

PROFILE: CHURCH OF TRUTH - COMMUNITY OF CONSCIOUS LIVING

The church has existed as a legal entity since May 25, 1984 when it was incorporated as the “Canadian Fellowship of Religious Mysticism” under the British Columbia *Society Act*. Over the years, our name has changed, in sometimes subtle ways, culminating in the “Church of Truth - Community of Conscious Living” May 3, 2001. Since 1994, the church has been managed and administered by a volunteer Board of Directors made up from the membership.

Evolution of our Spiritual Direction

Background: The church began as an enthusiastic group formed around the spiritual leadership of Richard Di Castri, ordained as a minister in Pasadena California’s Church of the Truth. The combined energy of this group manifested the funds and drive to create this body as a non-profit society, and to design and construct our building. In 1989, Richard ordained Joan Hopper who was the only minister member of our church to hold this distinction.

During its early evolution, the church maintained an association with California’s Church of the Truth* and with the International New Thought Alliance; our last membership with this Alliance was in 1994. Since then the church has evolved on its own auspices and is an independent entity.

In the early 1990s, Richard resigned as minister to follow other interests. With his resignation, and the subsequent hiring and departure of another minister after one year, challenges to the church’s survival manifested with a greatly reduced number of members and no revenue. The Board was considering dissolution of the society.

The Board was then approached by church members Maria Escude and D. Joan Thomas; Maria with a deep sense of guidance, proposed that the church did not need a minister. She and Joan volunteered to coordinate Sunday speakers and recommended that the community look at the prospect of renting the church space for much needed revenue. The Board agreed and committed members brainstormed for methods to make the church viable. This began the one step at a time of rebuilding the church. Our community is deeply grateful to the dedication of Maria and D. Joan, Marie Logan, Laura Lane, Brian Martin, Lorna Rennie and Madge Tolmie who were among those instrumental in keeping our church alive.

Spiritual Directions Committee: Maria and D. Joan were the precursors to the Spiritual Directions Committee created in the late 1990s. This Committee is elected by the members and has the mandate of ensuring spiritual activities are provided that are congruent with our constitution.

*The Church of the Truth was founded in 1913 in Spokane, Washington by Dr. Albert Grier; his vision was to shape a broad, universal religion of inclusiveness with no perception assumed as exclusively true or superior. The Churches of Truth ultimately became part of the already established New Thought Movement of which Dr. Grier became a prominent leader.

Who We Are

As the foregoing illustrates, a unique element of the church is that no minister is employed by it. Another distinctive aspect of our church is that we are a spiritual community that welcomes all, regardless of spiritual path or belief. Our openness and evolving nature is well expressed in our current Who We Are pamphlet:

“Our community is comprised of a rich field of individual and collective energies that is ever changing and evolving.”

While the church remains committed to the vision of a no minister policy, we currently have two church member ministers, Greg Skala, and Gordon Thurston, who have been granted the status of “religious representative”, that is, they are licensed under the *Marriage Act* to perform marriage services.

Our Sacred Space

The spirit of our church is embodied in its history, architecture, and with the energy of all who have graced it with their presence.

Architecture: Notes from John Cawood, a church co-founder and designer of our building, reveal the following. The sanctuary is designed in the transcendent image of the mandala which is a diagrammatic metaphor by which we can understand the deeper mysteries. The mandala is expressed in the form of a cross, representing the temporal body; the cross is within a circle representing the eternal spirit. All directions are drawn to the centre as illustrated by the break lines (converging on a small circle) set into the floor matching the rooflines overhead. From this centre, the spirit of our congregation flows out to the world beyond. Windows set high raise our vision to the light by day and carry the light of the church out into the world by night. The triangular skylight symbolizes God’s blessing on our church and also brings light to the memory of Marion Bruce Ewart whose gift of land and money was instrumental in making the building a reality. The exterior roof’s triangular form of a tent symbolizes faith in the protective presence of God which we carry with us on our journey. The triangle is also a metaphoric image of consciousness. Its horizontal base is our dualistic consciousness; the vertical thrust is our transcendent consciousness.

Rentals: Our sacred space is imbued with the energy of its architectural uniqueness and symbolism as well as with the spirit of all who have been drawn to it. It serves the larger community via rentals for such events as musical performances or concerts, workshops, meditation/yoga and private functions such as weddings, memorials and other celebrations of life. Rentals help defray our operational costs. Some events may be subsidized at the Board’s discretion.

Sources include:

Liz Connolly Bennett, Notes from November 7, 2004

Church historical files

John Clinton Cawood, The Thought Behind the Design of our New Building

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