



Foreword

One morning in 1978, when I opened my mail I found a flyer for something called the *Encyclopedia of American Religions*, in two volumes. According to the ad copy, these two books would provide details on about 1,200 different faiths currently operating in the United States. It sounded much too good to be true. I remember saying to my wife that if these volumes were half as complete as they claimed to be, it would be a work of monumental value to scholars. But for that very reason it was probably all hype. As I should have anticipated, she replied, “Rod, its only 90 bucks. Why not buy it?” So I did.

When the books arrived I was stunned. They were far more complete, far better organized, and far more sophisticated than the ad had claimed. For one thing, every effort had been made to provide *comparable* information on each of the groups. Since nearly all American religions groups originated in this country, most of them having broken away from a ‘parent’ body, great care had been taken to organize religious bodies in lineages on the basis of the denominational ‘family’ within which they had originated. In addition, critical historical details were provided as to the specific origins of each group, its growth and spread over time, and subsequent splits and conflicts that had developed. Equally careful attention was devoted to basic doctrines and special practices. The pattern of growth/decline of each group since its first days in America also was sketched. Of course, it would not have been difficult to provide this information for the twenty or thirty major Christian bodies. The incredible achievement was to have gathered surprisingly complete data for each of the hundreds of small Christian sects.

An even greater achievement was to have done all of this for the hundreds of non-Christian groups—New Thought, Spiritualist, Witchcraft, Theosophical, and the like. At the time, very few of us were more than dimly aware that these groups also formed lineages (or families) as most of them too had broken off from another group or had been founded by a leader with a prior background in another group. Moreover, most of these groups were (and are) tiny and many of them were (and are) extremely secretive and somewhat hostile to outsiders. Yet there they were, all assembled into families, their origins and history revealed, and with plausible membership figures.

Within the first hour of examining my new books I recognized their value for doing quantitative comparative studies and within the year I had created and analyzed a data set of 417 American-born Christian sects and 501 American-born non-Christian religious groups. The published results continue to inform scholars. Since then, of course, there has been an immense amount of scholarship making use of the *Encyclopedia of American Religions*.

My next response to my new books was: Who was this guy J. Gordon Melton anyway? I had good reason to wonder since I thought I knew all of the significant players in the history and sociology of American religion. I concluded that Melton must be someone about 80 years old who had devoted an obscure life of effort to amassing this incredible assembly of material. The dust jacket located him in Evanston, Illinois, so I got his phone number and called him. Surprise! He was quite young, supported himself as a Methodist pastor, and had devoted himself to collecting data on American religious groups since his teens. He told me that one day during high school he had come across Elmer T. Clark’s *Small Sects in America* and had gone home, sold his baseball cards, and started collecting sects. His achievement was all the more extraordinary considering that he had done it without any assistants and without any financial support. That’s why soon after the second edition appeared, the late Jeffrey K. Hadden began to characterize Gordon as “a national treasure.” And so he is.

We now have the eighth edition and it comes with all sorts of valuable new features. For the first time, this edition is illustrated and includes many maps, tables, charts, and graphs. It also is available as an e-book. Amazingly, the number of entries has grown from about 1,200 in the first edition to more than 2,300 independent religious groups as of 2008.

How is it possible for the number of groups to increase in every edition? The primary reason is that the number of religious groups in America keeps growing. A second reason is that Gordon keeps finding tiny groups here and there that he had missed. Consider this example of his constant scrutiny.

A few years ago I organized a conference on new religious movements bringing Gordon Melton and a dozen other well-known scholars to Orcas Island, Washington. This is a small resort community located in Puget Sound, famous locally for the several pods of killer whales (orcas) that frequent the area. Everyone flew into Seattle and then we took a chartered yacht to the island. Shortly after we arrived at the hotel, Gordon excused himself and said he had arranged to see a psychic practitioner on the other side of the island. “This guy has been trying to start a group and I want to see if he has any followers.” About two hours later Gordon returned. No followers. No new entry for the *Encyclopedia*, but another lead followed up. At the end of the conference we returned to Seattle in four single-engine float planes that picked us up on the beach and landed on Lake Union in downtown Seattle. Most of the other participants then took cabs to the Seattle/Tacoma Airport. Not Gordon. There were four possible new groups in Seattle he wanted to check out first. He never stops. And that’s why, as superb as the first edition was, the eighth is far, far better.

Rodney Stark
Distinguished Professor of the Social Sciences &
Co-Director of the Institute for Studies of Religion
Baylor University



Preface

As a high school student, I found a copy of Elmer T. Clark's pioneering study, *The Small Sects of America*, in a bookstore. Fifty years later I can still remember the sense of fascination I had as I read through the volume and discovered the many ways my neighbors did religion. Birmingham, Alabama, was not the most religiously pluralistic city in the country, but it had an amazing array of churches from Eastern Rite Catholic to Spiritualist along with representative congregations of most of the Holiness and Pentecostal groups. There was quite enough to start me looking for any groups that Clark had missed, and by the time I finished college in 1964, I had found several hundred. Moving on to Chicago for seminary and graduate school, I was able to witness the great expansion that America was undergoing following the 1965 change in immigration laws. At the beginning of the 1970s, when it came time to write my dissertation, I was totally focused on trying to understand the development of the unique American religious environment.

