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About this Ezine...

This 2013 Interspiritual Ezine is a free online publication from Namaste Publishing, Inc., the original publisher of Eckhart Tolle and other spiritual teachers, in support of the coming Interspiritual Age.

Namaste Publishing is grateful to all who contributed to this ezine, providing us with such a diverse and comprehensive summary of the current state of this exciting global movement.

Special thanks to Dr Kurt Johnson for all he did to bring the various contributing authors together.

Links in the ezine are all active, highlighted in one of the Namaste Publishing colors. We invite you to visit the websites of our contributors.

The book *The Coming Interspiritual Age* by Dr Kurt Johnson and David Robert Ord is published in softcover and eBook by Namaste Publishing.
Worldwide, an inevitable progression towards globalization and multiculturalism is unfolding. Inherent in this progress is our “Discovering a Universal Spirituality in the World’s Religions,” precisely the subtitle of Bro. Wayne Teasdale’s now classic book *The Mystic Heart*, appearing in 1999 on the cusp of our new Millennium.

Teasdale called this emerging global understanding “Interspirituality”—an appreciation and practice of spirituality centered on humanity’s most deeply shared values of the heart:
interconnectedness, love, kindness, compassion, and service. In the seminal documents of Interspirituality, Teasdale called for religion and spirituality worldwide to step up to the implications of a global civilization, one in which heart-centered religion and spirituality would be part of a positive future for humanity and not one of the sources of further competition and conflict.

**Hopeful Signs**

*The Coming Interspiritual Age* has now been available since the New Year. The overwhelmingly positive response to this book—by the public, religious leaders, and organizations—and its placement in the Top 10 of new releases in such markets as Amazon.com—has suggested there is truly a growing recognition of the need, as one prominent reviewer said, “for an Interspiritual Age to come, and come soon.”

The interest in this book is also evidence that a trans-traditional melding—indeed a trans-traditional and multi-traditional understanding of our global spiritual heritage and how it can be a potential reservoir of real wisdom for our species’ future—has been emerging for some time.

The differences between the world religions—in beliefs, doctrines, and creeds—are real, of course, and they cannot be ignored. Diversity will always be part of our religious experience, as it has been for centuries. The question is how a global civilization will be able to cultivate this diversity without it leading to the conflicts that can result when religious attention isn’t placed on our universally shared values of the human heart.

As we said in *The Coming Interspiritual Age*, this compelling need for religions to consistently emphasize and reflect the deepest teachings they all hold in common—of interconnectedness, love, sharing, compassion, and service—is seen by current science as an “anthropological threshold”. Whether we meet this potential globally may well determine whether humanity survives.

Eckhart Tolle, in his massively influential book *A New Earth*, posed our predicament clearly. “Humanity is faced with a stark choice,” he said, “evolve or die”. But he also said, as we all sense, that humanity is already experiencing the emergence of a new level of consciousness. This is the consciousness that Interspirituality seeks to explore and nurture.

The world’s emerging Interspirituality also reflects, we think, a new comprehension of the myriad historical threads that have converged to offer a rich heritage (as Brother Teasdale said) for a future global civilization based on the heart.

It’s also a recognition of the countless historical pioneers, across all the world’s traditions, who tirelessly pointed to the common root and path held by all the traditions in understanding humanity’s common heart and consciousness.

This is significant because, paralleling the inherent implications of our globalization and multiculturalism, it demonstrates a shift in attention from simply pointing to the differences
among the world’s religions, in their narratives and predictions, to a new attention to what’s held in common by all, and the pivotal role this commonality has for our shared future—this destiny of “discovering a universal spirituality in the world’s religions”.

This universal goal, Teasdale said, would require great courage of all the world’s religions. He emphasized that it cannot be just a pipe dream, or we will be selling all of our experiences and beliefs far too short.

Accordingly, when we see attention to a book with the themes emphasized in *The Coming Interspiritual Age*, we see evidence of a transcultural, trans-traditional, transnational, world-centric spirituality emerging worldwide. These are positive directions, boding well for humanity’s potential soft-landing in our inevitably global and multicultural future.

**Challenges**

As also pointed out in *The Coming Interspiritual Age*, there are arrays of quite negative energies occurring worldwide that characterize the current predicament of humanity. There are firmly embedded structures and systems that are emphatically not interested in serving the wellbeing of all. One perilous example is the exploitive global financial industry, which appears to uphold obsolete and false notions of Social Darwinism’s rubric of “survival of the fittest,” still imagining that a culture of outright greed is sustainable. It isn’t, and we can’t close our eyes to the ongoing danger of this false notion.

There are also billions of world citizens we might humorously call the “head-in-the-sand Ostrich sangha.” They simply do not see, or do not want to acknowledge, the reality of the many global threats and challenges truly besetting us—resource scarcity and competition, climate change, environmental degradation, frequent wars based on national and ethnic allegiances, and economic and social disparities of all kinds.

Even some of the world’s spiritual communities contribute to the problem, from fundamentalisms that emphasize strict differences and directly promote conflict, to spiritual teachings that are unrealistically otherworldly. Both of these extremes ignore what Teasdale called “the deepest urgencies of the human heart.” They also leave out the reality of simple common sense. A globalizing world, faced with challenges already too long ignored by many, isn’t helped by such extremes of misguided behavior, still so common across our world’s religions.

To aid humankind on our journey, future worldviews must be balanced, holistic, and guided by the heart. Successful future worldviews will have to balance and value both our inner and outer ways of human knowing—our spiritual and our scientific heritages. This is simple wisdom because it is also an adaptive imperative.

The survival of a species—and humans are no exception—depends on skillful adaptive choices, and skillful adaptive choices can only be made when the implications of various alternatives (our doing “this” or “that”) are clear. A successful human future will require both new awareness and new skill sets. These are simply laws of nature.
The New “Conflictedness” in Humanity
A positive sign of our times is that this clash of human values and visioning is fortunately creating many levels of conflictedness among our billions of world citizens. This conflictedness is uncomfortable, of course, but it’s a sign that people are recognizing what’s no longer sustainable from our past and what a positive future will require. For the first time in perhaps a century, millions are realizing it isn’t enough to be complicit in systems and structures that not only don’t serve the wellbeing of all but are also leading us to near-certain ruin.

What this means at the day-to-day level is that billions of world citizens are caught in lifestyles they already realize are unsustainable, or which are complicit with systems and structures that are propelling the world’s problems instead of furnishing solutions. Some—from Arab and Catholic Spring to Occupy—respond with action and innovative vision. Others—as evidenced from a myriad statistics presented in The Coming Interspiritual Age—join less actively but in overall agreement with the global need for fundamental structural change. Others find themselves caught in predicaments that are truly conflictive—complicit with systems they don’t like or support, but in which they seem to have no choice. However, the evidence of this conflictedness itself, reflected in opinion polls worldwide, shows that awareness about the need for change is massively afoot across the planet.

The world is entering a new experimental epoch. Interspirituality is only one of the arenas—the arena in which it appears undeniable that religion will need to be fundamentally different from what religions have often been in the past. Can the world’s religions turn to their shared, profound, and universal understanding of values—the simple standards of interconnectedness, love, kindness, and service that are the desire of every human being on the planet, religious or not? This is the question. Will religion and spirituality be part of a global solution, or will it be part of the problem? This question is truly an anthropological threshold for our species.

This is why, in this ezine dedicated to the themes of The Coming Interspiritual Age, we asked our contributors to address their passion—the arenas in which this message and challenge is alive, vibrant, and unfolding for them. We think you will see in these pages a wide and rich landscape in which the challenge of what an emerging new spirituality of the heart may look like is both dreamed and envisioned, described and demonstrated. We extend a tremendous thank you to the many busy and engaged spiritual and social leaders who agreed to contribute to these pages. We hope this ezine will be inspiring for you.

Dr Kurt Johnson, a scientist, comparative religionist, social activist and former monastic, was associated with the American Museum of Natural History and the One Spirit Interfaith Seminary in New York City. He was a close associate of Brother Wayne Teasdale, the founder of the modern interspiritual movement, and works also with the international Contemplative Alliance with Father Thomas Keating. His coauthored book Nabokov’s Blues: The Scientific Odyssey of a Literary Genius was chosen as one of the ten best books in science in 2000. Johnson and Teasdale cofounded the international Interspiritual Dialogue association in 2002, now the virtual Interspiritual Multiplex web resource. http://www.isdna.org.
**Interspirituality** is the *heart* space of all religions and spiritual traditions—of humanity itself. It is an exploration of ourselves so deeply rooted in unconditional love that any creed, belief, background, history that could cause separation between human beings and within a human being, dissolves. It is the next step in our evolution which includes the profound understanding that we are simultaneously independent, interconnected, and interdependent. What emerges is an unmistakable experience of wholeness and oneness that makes room for all of us, all of each other and all that is unfolding. Therefore Interspirituality naturally embraces the deepest practices of wellbeing—love, compassion, tolerance, forgiveness, charity, freedom—and is, in and of itself, a dialogue of deep connection among all people and all nations.

