

The archive information below may be found online at
the Graduate Theological Union's website
<http://www.gtu.edu/library/special-collections/archives/nrm>

New Religious Movements

California has historically been a center for the development and practice of non-traditional or alternative religious movements. In the 1960s, there was a large growth of new religious ideas and organizations.

Hare Krishna groups appeared in airports and danced down Telegraph Avenue. Buddhist teachers found many new converts. Sufi choirs sang in concert. New gurus emerged on a regular basis. Weekly radio programs brought new spiritual leaders to the general public.

Scholars from different disciplines began to study these new religions in order to understand--and for some, to help suppress--these groups.

The Center for the Study of New Religious Movements (1977-83)

In 1977, the Graduate Theological Union established the Center for the Study of New Religious Movements and the New Religious Movements Research Collection.

During its five years, the Center served as a central resource for many scholars. Jacob Needleman, professor at San Francisco State and author of *The New Religions*, was hired to direct the Center. He and Charles Glock, UC-Berkeley sociologist, managed the Center's larger projects.

The Center sponsored inter-disciplinary conferences and symposia. Grants were provided for individual scholars to use the resource library and write research papers in Berkeley.

The New Religious Movements Research Collection

At the same time, J. Stillson Judah, library director and a pioneer in the NRM field, began to collect information from hundreds of groups and organizations in California and across the United States. Periodicals and books were also added to the resources.

The New Religious Movements Research Collection supplemented traditional, radical and ecumenical Christian collections, with materials on alternative religious and quasi-religious groups new to the United States or who have grown significantly since 1960.

Areas include Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism, Sufism, Occult and metaphysical movements, neo-paganism, witchcraft, new age communes, and human potential movements. Related issues such as legal concerns and the response of mainstream religions are also covered.

Even though the Center closed in 1983, the library continued to collect new religious movements information. Files that include correspondence, newsletters, pamphlets, brochures, position papers, or promotional material were set up for over 900 groups and organizations. These files now form the New Religious Movements Organizations: Vertical Files Collection, ca. 1955 - 1998.

In 1998, the Library stopped adding material to the Vertical Files Collection but books and periodicals continue to be added into the general GTU Library and can be found through the library catalog,

In 2001, the GTU Archives received a grant from the Library Services and Technology Act, through the California State Library, to process and organize this and other NRM collections so that these materials would be available to researchers and interested persons.

Other Collections

The GTU archives has received significant NRM collections from different sources. Among the most noteworthy are

- Will Noffke, a popular radio personality, on a broad range of alternative religions (William ("Will") Noffke Papers, 1953 - 1998)
- Don Stone on est (Donald C. Stone, Jr. Papers, 1971 - 1983, 2001)
- Harry Dell Kiplinger on the early establishment of a Scientology group in San Francisco (Scientology at the Marina Collection, 1947 - 1973)
- Starhawk, a pioneer and advocate of earth-based spirituality and Goddess religion, (Starhawk Collection, 1966-2006, GTU 2002-4-01)

A number of smaller collections further supplement the NRM Research Collection.

Access to the Collections

The New Religious Movements Research Collections are part of the Graduate Theological Union Archives. For more information about the GTU Archives, including hours, fees, and other policies, see the [GTU Archives](#) web page.

The Research Collections

There are six main collections in the New Religious Movements Research Collections. A description of each collection follows. Complete finding aids are available at the Online Archive of California web site. Direct links to specific collections are listed with each description below.

(Please note that you may return to this page via a link which appears on the top of each finding aid.)

The Center for the Study of New Religious Movements Collection, 1977 - 1983 (GTU 91-9-3)

The Center, founded by the Graduate Theological Union, sponsored inter-disciplinary conferences, symposia, and forums, as well as individual researchers studying all aspects of new religious movements. The collection contains over 30 conference and seminar proceedings, and over 500 research papers by eminent scholars.

View the [Finding Aid for the Center for the Study of New Religious Movements Collection](#).

William ("Will") Noffke Papers, 1953 - 1998 (GTU 2001-8-01)

A radio show host and producer in Berkeley, California, Noffke interviewed the leading people involved in new religious, human potential, and new age movements. His shows included Meeting of the Ways, New Dimensions, and New Horizons. The collection includes materials he collected on groups and individuals as well as over 2,000 audiotapes of the interviews and shows.

View the [Finding Aid for the William \("Will"\) Noffke Papers](#).

Scientology at the Marina Collection, 1947 - 1973 (GTU 2001-8-02)

Records from the founding and early years of a Church of Scientology in the Marina district of San Francisco, California.

View the [Finding Aid for the Scientology at the Marina Collection](#).

Donald C. Stone, Jr. Papers, 1971 - 1983 (GTU 2001-8-03)

A study of est [Erhard Seminars Training] graduates' health and well-being, part of Stone's graduate work at the University of California, San Francisco. Included in the collection are surveys, reports, research notes, and graduates' interviews. The interviews are coded to protect individual privacy.

View the [Finding Aid for the Donald C. Stone, Jr. Papers](#).

New Religious Movements Organizations: Vertical File Collection, ca. 1955 - 1998 (GTU 99-8-1)

The collection was compiled by the Graduate Theological Union Library in cooperation with The Center for the Study of New Religious Movements. From 1977 to 1998, the accumulated materials grew to include over 900 groups and organizations in California and the United States. These vertical files contain information collected from the groups themselves or other sources and may include such materials as correspondence, newsletters, pamphlets, brochures, position papers, events flyers, or promotional material.

View the [Finding Aid for the Vertical File Collection](#).

Starhawk Collection, 1966-2006 (GTU 2002-4-01)

Starhawk, born Miriam Simos, 1951, is a pioneer in and advocate of the revival of feminist spirituality and Goddess religion, and a political activist in peace, environmental, antinuclear, and globalization issues. She is an author, lecturer, and workshop leader in witchcraft, ritual, spirituality, permaculture design, and bringing the power of spirituality to political organizing and activism.

View the [Finding Aid for the Starhawk Collection](#).

Additional NRM Resources

Books, reference works, periodicals, and audio/visual materials concerning New Religious Movements in general or about specific groups and organizations can be found by searching the Graduate Theological Union Library online catalog, [GRACE](#).