At first glance, the religious situation in America appears somewhat chaotic with all the different religions vying for attention and a following, some very successfully, some all but ignored. The first task was making sense of a bewildering array of belief. This task was somewhat accomplished by the emergence in my research and the subsequent designation of the religious families. Each family consists of a set of religious denominations that were bound together by their sharing the same history, engaged each other in like theological discourse, and followed similar behavior patterns. From looking at the families, I concluded that there was an interesting variety of ways to do religion, but not a huge infinite number. There are actually a relatively small number of basic religious myths that have captured the attention of the world's billions and a relatively limited number of ways that communities have found to successfully embody the myth. Meanwhile, the words and actions used to express those myths still seem endless.

In the modern secular world (where the separation of religion and government is in effect) people group themselves around these basic religious formats that have proved most viable in following them. Subsequently, they will construct the long-term, more-or-less stable organizations that facilitate an ongoing organized religious life. In the United States, we generally use the term *denomination* (a word first used in the Christian context) to designate these long-term organizations that are the basic structure of religious life. That term works well in North America, where some 80 percent of the public identify as Christians. It does not work so well with other religious communities. At the Institute for the Study of American Religion, we use the term *primary religious group*. A primary religious group is a religious organization or association that organizes individuals into local centers for regular worship (or its equivalent) and then organizes these centers of like-minded individuals in regional and national associations (the denominations). Overwhelmingly, these regional and national associations are legally established as corporations.

Primary religious groups are to be distinguished from secondary religious groups (association of denominations—such as ecumenical and interfaith groups) and tertiary religious groups (organizations that engage in religious activity but lack the full range of communal worship and related congregational life of a denomination). Tertiary groups, often called para-churches, usually specialize in a single task which they perform for multiple denominations—education, publication, evangelism, etc. Para-churches include everything from independent Bible schools to advocacy groups to large publication houses to overseas missionary organizations.

Once in place, the primary religious groups become the basic building blocks of religious life in a (relatively) free society. They make the basic rules that govern their own life.

They set the boundaries of belief that will be articulated by the group's religious functionaries and determine the strictness with which belief will be held. They decide on the type of worship that will be conducted and how often. They decide on the looseness or tightness of the organizational structure, who will own the property, and how authority will be exercised. They will raise and distribute money to further the overall group program. Most importantly, they will provide space and opportunity for the regular (daily, weekly, or other) gathering of the group for the affirmation of group's values and belief, the acknowledgement of the super-mundane realm, and the development and maintenance of community.

The primary religious groups form the stable structures that one can expect to be present week in and week out. They persist through the ups and downs of group life. Religious enthusiasms, theological fads, and spiritual excitements come and go; the primary groups react to these events, but continue on. Since the early nineteenth century, various religious visionaries have perceived the divisive nature of denominations and have articulated the hopes of a united Christianity or even a single religious community open and available to all, and have taken steps to bring their vision into reality. Such visions have always fallen short of understanding the function of denominations in a free society where knowledge is limited and religious communities serve a variety of functions for its members.

While some might hope for a post-denominational world or a united religion, no one has yet found a better way to serve the religious needs of a free and diverse people exercising their freedom on issues of the religious life as with every other area of life. Because so many disagreements on matters of belief, worship, organization, and ways to deal with new issues exist, sectarian differences as structured into the different denominations will remain with us for the foreseeable future. Post-denominational and interdenominational churches simply become new denominations and united religious communities become new religions. It is to be noted the only places where denominational differences have disappeared are in lands where the coercive power of the state is used to privilege one religious tradition while suppress all competition and dissent.

In the United States, understanding the meaning of separation of church and state has come to include strict limitations on government interference in the religious life of its people. That noninterference policy has also come to include strictures against government agencies compiling basic information about religion. Prior to World War II, the U.S. government gathered data from all of the different religious bodies functioning in America and issued a decade-by-decade census. That valuable report was discontinued in 1936. The federal and later the National Council of Churches attempted to fill the gap partially by the *Yearbook of American Churches*, however, that volume was very much limited. It only reported on groups it considered worthy, and was then further limited to information that groups supplied to it. Given the role of the *Yearbook* as an expression of the National Council of Churches, many large religious groups ideologically refused to report to it. At the same time, the Council felt unable to recognize some groups, for example the many Western Esoteric organizations, as members of the larger religious community.

As I became aware of the many religious groups in America that received no attention from my scholarly colleagues and about which no material existed in standard reference books, I saw the need for an organization that would research and systematically provide information on the many different religious organizations in (North) America. This need led to the founding of the Institute for the Study of American Religion (ISAR) in the fall of 1968. At that time I was just beginning my graduate program at Garrett Evangelical Theological Seminary and Northwestern University. I carried out the primary gathering of a basic collection of material on all of the different religious groups then functioning in North America, pursued a graduate degree, and wrote my dissertation on the shape and structure of American religion (denominationalism) simultaneously with the early development of ISAR. Finally, in the late 1970s, I was able to write the first edition of the *Encyclopedia of American Religions*, utilizing the solutions to the problems of distinguishing and understanding the basic religious structures in my dissertation.