Rev. Jody Lotito-Levine

http://withjody.com/welcome
I was happy to see that The Coming Interspiritual Age ezine uses the definition for “Interspirituality” that I shared with Namaste recently. I appreciate being able to expand on that definition in this brief piece which I have entitled “Instructions Included”. It speaks to the very nature and potential of Interspirituality to touch our lives in unmistakable ways – as its very foundation.

I sense that Interspirituality is embedded in the depths of who we already are. We instinctively know how to open up to this experience. The truth is, we are born with instructions which are found in the interior landscape of our authentic Truth – in the territory of feelings that shape the rhythms and patterns of our daily lives and that have the potential to catapult us into the present moment described as an experience beyond the perception of polarities, limitation and conflict into the mystery and perfection of Life itself. This experience occurs in the territory of the unknown in that we truly don't know how it will unfold. And so, instead of forging ahead with our own agenda, we listen deeply to the one that is unfolding in the present moment exactly as it is, knowing full well that — the path, the steps — and the directions are being revealed to us.

Interspirituality is the way in which we explore who we are beyond the convention of religion and the social norm to this depth of our Authenticity and Truth. It is an ongoing dialogue and journey of self awareness, introspection, reflection, emotional and spiritual evolution that will include growing pains and is often messy, but is also where we will discover the unconditional love and acceptance we seek outside and in others, in the refuge of our own HEART.

Interspirituality acknowledges and addresses the relationship between our personal and transpersonal selves – as it allows for unlimited uniqueness within a landscape of deep interconnectedness. And so the invitation of Interspirituality is for us to discover the truth of who we are via all that is unfolding in the present moment by peeling back the layers of separation that masquerade as separateness and to discover the common ground, regardless. It is the human experience defined as a divine, co-creative, perfect, expanding, limitless expression.
reflected to us in the eyes of the other and experienced by us in relationship to things, nature and each other.

**Interspirituality** presupposes all that emerges in our lives serves a purpose – and *is a reflection of the Truth of who we are* in that moment. This reflection acts as a guide in the discovery of our full potential – as one snowflake in the snow; as one star in the constellation; as one drop of water in the ocean; as one voice among many — that affects the whole. And regardless of whether or not we consciously accept this gift and responsibility, it is so. In this sense we are all **profoundly independent, interconnected, and interdependent**. It is in this sense that we are One.

This is the **invitation of Interspirituality** — to engage in this experience of creation and be **free to love** – the unconditional kind, not the emotionally immature kind, not the conditional kind, but a generous kind. This kind of love is miraculous, in that it is naturally inclusive, naturally expanding, naturally welcoming, naturally open, naturally available, naturally abundant, naturally dynamic, naturally tolerant, naturally forgiving, and naturally compassionate – this is our true nature. When we love we are deeply connected. **It is the energy of no separation – the energy of acceptance – the energy of peace – in all of our relationships, including the one with ourselves; in deep connection with nature, among all people, all religions and spiritual traditions, and all nations.**

My journey in the direction of Interspirituality has been an incremental one of radical inquiry – of asking questions and deeply listening to the answers that inevitably lead to shifts in circumstances and perception, opening my heart wider each step of the way. This endless stream of questions and answers have emerged in a compelling landscape of what it means to be fully awake, fully alive, fully engaged and fully present in my life. My greatest teachers are those of you who have crossed my path who are forever calling me into the present moment and always reflecting back the Truth – and Awareness itself that is profoundly alive inside of me as the guiding energy in my so called life. I am a graduate of the One Spirit Interfaith Seminary in NYC and a member of OUuN where I am an ordained Interfaith and Interspiritual Minister respectively. As a natural extension of my training, I started journeying with others, as a speaker, small group facilitator, counselor and celebrant, through important rites of passage – milestones, relationships, transitions and questions – inviting all those I meet into this sacred territory that is Freedom of the Heart.

[http://withjody.com/welcome](http://withjody.com/welcome)
“I'm very glad this wonderful book continues to draw praise and interest. I support and recommend it”

Fr. Thomas Keating

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Click HERE to watch Kurt as he is interviewed about the book
Click HERE to enter the website

The Coming Interspiritual Age

www.thecomcominginterspiritualage.com

a permanent place for discussion and sharing on the themes of The Coming Interspiritual Age... audios, videos, articles, quotations, discussions
Toward the end of his recent film Decoding Deepak, Deepak Chopra’s son Gotham asks his renowned father if he really thinks he is changing the world. Deepak ponders the question for a moment and then says no. He simply feels that the world is changing, and that he is part of the “transition team.”

Everyone who has written for this e-zine is part of that transition team – and so are you who are
reading it. We recognize one another by our deeply shared understanding that the world we were
given is not the way things have to be. We have awakened to the false separation we experience
as individuals trapped in a consumer culture that objectifies people, places and other living
beings: we recognize ourselves to be citizens of a living, breathing planet teeming with
magnificent life.

We reach beyond the religions of our birth to interfaith and interspiritual knowing that was not
possible even one generation ago. We honor the indigenous wisdom that connects us to the
Earth, while soaring in meditative states beyond imagining. We care for our bodies with organic
food and both new and ancient healing modalities. We heal our emotional bodies, too, often
breaking cycles of addiction or abuse that have been passed down for countless generations. We
take responsibility for
our lives, choosing
gratitude and
forgiveness over blame
and retribution.

We have a passion to
communicate new
visions of a culture of
peace, where humanity
lives in harmonious
relationship with one
another and all life. We
flourish as the
feminine instinct to
nurture and feed one
another comes into
balance with the
masculine energy to
create.

And we find one
another through the
neural networks of the
Internet stretching
across the globe. In
_Blessed Unrest_, Paul
Hawken describes the
millions people joining
together to effect vast
changes taking place
right now as an unseen
movement with no
name. He states,
“Describing the breadth of the movement is like trying to hold the ocean in your hand. It is that large.”

Something unprecedented is emerging through us, both individually and collectively. Each one’s contribution is essential to the whole.

In his book, ³ “The Golden Motorcycle Gang,” transformational success coach and co-author of “Chicken Soup for the Soul’ Jack Canfield goes into a trance-like meditation where he is addressed by a shining being of the future. She says:

“Outwardly, there are still signs of struggle and hardship for the seven billion human beings on planet Earth, but energetically the world has definitely changed. There is a greater awareness, a greater sense of compassion, and a greater sense of connection among all humans. It will still take many years to eliminate most of the earthly conflicts – but rest assured, with the changes you and the rest of the Golden and Silver Motorcycle Gangs have initiated, it is only a matter of time before there truly will be what many have called the Golden Age, or the age of Heaven on Earth.”

May Peace Prevail on Earth.
International Day of Peace
21 September

Journée internationale de la paix
21 septembre

Международный день мира
21 сентября

Día Internacional de la Paz
21 de septiembre
The Community of
The Mystic Heart

The Community of The Mystic Heart (www.communityofthemysticheart.org) is a far-flung association of persons dedicated to the vision and work of Brother Wayne Teasdale. It is associated with the Interspiritual Multiplex of Bro. Wayne’s Interspiritual Dialogue association (www.isdna.org).

The Community of The Mystic Heart was founded in 2010 as The Universal Order of Sannyasa, as envisioned by Brother Wayne in each of these now classic books, as a modern gathering of those committed to a life dedicated to deep spiritual practice, sacred service or activism, and advancement of the InterSpiritual Message—that life in the heart knows no boundaries in creed or belief.

It is a modern gathering of persons from many and varied life circumstances, dedicated to a lifestyle possible and appropriate for them within this deep intention. With several hundred members, it is a work in progress. A new website for the CMH will soon be posted at the URL above. Inquiries should go to Rev. T.S. Pennington: pennints@gmail.com
The SACRED at Sandy Hook?

by Constance Kellough, President & Publisher, Namaste Publishing

It’s the day of the memorial service for the tragedy at Sandy Hook. A kaleidoscope of images flash in front of me as I watch from my comfortable pew at home.

