

PARTNERSHIP

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is more of a philosophy than a religion, Cameron said. Because the word *church* has so many different meanings, “We’ve chosen to use the word *spiritual religion*,” she said.

Among the religion’s core beliefs: People are in partnership with God. Its teachings combine science, philosophy and religions of Eastern and Western cultures, including Christianity.

“These are tools on how to live in the world that we live in and how to actually change our experience so that we can live a happy life despite what’s going on around us,” Cameron said. “We actually can impact that which is going on around us.”

Religious Science, also called Science of Mind, is part of the New Thought movement. It honors all paths leading to God, whether Christian, Jewish, Buddhist, Hindu, Muslim or others.



DORAL CHENOWETH III | DISPATCH

Kathi Martin greets a friend at the Columbus Center for Spiritual Living, which opened in March. It teaches the Science of Mind, described as “a religion, a philosophy and a way of life.”

The movement is based not on dogma, but on universal spiritual principles, said Rodney Scott, communication director for United Centers for Spiritual Living, based in California.

“I think people are hungry for spiritual nourishment where they are loved ... and

appreciated,” Scott said. “That they can walk in a place and be held in the light of God and not be told that they are doing it wrong.”

The roots of New Thought trace to the late 19th-century American religion scene, said Paul Alan Laughlin, a professor of religion and philosophy at Otterbein College.

“New Thought is positive thinking and the denial of sinfulness of human beings,” Laughlin said. The traditional message of Christianity is that people are sinful, but New Thought and its derivatives reject that, Laughlin said.

The belief, he said, is that “we’ve got the same potential in us that Jesus had in him or that Buddha had in him.”

Between 50 and 100 people worship at the Columbus Center for Spiritual Living, which began its celebration services last month at the Northwest Masonic Lodge, 2436 W. Dublin-Granville Rd. The center is the fifth in Ohio.

Vera Nixon drives roughly 90 minutes each way from the Hocking Hills every Sunday to

attend. She’s been reading Holmes’ writing for about five years, since a friend gave her a Science of Mind daily-meditation magazine.

Nixon said she and her husband visit Columbus for entertainment and cultural events and would make the trek for medical care if needed. She views this as a similar investment: “I choose to come for my spiritual health.”

Sue Miller attended for the first time on a recent Sunday at the urging of a friend and some of her clients at the Migun Therapy Center, a thermal-massage business in Westerville.

“When people used to ask me what religion I was, I didn’t have an answer,” Miller said. She had attended churches in the past, but just never found the right fit.

Until now. “This is all about finding the God within you,” Miller said.

For more information about the center, visit www.SpiritualLivingColumbus.org. dwilson@dispatch.com