Since its initial appearance in 1979, the *Encyclopedia of American Religions* has been the only reference book that has provided basic data on the growing number of different religious groups in the United States and Canada, and thanks to the publisher, ISAR has been

given the opportunity to regularly update the material and add entries on new religious bodies as they form. In the period that the eight editions have appeared, several of the largest religious groups in America (Evangelical Lutheran of America, Presbyterian Church [U.S.A.]) have formed and the number of known religious groups in the United States has grown from some 800 to more than 2,300. Together, the various editions have chronicled the changing scene of religious life for a generation and thereby filled a major gap in information about one of the most important aspects of North American culture. Meanwhile, ISAR has supplemented the findings of the *Encyclopedia* in the more than 300 monographs it has seen into publication.

In this new edition of the *Encyclopedia*, I have been particularly aided by three people: James Beverley, Pamela S. Nadell, and Constance Jones. Beverley, a professor at Tyndale Seminary in Toronto, Ontario, became the associate director of the Institute for the Study of American Religion in 2000. With this edition, he also assumes additional duties in the preparation of the Institute's most important publication. For this edition he took on responsibility especially for the editing and updating of the introductory essay on religion in Canada and the two chapters on the Baptists and Islam. It is assumed that he will take on a greater proportion of the work in future editions.

As the coverage of the *Encyclopedia* has expanded, no single person can now hope to stay current on the ever-growing number of religious bodies it covers. Just the task of gathering updated material on the more than 2,000 religions in America is impossible for ISAR's small staff, even with the assistance of the large network of cooperating scholars who periodically call our attention to important developments. In previous editions we reached out for help on Catholicism and Shinto. In this edition we were able to secure two scholars to assist in the revisions on Judaism and Hinduism. Pamela S. Nadell is the Patrick Clendenen Professor of History and Director of the Jewish Studies Program at American University in Washington, and after working with her on the many needed revisions to the Jewish chapter in the *Encyclopedia*, I understand fully why she was recently named her university's Scholar/Teacher of the Year (2007–2008). She not only knew her stuff, she was kind and patient in her criticisms as we worked our way through the introductory material and individual entries. I am most grateful for her assistance.

Dr. Constance Jones is a sociologist with whom I have worked on a variety of projects for the last two decades. She is a sociologist and a professor of Transformative Studies at the California Institute for Integral Studies in San Francisco, and recently completed the *Encyclopedia of Hinduism* (Facts on File, 2007). It was only natural to twist her arm to assist in revising the material on Hinduism for the *Encyclopedia*. As I have come to expect of her, she did an excellent job of offering suggestions for revision.

With my own work on Buddhism, Dr. Beverley's help with Islam, and the efforts of Drs. Nadell and Jones, the major chapters on the Eastern and Middle Eastern religions in America have been most thoroughly revised and updated. This work represents one of the major features of this eighth edition of the *Encyclopedia*. At the same time, it has been my growing belief over the past decade that the chapters listed in previous editions as the Ancient Wisdom, Spiritualism and the New Age, and Magical families should be reorganized to reflect their common roots and continuing interaction. This reorganization has been accomplished in this edition with the designation of a new family, "Western Esotericism," and the reordering of the material in the three chapters. This reordering reflects the larger act of defining Esotericism as a long-standing tradition in Western religion by an emerging community of scholars specializing in Western Esotericism, and acknowledges their accomplishments over the last two decades. In this effort I am particularly reliant on the work of European scholars such as Antoine Faivre, Wouter Hanegraaff, and Massimo Introvigne, and especially North American scholars such as Joscelyn Godwin, Robert Ellwood, and Arthur Versluis.

With the assistance from the several scholars who review specific chapters and the support of a team of editorial assistants supplied by the publisher, I was able for the first time since the early editions of the *Encyclopedia* to do a thorough revision (and in places major rewriting) of its entire text and to review every one of the more than 2,000 entries. With this edition, we also for the first time introduce maps and graphic materials. It is hoped that these will assist in illustrating some of the important aspects of the religious scene from the

continuing role of older structures such as the ancient Episcopal sees of the Mediterranean Basin to the radical growth of some religions in the twentieth century.

As with earlier editions, we also offer coverage of what some are surprised to find in a reference work devoted to religion: entries on what I term the religiously irreligious—atheists, humanists, and rationalists. I do so because I have found groups such as American Atheists, Inc., and the Council on Secular Humanism to fit into a community of theological dissent from older religious communities and who now fulfill for their constituencies the roles that have traditionally been filled by religions—ritual acknowledgement of important events, moral guidance, expressions of community, and affirmations of ultimate concerns. These groups not only help us understand the boundaries of the larger religious community but represent the ferment as the cutting edge of religious development.

The continued growth of the American population, the arrival of tens of thousands new immigrants annually, and the concentration of people in large urban complexes has meant that the number of new religious options has continued to expand and, while some religious groups disappear, the net increase in the number of new religious bodies grows at a more-or-less steady pace (following the population curve). These new religions represent the merger of previous existing groups, schisms from older groups, new organizations brought to the country by immigrants, and innovative religious expressions created by the country's residents. Each edition of the *Encyclopedia of American Religions* has grown to reflect the growth of these new religions. With this edition, we have adopted a format change to accommodate the addition of more than 200 newly formed groups; we have decided to remove all the entries on defunct religious bodies from the main body of the *Encyclopedia* and place that material in a Defunct Appendix.