First responders, police officers huddle together, regaining their composure so they can carry on. Children run to see the comfort dogs brought to the memorial service. The various religions, represented by their priests, rabbis, and ministers, convene to contribute to the ceremony. Families and friends sit close to one another, in some cases holding one another so they won’t collapse with grief. It’s a coming together that transcends all barriers.
Humans are social beings, which means we thrive when we are accepted by others and shrivel when we aren’t. What could be worse than to feel alone in the world with no other human or life form to acknowledge and appreciate our existence?

We come together at good times to celebrate our joy. We also come together in times of tragedy, whether personal or collective. By sharing both our good times and our bad times, we experience a truth that underlies all of these experiences: we are not ultimately separate. At such times, we discover that my joy is your joy, my pain your pain.

Perhaps it’s especially in times of tragedy that we most seek the comfort of one another and most offer comfort. Something in us recognizes the illusory nature of the differences that appear to separate us—differences of race, religion, gender, political association, and culture. Whenever we are either overwhelmed with grief or ecstatic with joy, our differences fade like the morning mist, and we see clearly that we share a common humanity. We come to understand that there is no such thing as my pain or your pain. There is just pain, felt by all.
President Obama knew that the most helpful thing he could do was to be at the memorial in person, realizing his presence would bring a measure of comfort to the families of the twenty-six who were massacred that fateful day.

The President wisely reminded us that all children are our children—a truth the mystics of the world’s spiritual traditions have long emphasized. As science has been showing us of late, we are all aspects of one big, glorious self—a truth our ego’s belief in separation has so often blinded us to. In our separation mentality, we have seen ourselves only as an individual body, tribe, or nation that needs to defend itself against others. Times of intense emotion are windows of opportunity, when we most readily break through the illusion of separateness and feel our oneness.

Martin Buber, the Austrian-born philosopher, remarked that, “There is nothing that cannot be made sacred.” Yes, even the tragedy at Sandy Hook.

Beneath the world’s drama, there is peace. Beneath our personal pain, there is peace. However, to experience this peace, we need to allow ourselves to enter fully into our sadness. Instead of seeking to escape pain, if we go deeply enough into our grief, we surprisingly discover the peace beneath it. The peace doesn’t remove the pain of the tragedy, but it somehow softens it.

When we experience this “space” between our pain and this peace, we thereby come to know that nothing, even our pain, can destroy the reality of inner peace.

It’s in the presence of the loving support of a community that we can most safely allow ourselves to feel our pain in its immensity.

At such a time, a miracle seems to happen. The veil of the illusion of separation is torn and we become acutely aware of our oneness. We come to know that love is the common element of our humanity, not the divisiveness that tears us apart. Deeper than all divisions, love binds us as one. This is the unseen yet indisputably experienced “God Particle.”

We are entering the Interspiritual Age, the next great evolutionary leap for humankind—a leap from “I” to “we,” from separation consciousness to unity consciousness. While for some a portal into this heightened consciousness may be the unbridled joy of connection, the connection that binds those in common grief can also be a portal into unity consciousness.

May this be so for all at Sandy Hook—and for all of us who, while not physically there at the memorial, grieved with them.
In the Coming Interspiritual Age

Parents and educators will focus not so much on teaching our children how to earn a living, but on teaching them how to live in a global spiritual community.
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According to the Book of Genesis, the first thing that *adam* (Hebrew for “human”) does is name the other animals in the Garden. Naming is essential to our nature. To name a thing is to make it familiar, to normalize it, perhaps, at least in the world of magic, to have some influence over it. And so we seek to be the first to name a thing and in that way make it ours. And not only things, but ideas as well.

We are now in a race to name the emerging spirituality of the post-religion world. By post-religion I don’t mean a world without religion, but a world in which a growing number have stepped beyond the limitations and boundaries of any one religion. For the post-religionist each of us is heir to the entirety of human religious wisdom, and not just the subgroup into which any of us happens to have been born.

The post-religionist is spiritually hyphenated. For example, while I identify primarily as a Jew, and use the artifacts of Jewish civilization as the main building
blocks for making meaning in my life, my spirituality is a blend of Jewish-Muslim-Hindu-Buddhist-Taoist-Christian wisdom teachings, and my encounters with God are encounters with the Divine Mother, something normative Judaism would find alien if not heretical. So what do we call this?

The name of the moment may be “Interspirituality.” My friend and teacher Brother Wayne Teasdale spoke of Interspirituality in terms of the common “mystic heart” revealed and shared by the great contemplatives of all religions. My years of participation in Father Thomas Keating’s Snowmass Group, an annual gathering of contemplatives at St. Benedict’s monastery in Snowmass, CO, has helped me name that mystic heart through our Eight Points of Agreement:

1) The world religions bear witness to the experience of Ultimate Reality, to which they give various names.

2) Ultimate Reality cannot be limited by any name or concept.

3) Ultimate Reality is the ground of infinite potentiality and actualization.

4) Faith is opening, accepting, and responding to Ultimate Reality.

5) The potential for human wholeness – or, in other frames of reference, enlightenment, salvation, transcendence, transformation, blessedness – is present in every human being.

6) Ultimate Reality may be experienced not only through religious practices, but also through nature, art, human relationships, and service to others.

7) As long as the human condition is experienced as separate from Ultimate Reality, it is subject to ignorance and illusion, weakness and suffering.

8) Disciplined practice is essential to the spiritual life; yet spiritual attainment is not the result of one’s own efforts, but the result of the experience of oneness with Ultimate Reality.

We can, and will, argue over the meaning of Interspirituality and the naming rights to it. We are, after all, adam. But the name is less important to me than the trend it seeks to articulate.

So who are the Interspiritualists? We are the Nones who refuse to be limited to boxes on a religion survey. We are Spiritual Independents who cannot imagine that anyone or any system owns the truth. We are Holy Rascals who dare to peer behind the curtain of religious power, pomp, piety, and politics, and free ourselves from the domination of little men with large megaphones. And we are humble Seekers without Borders who quietly pursue Wisdom wherever she may be found.
We Are All Mystics

by Loch Kelly

In the book *The Coming Interspiritual Age*, authors Kurt Johnson and David Robert Ord discuss the importance of what they see as a global shift in spiritual consciousness that has already begun. They write that “movements of oneness—of unity consciousness—are afoot in nearly every arena, from the protests in the streets to the emergence of a new science and technology.” If we are to survive and thrive, the task for humans is to find the unity within diversity.

In reading their book, we can see that the main theme is not one of theological speculation but about the real survival of our species based on our ability to grow to the next stage of human
development. Religious differences have fueled much conflict and war, however the authors propose not to abandon all religion but instead to discover a deeper and more common mystical spiritual experience in order to survive and grow.

Many of us have believed that we are not capable of this deeper spiritual mystical experience, that the best we could hope for was an occasional moment of peace in nature, or with friends, or at church, synagogue, mosque, or on a meditation cushion. What if this is not true?

Wayne Teasdale says in *The Mystic Heart*, “We are all mystics!” and “we need to understand, to really grasp at an elemental level, that the definitive revolution is the spiritual awakening of humankind. This revolution will be the task of the interspiritual age. The necessary shifts in consciousness require a new approach to spirituality that transcends past religious cultures of fragmentation and isolation.” The great hope is that from the recent bringing together of the world’s contemplative traditions with science and psychology, the principles and essential methods of realizing and activating our spiritual awakening are beginning to become simpler and more effective.

Though we have developed our intellect to create tremendous modern advances, we are beginning to realize that the next stage of our development is to discover a non-conceptual unitive awareness and to drop into the wisdom of our heart. Mysticism is not regressing back to a childlike primitive state. Mystical awareness is actually a necessary progressive type of unity consciousness, which includes and also transcends our everyday mind.

The direct path wisdom traditions have reported that this spirit or unitive awareness is equally available to each of us and within each of us, and also as each of us. The radical mystical assumption is that we don’t have to wait for the spirit, earn grace, or create a new awareness. Instead unitive awareness is already here and it is a matter of learning how to accept it, perceive it and live from it. If we do not consider ourselves mystics already, then we are potential mystics—and if we choose, mystics in training.

If this unitive awareness is already here, why have we missed it? One of the reasons is because the spirit or unitive awareness is not a thing; its essential nature has no shape, size, or color. Emile Durkheim, the renowned anthropologist, believed that human beings developed religions through their perception of the sacred, “a superior realm, impalpable through the five senses but one that can nevertheless be experienced.” In one Buddhist model of consciousness we have our five senses, but then thinking is considered our sixth sense. One of the doors to mystical perception is to discover what or who these *six* senses appear to, and to develop a seventh sense of unitive awareness.