I am continually amazed by the developments in the North American religious community, though by now I should be used to seeing the changes in old religions and the seeming need for the new to emerge. I am also amazed the way that a seemingly small project begun as a grad student went on to grow into the dominating work of a lifetime. I have the greatest of appreciation for the many many people who have in ways great and small, in ways visible and invisible, contributed to making the *Encyclopedia of American Religions* a reality. I could not have done it without all of the assistance I have received. Hopefully, the new edition will continue to serve the information needs of its many users.

J. Gordon Melton
January 2009



Introduction

to the Eighth Edition

Melton's *Encyclopedia of American Religions* (MEAR), now in its eighth edition, provides a comprehensive survey of religious and spiritual groups in North America. The *Encyclopedia* continues in its role as "an indispensable guide to the confused landscape of American Religion" (*Choice*) by providing both a historical perspective and current information on the many groups that constitute America's religious life.

MEAR covers currently functioning religious groups and, in the Defunct Appendix, groups that are no longer active. Most groups covered meet the following criteria:

- seeks the chief religious loyalty of its members
- promotes its particular view
- satisfies one of the following conditions of size:
 - if the group is organized into congregations, has two or more congregations, or has one congregation with more than 2,000 members who make a measurable impact on the country through mass media
 - if not organized into congregations, membership is drawn from more than one state and from beyond a single metropolitan area

Several groups that do not meet the size requirements outlined above have been included. These groups, such as satanists, espouse beliefs that are at odds with those of most people in the United States and Canada. Despite their limited numbers, these groups have been included to illustrate the religious complexity and diversity of America.

NEW IN THIS EDITION. The eighth edition of the *Encyclopedia* contains over 2,300 descriptive entries on religious bodies, including over 200 new to this edition, and represents a complete revision and expansion of the previous edition. For the first time, the *Encyclopedia* will have illustrations such as maps and charts. Defunct entries have been removed from the directory listings and placed in a Defunct Appendix. This edition also features:

Master Name, Subject, and Keyword Indexes have been consolidated to create one Index, providing a one-stop listing of all key details mentioned in this edition.

CONTENT AND ARRANGEMENT. The eighth edition of the *Encyclopedia* now consists of two parts, which are followed by two appendices and an index:

- Three **Introductory Essays** trace the development of religion in America and Canada.
- Twenty-four **Religious Family Historical Essays** discuss the growth and development of the major religious families and traditions in North America. Following each essay are the directory listings for that religious family. They provide contact and descriptive information on the various groups that comprise the 24 families and traditions. Two remaining directory sections—Unclassified Christian Churches and Unclassified Religious Groups—include those groups that cannot be classified within any of the distinct religious families.

The **Defunct Appendix** lists organizations that have become defunct. The **Geographic Appendix** and **Index** facilitate access to information provided in this edition.

For additional details on the content, arrangement, and indexing of MEAR, consult the **User's Guide**, following the introductions.

COMPILATION METHODS. The information contained in the entries has been assembled from material obtained directly from the religious bodies listed. Each group was asked to update and return a revision form containing information on their organization, and the

majority of organizations graciously complied. In some cases, follow-up telephone conversations were held.

AUTHOR BRINGS UNIQUE PERSPECTIVE. Dr. J. Gordon Melton has been studying America's religious landscape for more than thirty-five years. A graduate of Garrett Evangelical Theological Seminary in Evanston, Illinois, with a Ph.D. from Northwestern University in the History and Literature of Religions, Dr. Melton is nationally recognized as a leading authority on religion, particularly the newer, small groups. He serves as the Director of the Institute for the Study of American Religion based in Santa Barbara, California, and is a research specialist with the Department of Religious Studies at the University of California—Santa Barbara. He has authored a number of articles, text books, and reference works on American religion. Among the many Gale titles authored by Melton are the *New Age Encyclopedia*, *Religious Leaders of America*, and *The Churches Speak Series*.

For additional details on the author and the impetus for undertaking the *Encyclopedia*, see Selections from the Introduction to the First Edition following this introduction.

MEAR ALSO AVAILABLE IN ELECTRONIC FORMATS. *Melton's Encyclopedia of American Religions* is also available online through the Gale Virtual Reference Library and Gale Directory Library. Information on ordering these versions can be found at www.gale.com. *MEAR* is available for licensing. The complete database is provided in a fielded format and is deliverable on such media as disk or CD-ROM. For more information, contact Gale's Business Development group at 1-800-877-GALE, or visit our website at <http://gale.cengage.com/bizdev/>.

COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS WELCOMED. Comments, suggestions, and information on new organizations or organizations not currently listed are welcomed. Please contact:

Dr. J. Gordon Melton
Institute for the Study of American Religion
Box 90709
Santa Barbara, CA 93190-0709

or

Gale, Cengage Learning
27500 Drake Rd.
Farmington Hills, MI 48331-3535
Telephone (248) 699-GALE
Toll-Free (800) 347-GALE



Selections

from the Introduction to the First Edition

The *Encyclopedia of American Religions* explores the broad sweep of American religions and describes over 1,200 [now 2,300] churches. Some churches in the *Encyclopedia*, such as certain Hindu and Jewish bodies, follow a tradition several thousand years old. Others were born yesterday, like Garner Ted Armstrong's Church of God International, formed in the summer of 1978. With few exceptions, if a church existed in the United States in 1976 [now 2009], it is discussed in the *Encyclopedia*.

In my years of study of American religion I discovered three kinds of religious institutions: primary religious bodies (i.e., churches), secondary organizations that serve the primary bodies, and tertiary organizations that strive to change the primary bodies. The *Encyclopedia* treats only the primary religious bodies, but it does refer to the two other kinds of institutions, so some comment on all three types is necessary here.

In defining primary religious bodies (a church, denomination, sect, or cult), I established certain criteria. First, a church seeks the chief religious loyalty of its members. Second, it meets requirements of size. If it is organized into congregations, it has at least two congregations, or it has one congregation of more than 2,000 members who make a measurable impact on the country through the mass media. If a church is not organized into congregations, it meets the size requirement when its members come from more than one state and from beyond a single metropolitan area. The third criterion concerns faith: a primary religious body tends to promote its particular views. For instance, it may encourage belief or disbelief in the Trinity. Or it may try to discourage the wearing of neckties; some holiness churches consider wearing neckties ostentatious.

I waived the size requirement for primary religious bodies whose beliefs are at odds with those of most people in our culture. For example, some satanic groups are discussed in the *Encyclopedia* although they do not have enough members to meet my size criterion for primary religious bodies. The vast majority of churches in the *Encyclopedia* do, however, meet my three criteria.

Most primary religious bodies share other traits. Their leaders "marry and bury," as the saying goes. The churches usually hope to expand: they plan to make converts and form additional congregations. Finally, a number of primary religious bodies, though under-represented in America, have large foreign branches.

Much of the money and time given to religious enterprises in the United States is channeled not into the primary religious bodies, but into secondary and tertiary religious institutions. Secondary religious organizations, service agencies, perform tasks for one or more primary body. The tasks include missionary work, the education of seminarians, the publication of church materials, the sale of religious articles, and care for orphans and the aged.

Tertiary organizations try to change a number of primary religious bodies by promoting one special issue. For example, ecumenical organizations seek the unity of churches. However, few churches supporting the ecumenical organizations have specific plans to merge with other churches, so ecumenists try to change the attitudes of the churches. Among the country's ecumenical groups are several that draw members from various religious families (e.g., the National Council of Churches and the National Association of Evangelicals) and many more whose members are limited to one family (e.g., the Christian Holiness Association, the Pentecostal Fellowship of North America, the World Baptist Alliance, the International New Thought Alliance, the American Council of Witches, the Midwest Pagan Council, and the Buddhist Council of Hawaii).

Tertiary organizations have been formed to promote peace (the Fellowship of Reconciliation), a belief in creation instead of evolution (the Bible Science Association, Inc.), the psychic (the Spiritual Frontiers Fellowship), spiritual healing (the International Order of St. Luke, the Physician), Pentecostalism (the Full Gospel Businessmen's Fellowship, International), and Sabbatarianism (the Bible Sabbath Association).

Because the country is virtually flooded with secondary and tertiary organizations, the primary religious bodies form only a small percentage of American religious institutions. It is to the primary bodies, though, that the secondary and tertiary organizations look for members and support.

In describing America's 1,200 [2,300] primary religious bodies, I am departing from the church-sect-cult categories of Ernst Troeltsch. He pioneered in describing various Christian bodies, not in doctrinal, but in social terms, treating churches as far more than defenders of certain beliefs. In the latter part of his work, *The Social Teachings of the Christian Churches* (New York: Macmillan, 1931), Troeltsch examined the Christian churches of post-Reformation Europe. He discovered three types of groups: the dominant state churches, the sect groups (schismatic groups that broke away from the state churches), and the mystical groups (the latter came to be called cults). Unfortunately, American sociologists applied Troeltsch's categories to American religions. With time, the popular media attached pejorative connotations to the words "sect" and "cult," connotations Troeltsch never intended. To understand Troeltsch properly, one must remember that he described only Christian religions. Furthermore, he studied countries with Christian state churches, to which all citizens were expected to belong. The United States has no state church and has far more non-Christian churches than Europe had before 1800, the terminal point of Troeltsch's study.

American religions do not yield to so simplistic a set of categories as the church-sect-cult triad. Instead of using those three classifications, I examined religions family by family and have found 17 [now 18] distinct families. This approach, I hope, does justice to the amazing variety found within the American religious experience. Ten [12] of the 17 [18] religious families in the United States basically follow Christian beliefs and practices; seven [6] do not.

Within the 17 [18] families of American religions, the member bodies of each family share a common heritage, thought world (theology in its broadest sense), and lifestyle. These three features define each individual religious body and illuminate its relationship to other churches in the family.

It has become fashionable to use other characteristics in classifying religious bodies, characteristics such as ethnicity, class, racial composition, type of leadership (priest? guru? pastor?), and the degree of acceptance of or hostility to the world. While these characteristics provide useful information, they are entirely inadequate in explaining the formation, development, relationships, and continuing life of the broad spectrum of America's religious bodies. Elements of ethnicity are, for example, most helpful in identifying sub-groups within the older European church traditions brought to America in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Lutheran, Reformed, and Pietist churches split along ethnic lines, each sub-group using its own language. But as language barriers disappeared, the ethnic orientation of the churches diminished. Thus Swedish Baptists in America are more likely to develop joint programs, to merge, or to share missionary concerns with German or English or even black Baptists than with Swedish Lutherans or Swedish Pentecostals. The strength of family relationships overrides ethnic considerations.