One ancient wisdom tradition from India identifies four natural states of consciousness. The first three we all know well: 1) ego-consciousness, or our everyday waking state, 2) sleep, 3) dream and daydream. The fourth natural state is unitive awareness, called *turiya* in Sanskrit, and it is not included on our Western psychological map. However, once we know how, we can experience unitive awareness just as naturally as we experience the other three states. Though unitive awareness may seem like a new experience, it is not an altered state. We will realize that
our everyday point of view is “altered,” and that by recognizing unitive awareness we are actually dehypnotizing ourselves from the trance of self-centeredness. Through shifting unitive awareness from the background to the foreground, we arrive at our natural condition—what in Zen is called “ordinary mind,” or heart-mind.

What is the result of becoming familiar with this fourth natural state? It leads to a discovery of our basic nature not just as a state but as a stage and our basic condition. Patanjali, the author of the Yoga Sutras, said, “It is when we distinguish ‘unitive awareness’ from ‘consciousness’ that the ongoing construction of the false self ceases.”

One way we know that a natural awareness is always already here is because of those whose ego-identification has been dissolved or blown apart by tragedy or severe overwhelm. They report that a unitive awareness is revealed to be naturally functioning like our breath or our heartbeat. However we don’t have to wait for a tragedy if we can learn to intentionally discover the anatomy of awareness. I have found that this unitive awareness is not esoteric or reserved for the Olympic athletes of meditation, but in fact it is teachable and learnable. There is not one way, method, or tradition that is best for all, but we are finding the principles and pathways to learn and unlearn which lead to making unitive awareness more accessible. Modern mystical practices are developed in dialogue with ancient methods such as “infused contemplation” in Christianity, “just sitting” in Zen, “resting in the arms of god” in the Sufi tradition, and “recognizing your own face” in Tibetan Buddhism.

Unitive awareness can learn to know itself both as formless awareness and simultaneously arising as all forms.

Imagine you are in the middle of a small storm cloud, trying to see clearly. No matter where you move or what you try to change within the cloud, you remain in fog. If, instead, you simply step out of the cloud, you will recognize that you actually have access to the clarity of the open sky. You realize that the foundation of who you are is the sky and all its contents. Once you realize that the sky is all around and simultaneously within the cloud, you can include the cloud without losing clarity.

In other words, when we feel alone in our heads, depressed, or upset, it’s as if we’re trapped inside the cloud of those thoughts and feelings. But unitive awareness can step back and recognize itself as the vast sky of formless awareness. As this vast, open sky awareness, we can then return to include any emotional storm, pattern, or story without becoming re-identified or needing to remain outside, as a witness. When this open sky of awareness is the ground of being and where we are knowing from, it naturally includes everything from within and reveals the natural unity with everyone and everything. After all, no storm ever hurts the sky. And sky permeates even the thickest, darkest cloud.

This is not just a discovery meant for our individual awakening, but it also reveals the interconnectedness of all of us with each other, nature, and life itself. This kind of natural mysticism is the union of contemplation and action. We feel that this shift of perception is also a shift of identity as now we are part of a greater whole, the same world family; and though we
retain our uniqueness, we even realize we are of the same essential nature. From unitive awareness we have the starting point for conflict resolution, cooperation, and mutual love and respect.

Loch Kelly, MDiv., LCSW, is founder of the Awake Awareness Institute and a well known spiritual teacher. A graduate of Columbia University and Union Theological Seminary, he originally studied Buddhism in Sri Lanka, nondual traditions of Dzogchen with Tulku Urgyen Rinpoche in Nepal and Advaita in India. He has also served as the Coordinator of Counseling as well as Interfaith Chaplain for Union Theological Seminary. He is also a nondual psychotherapist and serves on New York Insight Teachers Council. He has been invited to teach the direct path of meditation and awakening by Mingyur Rinpoche and Adyashanti.
Go for the Gold

Harry J. Gensler
I do philosophy. I’ve published a dozen books on logic and ethics. For the last forty-five years, my passion has been the golden rule (GR): “Treat others as you want to be treated.”

GR combines logic and ethics. How so? Let me explain. I’ve had a beard on and off for much of my life. I hear people say things like “All bearded people are crazy.” I challenge their consistency. I ask, “Did Jesus Christ and Abraham Lincoln have beards?” They say yes. I ask, “Were they crazy?” They say no. I say, “You contradict yourself, your beliefs clash, you’ve got to change something.”

GR is about moral consistency and switching places. Suppose I want to test the GR consistency of my actions toward another. In my imagination, I switch places with the other person. Then I ask: “Am I willing that if I were in the same situation as the other person then I be treated that same way?” If not, I violate GR. GR tells us to treat others only as we consent to being treated in the same situation.

Many of my philosophy colleagues dismiss GR as a crude proverb that leads to absurdities when we try to express it clearly. The intellectual challenge is to clarity and defend GR.

I just published a Routledge book called Ethics and the Golden Rule. This is a GR book for everyone: for parents who want to teach morality to their children, for activists who want to reshape society, for biologists who want to trace GR’s evolutionary roots, for professionals who want to bring sense and compassion to their lives, and for religious people who want to live their faith more authentically. There are technical parts for philosophers and simpler parts that use stories to explain profound truths.

And there’s an interfaith emphasis. As a Jesuit Catholic priest, I love that Jesus used GR to sum up the bible (Matthew 7:12). This same GR was taught by Hillel, Confucius, Buddha, the Hindu scriptures, and so on. GR is global – endorsed by nearly every religion and culture. GR is a point of unity in a diverse world.

Harry J. Gensler, SJ, is an American philosopher and a Jesuit Catholic priest. He has published twelve books on ethics and logic. His most recent book, Ethics and the Golden Rule (Routledge 2013), is the result of 45 years of reflection on the golden rule (“Treat others as you want to be treated”). It covers a wide range of topics, such as how the golden rule connects with world religions and history, how it applies to practical areas like moral education and business, and how it can be understood and defended philosophically. Http:// www.harryhiker.com has more information on Gensler.
Creation Spirituality, Deep Ecumenism and Interspirituality:

Reflections from Matthew Fox
It is a pleasure to contribute to this fine 'zine' on interspirituality or what I have been calling ever since my book *The Coming of the Cosmic Christ*, “deep ecumenism.” As I explained in that book, which appeared twenty-five years ago this year, I created that term from working with Buddhist activist Joanna Macy around the theme “deep ecology.” The deep ecology movement insisted on bringing a sense of the sacred into the ecological movement which was until then ignoring the spiritual dimensions of the struggle for eco-justice.

I felt the same way about “ecumenism” among religious traditions. Far too many efforts were simply about reading theological position papers at each other. Enough of this, I said! Let's go deeper. Let us go into our spiritual traditions, our mystics and our prophets, and work out of that deep source. And let us also gather together around issues of shared values in areas of social justice, economics and ecology just as the civil rights movement and the anti-war movement had done. Thus was born the term “deep ecumenism” or what is called here “interspirituality.”

The late Father Bede Griffiths, mentor to Brother Wayne Teasedale who has influenced many in the interspirituality movement, dialogued with me at Holy Names College (before the inquisitor general Herr Ratzinger got me expelled from that school) and this is what he said about creation spirituality. “I have the greatest admiration for the work Fr. Matthew is doing. In our little ashram in India, we read his *Original Blessing* about two years ago and the we read his *The Coming of the Cosmic Christ*. When I met him last year, I said, 'I think his creation spirituality is the spirituality of the future and his theology of the Cosmic Christ is the theology of the future,' and I firmly hold that that is so.”

My own awareness of deep ecumenism began in my childhood as I grew up in a university town (Madison, Wisconsin) where diversity was quite apparent. My parents wisely chose to rent any empty room we had out to a graduate student from another country. Thus I shared my living space as a teen ager with an atheist communist from Yugoslavia (an architectural student), a Singh from India, a Lutheran from Scandinavia, etc. etc. I attended a public high school where my closest comrades were Jewish, agnostic or Protestant. It was clear to me early that religious philosophies are diverse and for that reason beautiful and each of them offered their share of wisdom. I brought this awareness with me when I entered the Dominican Order.

Speaking of wisdom, current Biblical scholarship has finally come around to the truth that the historical Jesus derives from the Wisdom tradition of Israel and that tradition is in fact the creation spirituality of Israel since it emphasizes the revelation of nature itself (and not just the Bible) and it is ecumenical—the queen of Sheba is invoked as a wisdom teacher and she was by no means Jewish. Once we reset our religions in the context of *the sacredness of creation* they take on a certain humility for, as I pointed out in my Cosmic Christ book (and the Buddha nature concept parallels exactly the Cosmic Christ concept), there is no such thing as a Roman Catholic rainforest, a Buddhist ocean, a Lutheran moon, a Baptist sun or an atheist corn field.
Jesus himself is from the wisdom tradition of Israel. He takes for granted the wisdom of nature in so many of his parables where lessons are drawn from deep listening to the sacred patterns of nature whether lilies and mustard seeds, sparrows or sheep, rain or waters. Today, given the ecological peril facing all peoples regardless of creed, race or culture, surely we are all called to return to such a “wisdom” perspective. In the middle ages, a pre-modern consciousness prevailed that was (and still is among indigenous peoples) a consciousness of ecology and cosmology. The question was how we humans fit in to the “web of life” (Hildegard of Bingen)—not how we would exploit mother earth for her secrets and her valuables (Francis Bacon and the modern consciousness). In short, anthropocentrism did not prevail.

Thomas Aquinas in the thirteenth century said: “Revelation comes in two volumes: Nature and the Bible.” It is this prayerful attention to nature's revelation that has been lacking in the modern era which put far too much stress on the “word of God” as words in a book than on the Logos or Word that is present throughout creation, what John's gospel calls the “light in all things” and what today's post-modern science calls the photons in every atom in the universe (photons being light waves). Thus, the Cosmic Christ.

I have tried to walk my talk of deep ecumenism in all my writings, teaching and designing of spirituality programs over the years. We must understand that science too is a source of wisdom—who can deny that the awe and wonder aroused by today's new creation story from present day cosmology and enunciated by such people as Thomas Berry and Brian Swimme and Nancy Abrams and Joel Primack is not a sacred story for our times that lifts us all beyond the sectarian boxes of religious tribalism? Or that the work on chaos theory as enunciated by Ralph Abrams in his book, *Eros, Chaos and Gaia* does not explain much of the patriarchal excess of world religions for millennia as an effort to cage the goddess Chaos? Or that psychology's ability to name the shadow and help deal with it is not of vital importance to spirituality? As Aquinas put it in the thirteenth century, “a mistake about nature results in a mistake about god.” Who then studies nature? Scientists of course. We must bring them to the table of deep ecumenism.

A current example of that need is the irrational resistance of some religious figures to the role of the homosexual in culture and human history. Science has spoken (just as it did on the earth revolving around the sun when the church overreacted by imprisoning Galileo)—the truth is that 8-10 percent of any given population is going to be gay or lesbian (and 464 other species have been counted with gay and lesbian populations), so it is not “unnatural” to be gay and lesbian—except for heterosexuals (and it is unnatural for gays and lesbians to be forced to be heterosexual).

As our spirituality program grew after moving it to Oakland, California, we had on our faculty a Yoruba priestess, Hindus (thanks to Bede Griffiths), Native Americans (Lakota leader Buck Ghosthorse led our staff, faculty and students in regular sweat lodges), Buddhists, Sufis, Protestants, Catholics, scientists, a wikka person (Starhawk who kept the Vatican up at nights). In short, we practiced interspirituality and all were the better for it. Personally, as I point out in my autobiography, *Confessions of a Post-Denominational Priest*, I derived untold benefit from undergoing sweat lodges, vision quests (I report mine in some detail there), sundances, pelting
HILDEGARD of Bingen
A SAINT FOR OUR TIMES

UNLEASHING HER POWER IN THE 21ST CENTURY

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with flowers ceremonies and more. I realized the antiquity of the ancient indigenous songs and earth-based practices as well as their universality (I recall a student from China told us after his first sweat that they had these practices in ancient China as well).

I tried to lay out a vision and a methodology for interspirituality in my book, One River; Many Wells: Wisdom Rising from World Faith Traditions. I was consciously not trying to write a book on world religions—Huston Smith had covered that ground very nicely as had others. Rather, I was trying to bring together all the mystical teachings of the world—whether Buddhist, Hindu, Taoist, goddess, Celtic, African, Jewish, Muslim, Christian-, Indigenous—round themes that seemed to me then (as they do now) essential for our survival as a species. Among the 18 themes I picked were: the Sacredness of Creation, Meditation, Names for God, Feminine Names for God, Death and what follows, Imagination, Compassion, Spiritual Warriorhood, and more. My method was to cite from sacred books or stories of all these traditions including the words of their mystics.

The title of the book derives from the teaching of Meister Eckhart that “God is a great underground river that no one can stop or destroy.” If we remain at the surface, we can easily fall into games of oneupmanship and competition among religions. But if we all journey down our respective wells we come to a deep place which is a common place, the great “underground river” that is not named as Catholic or Buddhist or Hindu but is beyond all names. It is that depth that is called for today. There is where the source lies.

The great scientist and mystic of the fifteenth century, Nicolas of Cusa, put it this way: “Humanity will find that it is not a diversity of creeds, but the very same creed which is everywhere proposed....There cannot but be one wisdom....Humans must therefore all agree that there is but one most simple wisdom whose power is infinite; and everyone, in explaining the intensity of this beauty, must discover that it is a supreme and terrible beauty.” David Bohm, the deceased post-modern physicist, says he owes more to Cusa than to Albert Einstein.

Father Bede Griffiths has often said that “If Christianity cannot recover its mystical tradition and teach it, it should just fold up and go out of business; it has nothing to offer.” He is so right. We must, Easterners and Westerners, in whatever tradition we find ourselves, recover our mystical traditions and teach them. Without the love that mysticism burns with, we will not have the energy and imagination, the creativity and the warrior energy, to defend this rare planet that is our sacred home.

Celebrate the diversity in our beautiful traditions but let no one be deceived that at this critical time in human and planetary history any one tradition has all the answers. Even with science on board we are all stumbling in the dark, the dark night of our species. We need one another more than ever and together we have to forge a new spiritual vision that is worthy of our great, great grandchildren who one day will ask: “Where were you when the earth was burning? When the forests were disappearing? When species were going extinct? Did you cling to old religious righteousness? Or did you contribute to a spirituality of contemplation and action? Of mysticism (love) and prophecy (defending what we cherish)? Of compassion and warriorhood?”
Radical Passion

by Andrew Harvey

It has become increasingly clear that only Sacred Activism—the fusion of the deepest mystical knowledge, peace, strength, and stamina with calm, focused, and radical action in every arena of society, culture, economics, and politics—can be of help in our growing world crisis. Neither a purely "spiritual" nor simply "activist" approach can solve our enormous problems. The core teachings of all the major mystical paths make it clear that there is, within human beings, an enormous unused reservoir of pure divine power, the pure power of sacred wisdom consciousness, passion, and compassion--the power of what Jesus called the kingdom of heaven, and of when in Hinduism is known as bliss-consciousness. These core teachings also reveal that if we can learn how to use this power--or rather how to let it use us as its luminous instruments—we will harness the "energies of love" and discover for ourselves how a clear, focused, purified, divine passion devoted to transformative action on all levels can birth a new world.

Anyone who has studied the history of Christianity and surveys the state of the contemporary churches operating supposedly in Jesus’ name knows that this extremely radical vision has been betrayed. And yet, an unbroken line of mystics who awoke to Christ consciousness – from the early apostles through the Desert Fathers to St. Frances, Teresa of Avila, St. John of the Cross and Jan Van Ruysbroeck – kept alive the outrageous truth of what Jesus announced both in his words and in his miraculous and healing actions. And in the twentieth century, Thomas Merton, Teilhard de Chardin and Father Bede Griffiths were inspired by their growing initiation into the full embodied passion of Christ consciousness to imagine a new future for humanity, a birth on earth and in the body of the Divine Human.

Andrew Harvey talking with Fr. Bede Griffiths
I was given an insight into the marriage of the Light with every aspect of the psychic and physical life by the Dalai Lama in a conversation in Oslo, Norway. In a time as drastic as ours, union with the Transcendent alone, without the Descent that marries the Light to our most chaotic impulses and to the depths of the body, will not and cannot be enough. We have seen throughout human history how mystics of all traditions have used bliss and gnosis as a kind of subtle heroin, as an intoxication that allows them to dismiss the body and all earthly realities as “illusion” and so leave them untransformed. As Satprem writes in *Sri Aurobindo, or The Adventure of Consciousness*: “We have denied the divinity of matter to confine it in our holy places and now matter is taking its revenge. If we accept this imbalance there is no hope for the earth. We will swing from one pole to the other – both equally false – from material enjoyment to spiritual austerity without ever finding our plenitude. We need both the vigor of matter and the fresh waters of the spirit.”