In order to understand any family or its members, it is necessary to understand the family's heritage, thought world, and lifestyle. In many families, one of the three features—heritage, thought world, and lifestyle—is dominant. For the Lutheran family and those churches within the liturgical family, heritage is the feature setting them apart from other churches. Lifestyle is the key feature for four families in particular: the Communal, Holiness, Pentecostal, and Psychic families. Group ownership of property and certain self-imposed disciplines put communes into a class of their own. A day-to-day striving for perfect love dominates holiness preaching and teaching, with worldly activities prohibited. Pentecostals seek certain gifts of spirit, such as speaking in tongues, prophesying, and heal-

ing, so Pentecostals have a distinctive lifestyle in both their worship and their daily lives. Finally, the psychics are set apart from other religious groups because of their interest in extrasensory perception, psychokinesis, and communication with spirits through seances and visions.

If heritage and lifestyles distinguish certain families so does the thought world for other families. For fundamentalists and for the Protestant churches, especially those that follow John Calvin's Reformed theology, the features distinguishing them from each other is their thought world. They hold divergent views on these topics in particular: sacrament, ecclesiology, the sovereignty of God, perfection, and the nature of the end of time. But even where there is agreement, sharing a thought world does not necessarily mean holding identical views. Rather, it means sharing some beliefs that set the context for constant debate over specifics. Adventists, for example, expect Christ to return soon, but violently argue among themselves about the nature of his return, the possibility of pinpointing the date of his return, and the significance of certain world events as signs of his return.

Of particular interest to me are the families of "hidden religions" outside the country's religious mainstream. The spiritualists who hold seances are within the hidden families; so are the Buddhists, the Sufis, and the witches in their covens. Such groups are invisible to many Americans, but often they have large national followings. Several congregations that belong to these sizable but hidden families meet within a few blocks of my home in Evanston, Illinois. But had I not searched hard for these congregations, I would never have found them.

Many years of searching have gone into my study of America's religions. I might be better qualified to study the country's religions if I were a detective instead of a Methodist minister. I have examined endless printed material and interviewed countless church founders and leaders—all with the aim of understanding the heritage, lifestyle, and thought world of the religions. To say the least, the task has had its challenges. Some churches exaggerate or deny aspects of their lifestyle or history. Many Pentecostals say their church was founded at Pentecost, in 33 C.E., and hide their recent origins. Other churches try to gloss over the career their founder led before establishing their church. Among such founders, David Berg (of the Children of God), L. Ron Hubbard (of the Church of Scientology), A. A. Allen (of the Miracle Revival Fellowship), and Sun Myung Moon (of the Unification Church) have followed or still follow vocations quite different from that of a spiritual leader. For example, Hubbard was an undercover agent for the Los Angeles Police Department, a fiction writer, and an explorer before founding his church.

Some religious bodies function as such but deny their religious nature. One such organization is the World Plan Executive Council, popularly called Transcendental Meditation. Others dislike denominational labels and refuse to list themselves in the phone book or give brochures to non-members. The Cooneyites, also called the Two-by-Two's, have developed the shunning of publicity into a fine art.

To paint a picture of America's religious bodies in 1978 is not to describe them as they will be in 1988 [or 2018]. Families dwindle and expand. The major church in a family (one that claims more than half the family's members) may divide in half in a decade, torn by schism. Smaller churches in a family may consolidate—e.g., through merging all-black and all-white churches. Lutherans, once divided according to European ethnic origins and language, have consolidated in this century and then redivided over doctrinal issues. The Eastern religious bodies in this country—originally composed of Hindu and Buddhist immigrants—have attracted young American devotees, thereby blending the West with the East. Despite changes within families, however, the identity of the families remains the same. An intense conservatism governs religious bodies; they would rather lose dissident members than change. Further, churches rarely jump from one family to another. Theological and organizational patterns tend to perpetuate themselves. True, institutions adjust to the changing society, but only begrudgingly. The division of religions into families (denominationalism) is fundamental to religious life in the United States. We do not live in a post-denominational age. The ideals of ecumenism have swept through American Christianity, firing imaginations, creating cooperation structures, and breaking down walls

of intolerance and hostility between religions. But if ecumenism has illustrated anything, it has been this: the religious family is strong. It will endure.

J. Gordon Melton



User's Guide

Melton's Encyclopedia of American Religions consists of the following sections:

- Introductory Essays
- Religious Family Historical Essay Chapters, with Directory Listings
- Defunct Appendix
- Geographic Appendix
- Index

Each section is fully described below.

INTRODUCTORY ESSAYS. Three essays, “The Development of American Religion: An Interpretive View,” “Religion in Canada: A Historical Survey, 1500 to the Present,” and “American Religion in the Twenty-first Century,” provide an overview of American and Canadian religion as well as the latest religious trends for the future. Together these introductory essays present a comprehensive picture of the evolution of North American religion and project some trends for the immediate future. These essays also place the historical essays covering each denominational family into a larger context.