The “marriage” the Dalai Lama spoke of—that Jesus describes in the Gospel of Thomas and Satprem calls for—between our left and right brains, between the “outer” and “inner” sciences, between the “vigor” of matter and the “fresh waters” of the spirit, between “body” and “soul” can only take place at its most mutually transformatory depth through a descent into everything that “disturbs” it in ourselves and in the world. The great hope that we discover if we dare this path is that this marriage of “opposites” although difficult, frustrating, bewildering and sometimes painful is not impossible; the great birthing energies and incessant grace of the Divine Light itself guides, protects, sustains and nourishes us through everything.

What must happen now is that millions of us must be compelled awake by the growing disaster of our own making to understand that the way forward is, as Jung said, the way *through*—the way through a naked acknowledgment of our responsibility for our actions and the addictions and lust for power that propelled them that, if it is united with conscious connection with the Divine Light and its grace, will not only help us preserve ourselves and nature, but transform us into being conscious, humble, co-creators of an increasingly just and peaceful world.

This is the future that the divine within and without us is preparing for us in the crucible of an exploding crisis that is at once a death of all our illusions about ourselves and our powers and a potential birth in us of an embodied divine love and wisdom. In seeing this potential clearly and
in undergoing joyfully and with faith whatever ordeal is necessary to incarnate it lies a hope more powerful and in Jesus’ words more “astonishing” than any that has yet guided, inspired and infused us.

One night in a dream I saw two rivers of flame meet in a sea of boiling fire and heard the words “when the two fires meet a third fire is created more powerful than either.” When I awoke and meditated on what I had dreamed I understood that these two fires were the fire of the mystic’s passion for God and the fire of the activist’s passion for justice and that in the fire that I had experienced in Coimbatore these two fires were fused. In the greatest of human beings, in Jesus, Rumi, the Buddha and in beings in our own age such as Nelson Mandela and the Dalai Lama and Martin Luther King, these two fires, kept apart in so many ways both by conservative religious establishments and by purely secular visions of activism were fused in a “third fire”—the fire of wisdom and love in action.

This third fire was, I realized, the key to preparing and transforming the human race. If the fire of the mystic’s passion for God could be fused with the activist’s passion to see justice done and capacity for sacrifice in the real world, then a new kind of human being would be born. This human being would be grounded in universal, all-embracing, mystical truth, and would be acting for justice in a local context with a global consciousness, beyond national or tribal or religious boundaries. The mystic’s shadow of addiction to being would be healed by the activist’s focus on doing. The activist shadow of addiction to doing would be infused and balanced and transformed by the mystic’s surrender to divine wisdom and joy. The fusion of the mystic’s passion for God with the activist’s passion for justice in the third fire of divine love and wisdom in action would heal increasingly the tragic split in our modern consciousness between masculine and feminine, body and soul, light and matter, inner and outer wisdom, passion and peace, inner contemplation and outer action.

What fills me with hope is that millions of human beings are now, in the fire of our current financial and environmental crises, waking up to the need for inner and outer transformation making the quantum evolutionary leap I have been describing possible. The time for the Birth of Sacred Activism on a global scale has arrived. Everything is now at stake and everything is possible.

[This article has been excerpted from Radical Passion, The Hope, and other writings and commentary by Andrew Harvey and reprinted by permission of the author.]

Andrew Harvey's life's work bridges the great divide between spiritual resignation and engaged spiritual activism. A manifesto for the transformation of the world through the fusion of deep mystical peace with the clarity of radical wisdom, his writings are a wake-up call to put love and compassion to urgent, focused action. He is founder of the Institute for Sacred Activism (www.andrewharvey.net) and the author of nearly twenty well known books, including The Return of the Mother, Son of Man: The Mystical Path to Christ and, most recently The Hope and Radical Passion.
“Hi, Bizah!” greeted Akina. “Fancy meeting you now, because I was just heading to your house to ask you to join me for tea.”

“No kidding,” Bizah replied with surprise. “Why, I was just heading to your place to ask you to do the same thing. Funny how we both were prompted to invite each other to tea at the same time.”

“Well, we have become close friends, Bizah, and do share with each other at a deep level. Because of this, we are really not separate in our consciousness anymore.”

“I guess you are right, Akina. Okay, let’s try this: where would I prefer to have tea with you? At your place or mine?”

Akina became still for a moment then responded, “At my place.”

“Right!” exclaimed Bizah. “Now, how did you guess that?”

“Because I have the best cookies,” replied Akina.

(Follow Bizah at www.namastepublishing.com)
"Distant Stars"
What messages do
the wings of time now carry
What visions do
the deeper dreams foretell
What mischief is
the wounded ego seeding
What brilliance stands
to heal at the open minded door
What leaps life over
all imaginations’ boundaries
What flows love cleaner
than the pure of heart’s desire
What knows more
than any moment’s musing
What continues sending
to us the light of distant stars

Listening,
Marjorie Lipari aka
Rev. Mudra
Mystical Philosophy Rev. Marjorie Lipari©2012
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I consider myself a Mystical Philosopher, as an Interfaith/Interspiritual Minister. I am dedicated to writing prayers and poems daily and have been doing it for over six years. I have been performing, acting, singing, painting, doing photography, creating music and lyrics for well over forty years. I do spiritual counseling, healing work, ceremony and am presently writing a stage solo work entitled "I AM Twins."
It was my deep pleasure and honor to know Brother Wayne Teasdale. As Kurt and David point out in *The Coming Interspiritual Age*, I was graced to be a participant in some of the very last dialogues that Brother Wayne undertook in this life, and they were always touched by grace and love and beauty and deep truth.

Brother Wayne came to see Integral Theory as a foundational theory for Interspirituality, and we spoke often about this important theme. In a certain sense, these two movements were born together, or at least in parallel, with Interspirituality tracing the practical and theological aspects of interweaving the world’s Great Traditions and Integral Theory offering one of the first believable and workable frameworks to carry out this noble aim (hence Brother Wayne’s interest in it).
But there was nothing merely theoretical in Brother Wayne’s interest—he lived what he believed; he walked the talk he was learning and applying daily, and with heroic courage and dedication. The key to Brother Wayne’s success in introducing Interspirituality to the world lay in his bringing together deeply Realized beings from virtually every tradition, putting them together in one place, and allowing them to discover their truly fundamental and universal agreements. The key to Integral Theory was putting all the world’s Great Traditions on the table at once, and then creating a Composite Map that covered all the bases and dimensions in a human being, using each Tradition to fill in gaps left by the others. This Composite or World Map allowed each Tradition to see how they were all “true but partial” aspects of Humanity’s Great Spirituality, and thus gave them all a Grid they could easily hang their own Tradition’s spiritual Truths on, without denying or denigrating any others. Thus, embracing a truly Integral Interspirituality allowed each seeker to be a “dual citizen”—embracing both an Integral Map and their own Tradition’s version of that Map—thus being a member of all Traditions as well as one’s own.

The Integral Framework consists of 5 major elements (culled from a study of premodern, modern, and postmodern maps)—known as quadrants, levels, lines, states, and types. Quadrants are the basic dimension/perspectives that all occasions possess—an interior and an exterior, and an individual and a collective (giving 4 major grids or “quadrants”—the inside and outside of the individual and the collective, represented by pronouns such as I, We, It, and Its, resp.). These 4 quadrants are often simplified to “the Big 3”—I, We, and It; or Beauty, Goodness, and Truth; or art, morals, and science; or Buddha, Sangha, and Dharma; or the Trinity. But by claiming that all occasions possess these 3 or 4 dimensions, Integral Theory claims that Spirit itself can be looked at in 1st-person terms (the innermost highest Spirit-Self or “I-I”); in 2nd-person terms (as a Great Thou, as in Buber’s I-Thou relation); and in 3rd-person terms (a Great Web of Life or Gaia). Neither of those is more real or more important—they are all dimensions of the same Spirit seen from different perspectives (or different quadrants).