RELIGIOUS FAMILY HISTORICAL ESSAY CHAPTERS, WITH DIRECTORY LISTINGS. This portion of the *Encyclopedia* contains 24 general essays that trace historically the rise of the 24 major religious families and traditions, as outlined on the “Contents” pages, into which most U.S. and Canadian bodies can be classified. A select list of bibliographic source materials appears at the end of each essay. Directory listings of individual religious groups that fall into each of the 24 religious families immediately follow the narrative for that chapter. The remaining two directory sections—Unclassified Christian Churches and Unclassified Religious Groups—include those groups that cannot be classified within any of the distinct religious families.

Whenever available or appropriate, a directory listing typically contains the following categories of information in the order listed.

Organization Name and Acronym. The official name of the organization and, if available, acronym.

Address. The street location and/or mailing address of the organization appears directly under its name. If the organization's current address could not be located for the current edition, it is noted here.

Alternate Address. Provides, if applicable, the address of an organization's Canadian or international headquarters, or an alternative address at which the organization may be contacted.

Description. A discussion of the organization's history, beliefs, organization, and leaders, generally paraphrased from information obtained from the organization itself. This data preserves, as closely as possible, the original wording from a questionnaire response, website, etc., in order to avoid any misinterpretation of the organization's beliefs.

Membership. Most recent statistics as reported by the group, including, as appropriate, number of members, centers, congregations, churches, and ministers. The geographic location of the various congregations, churches, or other groups may also be provided. If no membership statistics are provided, the phrase “not reported” appears.

Educational Facilities. An alphabetical listing of post-secondary educational institutions sponsored and/or supported by the group. Each listing includes the city and state/province in which the institution is located.

Periodicals. Periodicals and newsletters issued by the group. Unless otherwise noted, publications are available from the address provided at the beginning of the entry.

Remarks. Includes additional information not applicable to the basic headings listed above. It could include comments or interpretation by those outside the organization.

Sources. Provides complete bibliographic citations, arranged alphabetically, of selected source materials used to develop the entry as well as sources for further reading. When known, URLs for the organizations' primary websites have been added as the first item.

DEFUNCT APPENDIX. Provides information on organizations that have become defunct, listed according to their religious family in the order in which those chapters appear in the *Encyclopedia*. Entries include the organization name and a brief synopsis of the group's history, beliefs, organization, and leaders.

GEOGRAPHIC APPENDIX. Offers geographical arrangement of the organizations included in Directory Listings. Entries are arranged by country (with the U.S. first), then listed alphabetically by state and then by city. Canadian entries follow the U.S. listings, with entries arranged alphabetically by province and then by city. Entries outside the U.S. and Canada are listed last, alphabetically by country, then by city. Entries include organization name and address.

INDEX. Provides an alphabetic arrangement of all religious organizations, acronyms, individuals, educational facilities, periodicals, and other significant details mentioned in the historical essays, the directory listings, and the defunct appendix. The index also includes inversions on significant keywords appearing in the names of organizations, periodicals, and other entities. (Due to their prevalence, keyword inversions are not provided for "Church," "Religion," and similar terms.) The index also includes *see* and *see also* references. Periodical titles are rendered in *italic* type. The leading articles "A," "An," and "The" are disregarded for filing purposes within the index; thus, "The Prayer of Peace" will be found filed under "P" and not "T." A **boldface** number following an organization name indicates that organization's main entry in a directory section.