“Levels” refers to “levels of consciousness” or “structures of consciousness,” such as Jean Geber’s archaic stage, magic stage, mythic stage, rational stage, pluralistic stage, and integral stage. Each of those levels (in their numerous versions) has a different view of God or Spirit (as shown by, e.g., James Fowler’s research). Understanding which structure-stage a person is at will help understand how and why that person understands Spirit as they do. Again, none of the stages are simply right or simply wrong. Each stage is adequate; each succeeding stage is more adequate.
“Lines” refers to “developmental lines.” Through each of those just mentioned developmental levels, various developmental lines grow and evolve. These are often known as “multiple intelligences”—cognitive intelligence, emotional intelligence, moral intelligence, self intelligence, interpersonal intelligence, kinesthetic intelligence, aesthetic intelligence, spiritual intelligence, and so on. Thus, “levels and lines” go together, with each line developing through the various levels (so that a person could be highly developed in, say, cognitive intelligence, mediumly developed in emotional intelligence, and poorly developed in spiritual intelligence).

“States” refers to “states of consciousness,” which differ from “structures of consciousness” in that structures always unfold in stages or levels of development, whereas states generally just come and go—they arise, stay a bit, and then pass. Waking, dreaming, and deep formless sleep are common natural states of consciousness.

When, however, states are trained, then they tend to unfold in stages as well, and these are the major stages of meditative development. In meditation, Awareness or Wakefulness moves from the waking or gross state into the dream, visionary, or subtle state; then into the formless, unmanifest, causal state; and from there into unity or nondual states of ever-present Awareness.

(This, by the way, is why the developmental stages that Western psychology has discovered—such as archaic to magic to mythic to rational to pluralistic to integral—don’t match up with any of the stages of meditation from any of the world’s Great Traditions, although the Traditions all tend to agree with each other, seeing some version of gross states to subtle states to causal states to nondual states. The reason they differ is that the stages Western psychology studies are stages of the major structures of consciousness; while meditation activates the stages of the major states of consciousness. Both of these developmental sequences are important: the former governs how we GROW UP, the latter governs how we WAKE UP. Both are necessary for a truly Integral Spirituality.)

“Types” refers to any number of typologies, old, new, and everything in between, including the Enneagram, masculine-feminine, Myers-Briggs, NLP techniques, and so on. Any of the types in any of those can occur at any level or line, and so they are an additional aspect needed to be included. People at different types usually have different approaches to spirituality (although again, none are inherently “the best”).

As we said, few if any of the Great Traditions cover all these bases. For the Composite or World Map, each was used to fill in the gaps in the others (along with Western psychology and other disciplines). This is why “dual citizenship” is generally so important for any spiritual seeker—it’s important to understand where one is on each of those 5 major dimensions, which are fully compatible with the major tenets of one’s own background Faith. By filling out one’s
Faith using the Integral Framework, one can immediately make their Faith “integral” or “comprehensive” or “holistic” or “interspiritual”—as well as bring it up to speed in the modern and postmodern world. Of course, any number of other dimensions and variables can be added to this Framework; it is simply a model of the minimum one needs to generate a World Spirituality.

But in creating a worldwide Integral Framework for spirituality, we have the (or at least a) foundational Framework for an Interspiritual approach to Spirit or ultimate Being. We can see 1st-, 2nd-, and 3rd-person perspectives on Spirit, and see each of those develop through various levels and lines. Further, we can approach that universal Spirit in direct experiential terms by developing through the various states of consciousness, with each deeper state coming “closer” to ever-present Spirit, and opening us to a deeper Presence in the timeless Now. Meanwhile, the spiritual intelligence structures of consciousness give us higher and wider and increasingly sophisticated and mature interpretations of the various spiritual states, moving from an archaic view to a magical view to a mythic-literal view to a rational view to a pluralistic view to an integral view—with each increasing view capable of taking more and more perspectives, resulting in increasing capacities of love, consciousness, compassion, care, gratitude, and service. Moreover, the Integral Framework allows us to see the many commonalities in the world’s Great Traditions, as well as act to fill in any gaps each of them might have missed. This is truly an Interspiritual approach to the Ground of Being, and one made available only recently in humankind’s history, making this a very exciting time to be alive! And a time to be very grateful to Brother Wayne (and so many other integral pioneers) for making us all more aware of the extraordinary possibilities—and responsibilities—that this entails.

The Princeton psychologist Julian Jaynes (1920-1997) dedicated his life to understanding the origin and nature of consciousness, culminating in his popular and controversial book, *The Origin of Consciousness in the Breakdown of the Bicameral Mind*. In it he proposed that consciousness was not biologically innate but a learned process based on language and a relatively recent development historically.

Jaynes initially began his search for consciousness conducting experiments with animals such as protozoa and flatworms. He later realized he was not studying consciousness in these animals at all, yet this period nonetheless helped him to refine his definition of the term. Jaynes asserts that the reason for much of the ongoing confusion over the nature of consciousness is the failure to
properly define it. This problem continues today, with speakers at consciousness conferences rarely defining consciousness directly and often discussing consciousness in ways that imply dramatically different definitions.

Jaynes sets about defining consciousness by first clarifying what it is not. First, Jaynes demonstrates that consciousness is not all mentality. Things like vision, movement, and even speech are all accomplished without consciousness. Further, Jaynes argues that it is a mistake to equate consciousness with sense perception, as even white blood cells are able to react to their environment and would therefore have to be considered conscious. Second, Jaynes argues that consciousness is not a copy of experience, pointing out the absence of memories we have for common things we encounter such as which letters are associated with the numbers on a telephone, or the fact that our memories of certain events, such as swimming, often take a different point of view than the actual experience. Third, Jaynes explains that consciousness is not necessary for learning. Conditioned responses happen outside of consciousness, as does learning motor skills such as typing. Finally, Jaynes argues that consciousness is not necessary for thinking or reasoning. While this notion is at first counter-intuitive, Jaynes describes experiments that show that when making a judgment — for example between which of two weights is heavier — the solution comes automatically. Similarly, when viewing a series, for example of geometric shapes, the determination of which figure comes next happens automatically and without introspection. Furthermore, scientists and others often experience solutions to problems in a flash of insight, often when not even thinking about the problem. Consciousness may be involved when setting up the problem, then during a period of incubation (often during sleep), the solution to the problem is resolved outside of consciousness.

Jaynes concludes that consciousness is not an all or nothing proposition that evolved biologically, but rather a package of features that are learned through metaphorical language and taught to each successive generation. These features include an analog ‘I’ (that can move about

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in mind-space in the same way the bodily ‘I’ can move about in actual space), narratization (the analogic simulation of actual behavior), spatialized time (how we locate events and our lives on a timeline), as well as others, such as concentration, suppression, excerption, and consilience. It is through metaphorical language that we establish the inner world that allows us to introspect.

When did this inner world first appear? In looking at the oldest reliable texts, Jaynes found that consciousness disappears in the oldest layers of the *Iliad*. There is no evidence of introspection, no concept of will, and the body is referred to by various parts but never as a whole. Furthermore, words that in a later age come to refer to things related to the mind all have more concrete meanings in the *Iliad*. For example, the word *noos*, which comes to mean conscious mind, originally comes from the word *noeein*, which means to see.

This, together with a great deal of anthropological evidence, led Jaynes to a comparatively recent date for the development of subjective consciousness — roughly 1200 B.C. in areas such as Greece, Egypt, and Mesopotamia. The work of other scholars provides additional support for this dating. According to the historian Chester Starr, for example, the Greeks did not develop the modern concept of history until as recently as 800 B.C. The development of consciousness has been documented in China during roughly the same time period by the sinologist Michael Carr. In the Americas and in isolated places such as Easter Island, evidence suggests that consciousness developed even more recently.

This recent date for the development of consciousness is at first startling. If consciousness developed this late, how was anything accomplished in the ancient world? Prior to the development of consciousness (keeping in mind Jaynes’s precise definition), Jaynes argues that humans could communicate, learn, organize, and problem-solve, but did so without introspection. Behavior was largely habitual, but during the stress of decision making, the brain used language to convey experience from the right hemisphere to the left hemisphere in the form of verbal commands. So rather than introspecting upon a course of action, people in ancient civilizations were directed by verbal commands that they interpreted as that of their leader, king, dead ancestors, or the gods. Today we call these voices auditory hallucinations.

According to Jaynes, at this time the brain hemispheres operated in a less integrated manner than they do today. Ancient man had a “god-side” (right hemisphere) and a “man-side” (left hemisphere) and neither side was conscious. Jaynes calls this earlier mentality the “bicameral mind,” based on the metaphor of a bicameral legislature. Jaynes believes the bicameral mind evolved along with language as a method of focusing attention as well as a form of social control for the agricultural-based societies that emerged around 9000 B.C. It was not until
language developed to a certain level of complexity, writing emerged and became widespread, and populations grew to sizes no longer manageable, that the bicalmer mentality broke down and consciousness was learned as a more effective way of dealing with novel situations.