Key to Abbreviations

&	and	Co.	Company	Hon.	Honorary	MS	Mississippi
A.B.	Bachelor of Arts	Col.	Colonel	Hwy.	Highway	Msgr.	Monsignor
AB	Alberta	Coord.	Coordinator	IA	Iowa	MSW	Master of Social Work
A.M.	Master of Arts	Corp.	Corporation	ID	Idaho	MT	Montana
Abp.	Archbishop	Corr.	Corresponding	IHM	Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary	Mt.	Mount
Admin.	Administrative, Administrator	CSA	Sisters of the Congregation of St. Agnes	IL	Illinois	Mus.B.	Bachelor of Music
AK	Alaska	CSC	Congregation of the Holy Cross	IN	Indiana	Mus.D.	Doctor of Music
AL	Alabama	CSJ	Congregation of St. Joseph	Inc.	Incorporated	N.	North
Apt.	Apartment	CSP	Paulists	Intl.	International	Natl.	National
AR	Arkansas	CT	Connecticut	J.C.B.	Bachelor of Canon Law, Bachelor of Civil Law	NB	New Brunswick
Assoc.	Associate	Ct.	Court	J.C.D.	Doctor of Canon Law, Doctor of Civil Law	NC	North Carolina
Asst.	Assistant	Cust.	Customer	J.D.	Doctor of Jurisprudence, Doctor of Law	ND	North Dakota
Ave.	Avenue	CZ	Canal Zone	J.U.D.	Doctor of Both Laws (i.e. Canon and Civil)	NE	Nebraska, Northeast
AZ	Arizona	d.	died	Jr.	Junior	NF	Newfoundland
b.	born	D.D.	Doctor of Divinity	KS	Kansas	NH	New Hampshire
B.A.	Bachelor of Arts	D.Th.	Doctor of Theology	KY	Kentucky	NJ	New Jersey
B.D.	Bachelor of Divinity	DC	District of Columbia	L.Th.	Licentiate in Theology	NM	New Mexico
B.L.	Bachelor of Laws, Bachelor of Literature, Bachelor of Letters	D.D.S.	Doctor of Dental Science	LA	Louisiana	No.	Number
B.S.	Bachelor of Science	DE	Delaware	LL.B.	Bachelor of Laws	NS	Nova Scotia
B.Theo.	Bachelor of Theology	Dir., Dir.	Director, Directors	Ln.	Lane	NT	Northwest Territories
BC	British Columbia	Div.	Division	Ltd.	Limited	NV	Nevada
Bd.	Board	Dom.	Domestic	M.A.	Master of Arts	NW	Northwest
Bldg.	Building	Dr.	Doctor, Drive	M.Div.	Master of Divinity	NY	New York
Blvd.	Boulevard	E.	East	M.R.E.	Master of Religious Education	OAR	Order of the Augustinian Recollects
Bp.	Bishop	Ed.D.	Doctor of Education	M.Re.	Master of Religion	OCD	Order of Discalced
Brig.	Brigadier	Exec.	Executive	M.S.	Master of Science	Ofc.	Officer
Bro.	Brother	Expy.	Expressway	M.Th.	Master of Theology	OFM	Order of Friars Minor
Bus.	Business	FL	Florida	MA	Massachusetts	OH	Ohio
c.	circa	Fl.	Floor	Maj.	Major	OK	Oklahoma
c/o	care of	For.	Foreign	MB	Manitoba	OMI	Oblats de Marie Immaculee
CA	California	Fr.	Father	MD	Doctor of Medicine, Maryland	ON	Ontario
CAE	Certified Association Executive	FSC	Fratres Scholarum Christianarum	ME	Maine	OP	Ordo Praedicatorum
Card.	Cardinal	FSE	Brothers of the Holy Eucharist	Mgr.	Manager	OR	Oregon
CEO	Chief Executive Officer	FSP	Pious Society of the Daughters of St. Paul	MI	Michigan	OSA	Order of St. Augustine
Chm.	Chairman	Ft.	Fort	MIC	Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception	OSB	Ordo Sancti Benedicti
Chwn.	Chairwoman	Fwy.	Freeway	Min.	Minister	OSC	Order of St. Clare
CM	Congregatio Missioni Sancti Vicentia Paulo, Congregatio Mariae	GA	Georgia	Mktg.	Marketing	OSF	Order of St. Francis
Cmdr.	Commander	Gen.	General	MN	Minnesota	OSU	Order of St. Ursula
CMF	Congregation of Missionary Sons of the Immaculate Heart of the Blessed Virgin Mary	GU	Guam	MO	Missouri	PA	Pennsylvania
CO	Colorado	HI	Hawaii			PE	Prince Edward Island
						Ph.B.	Bachelor of Philosophy
						Ph.D.	Doctor of Philosophy
						Pkwy.	Parkway

Key to Abbreviations

Pl.	Place	Rte.	Route	SM	Sisters of Mercy	Tpke.	Turnpike
PO	Post Office Box	S.	South	SND	Sisters of Notre Dame	Treas.	Treasurer
PR	Puerto Rico	S.S.L.	Licentiate of Sacred Scripture	Sq.	Square	TX	Texas
Pres.	President	S.T.B.	Bachelor of Sacred Theology	Sr.	Senior, Sister	U.S.	United States
Prod.	Producer	S.T.D.	Doctor of the Science of Theology, Doctor of Sacred Theology	SSCC	Congregation of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary	U.S.A.	United States of America
Prof.	Professor			SSE	Sisters of St. Carmelites Elizabeth	UT	Utah
Prog.	Program	S.T.L.	Reader in Sacred Theology, Licentiate in Sacred Theology	SSJ	Sisters of St. Joseph	V.P.	Vice President
Prop.	Proprietor	S.T.M.	Master of Arts in Theology	St.	Saint, Street	VA	Virginia
QC	Quebec	SC	South Carolina	Sta.	Station	ven.	Venerable
Rd.	Road	SD	South Dakota	STD	Doctor of the Science of Theology	VI	Virgin Islands
RD	Rural Delivery	SE	Southeast	Ste.	Sainte, Suite	VPM	Voix du Peuple Murundi
Reg.	Regional	Sec.	Secretary	SW	Southwest	VT	Vermont
Rep.	Representative	Serv.	Service	Ter(r).	Terrace, Territory	W.	West
Rev.	Reverend	SJ	Societas Jesu	Th.B.	Bachelor of Theology	WA	Washington
RFD	Rural Free Delivery	SHCJ	Society of the Holy Child Jesus	Th.D.	Doctor of Theology	WI	Wisconsin
RI	Rhode Island	SK	Saskatchewan	Th.M.	Master of Theology	WV	West Virginia
Rm.	Room	SL	Sisters of Loretto at the Foot of the Cross	TN	Tennessee	WY	Wyoming
RR	Rural Route					YT	Yukon Territory
RSCJ	Society of the Sacred Heart						
RSM	Sisters of Mercy						