Initially shocking, Jaynes supports his re-interpretation of human history and psychology with a wide range of evidence. Jaynes notes studies in which hallucinations were evoked through stimulation of the right temporal lobe. An analysis of ancient texts such as the *Iliad* and the Old Testament provide many examples of individuals who, in times of stress or decision making, are provided direction by a hallucinatory voice (interpreted as that of a god). In Egypt, we see the hallucinatory guiding voice described as a person’s *ka*. Later, in Rome, it was referred to as one’s *genius*. Idols, viewed not as representations of gods but as the gods themselves, were widespread and served as hallucinatory aids. Furthermore, dreams in the ancient and modern world show a stark contrast. Dreams during the bicalmer period consisting of visitation dreams, where the dreamer perceives himself as asleep in bed and then visited by a god or spirit who issues a command; it is not until after the advent of consciousness that the dream experience changes to perceiving oneself acting out events in other locations. Evidence suggests that children’s dreams go through a similar transition as they acquire language.

Jaynes presents evidence that after the transition from bicalmerality to consciousness, hallucinations were suppressed in most people, resulting in the widespread loss of hallucinatory guidance. Oracles, prophets, and divination emerged as an attempt to discern the will of the now-silent gods, and ancient texts such as the *Ludlul Bel Nemequii* chronicle the departure of the gods. Later, religious reformers such as Jesus promoted the concept of one God to replace the many gods previously heard and worshipped, and the world’s modern religions emerged to fulfill the longing for the lost direct connection with the gods.

Remnants of the transition from bicalmerality to consciousness remain all around us. Vestiges of the bicalmer mind can be seen in a wide range of phenomena such as the occasional hallucinations heard by normal, non-psychotic people, the command hallucinations of schizophrenia patients, the loss of personal authorization in hypnosis, related trance state such as “possession” and poetic frenzy, the imaginary companions of children, and the nostalgic quest of modern religions for the lost voices of the gods.

It is not an overstatement to say that a tribe of people is coalescing around the world to celebrate a shift in consciousness from religious separation to interspiritual connection. Many of us have been pilgrims on this path for decades—sometimes feeling alone in the wilderness, sometimes gathering with other seekers who are similarly drawn to worshipping the sacred in every single holy house we encounter. Now, at last, our numbers seem to be reaching a tipping point and what was a fringe phenomenon is becoming a global movement.

The interspiritual movement is characterized as much by what it is not as what it is. It is not a new religion; in fact many of its most enthusiastic adherents consider themselves “spiritual but not religious.” It has no creed or dogma, no tenets or prohibitions. No special attire sets it apart and no single symbol represents its core philosophy. Its membership is as diverse as the full spectrum of humanity. It is not about belief, but action. And the only action required is love.

Critics of religious pluralism have questioned the validity of looking for the unifying scriptures, beliefs, and practices at the heart of all the world’s religious traditions. They suggest that those of us who are dedicated to interspirituality, in our efforts to invite everyone to the table and give each faith an equal voice, run the risk of diluting all that rich diversity and ending up with a mealy mush that tastes sweetish but lacks any real substance. This analysis strikes me as an artifact of Aristotle’s Law of the Excluded Middle—in other words, a malady of the Western Mind. It ignores the very real fact that seemingly mutually exclusive propositions, on closer examination and engaging the tools of radical inquiry, reveal a common wisdom at their core. This is the Paradox of the Perennial!
Here is what I find so powerful—even revolutionary—about the Interspiritual Movement. It does not insist that all the world’s religions are the same. Rather, it reveals that all the world’s religions recognize and proclaim that all beings are one. It is in this sense that the Interspiritual Path is unifying.

And during these times of strife (that is, the entire course of human history) we need this unifying power more urgently than ever. So, let us embrace the unity in the diversity, honoring the carefully constructed ritual containers of all the world’s wisdom ways, and seeking the treasures of love that connect us all.

"God of Love: A Guide to the Heart of Judaism, Christianity and Islam by Mirabai Starr (Monkfish Book Publishing Company) celebrates the common wisdom streams of the three monotheistic traditions."
The Children of the World

Let us go up on the mountain... May all things be a source of peace!

Entreat Us to Be at Peace
Blessed are Peacemakers for they are the children of God...
Great Spirit... spirit of Peace....
Those who walk on the earth with love and humility... We address them with "Peace"
Almighty and Great, you are the cornerstone of peace...
Shanti, Shanti, unto all! May there be peace on earth...
we pray will come to all our brothers and sisters...
Oh Enlightened Ones, bring peace!
THE MYSTIC HEART:
The DIVINE, EARTH, and HUMANITY

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MERTON
and
Interspirituality

by Robert G. Toth

Robert G. Toth is a founding Executive Director of The Merton Institute for Contemplative Living
In this article on Merton and Interspirituality, we will explore Thomas Merton’s ideas, and more importantly his counsel to us, as we seek to realize interspirituality as a vision for humanity that requires contemplation, contemplative dialogue and contemplative living for its accomplishment.

In many ways Thomas Merton was a catalyst, a source and resource for the coming Interspiritual Age. At the time Thomas Merton lived, he was a voice crying in the wilderness for interspiritual understanding, acceptance and communication. In his writings and in his example many people found permission to explore religious traditions other than their own which taught that they alone held the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. Merton did not use the term “interspiritual,” but his use of “interreligious” is synonymous with and incorporates the various contexts of Interspiritual. (See: The Coming Interspiritual Age, p.9.)

Thomas Merton believed that it is “absolutely essential” for contemporary society to recover “a dimension of wisdom oriented to contemplation as well as to wise action,” and that “it is no longer sufficient merely to go back over the Christian and European cultural traditions. The horizons of the world are no longer confined to Europe and America. We have to gain new perspectives, and on this our spiritual and even our physical survival may depend.” (Mystics and Zen Masters, p.80.)

He also saw that “There are always people who dare to seek on the margin of society, who are not dependent on social routine, and prefer a kind of free-floating existence under a state of risk. And among these people, if they are faithful to their own calling, to their own vocation, and to their own message from God, communication on the deepest level is possible. (The Asian Journal, p.308.)

This statement is one of many Merton makes about the requirements for an inner life that are necessary before engaging in the conversation. The “interspirituality movement” toward a global shift in consciousness consists of people who have attained some awareness of its meaning and potential. Some have been moved to efforts to advance the movement as individuals or collectively. Others have not.

It is very much like learning to walk. As infants, walking is the activity we desire but before we
can walk we must first learn to balance ourselves. Initially we are conscious of keeping our balance as we begin to walk. Then, once balance is achieved, it becomes integrated into the action of walking and although we are no longer conscious of it, it is there as the essential support for being able to walk.

And so it is as children of interspirituality consciousness. Some who desire to advance the movement move before they have their balance, bump into each other, knock things over and create confusion; and some find their balance but hold on to something for security in fear of what will happen when they let go; and some find their balance, integrate it into their movement and walk in unison with others.

Thomas Merton cautions against action that lacks a deep contemplative foundation. Constant attention must be given to the balance-integration that supports our actions, and to an awareness that no matter where we find ourselves on this contemplation-action spectrum, we are always susceptible to losing our balance.

As we mature we develop a moral conscience that monitors our choices and actions. Integrating contemplation and action requires us to also develop a contemplative conscience that both informs, refines and monitors our moral conscience, and calls us to deeper meaning, purpose and direction in our lives.

A contemplative conscience attends to the balance and integration that supports and sustains our active life. It is our first priority. It requires the kind of continuous attention Merton counseled the discouraged peace activist, Jim Forest, to take: to see the critical importance of your own thinking about what you are doing; that striving to build yourself an identity in your work and witness is not the right use of your work; that the great thing after all is to live, not to pour out your life in the service of a myth; that the real hope, then is not in something we think we can do, but in God who is making something good out of it in some way we cannot see; and that we must not depend upon the hope of results, but on the value, the rightness, the truth of the work itself. (The Hidden Ground of Love, pp. 294-97.)

Merton was indicating the depth of reflection that developing a contemplative conscience requires. But it also requires spiritual disciplines to sustain it, e.g., meditation, spiritual reading, and prayer, Evidence of a developing contemplative conscience is found in the depth of a person’s contemplative consciousness, that is, the extent to which he/she sees the inter-relatedness and interdependence of all that exists and the degree to which that consciousness guides our decisions and actions. With reference to the quote from The Asian Journal above:

What do I dare to seek?  
Am I dependent on social routine?  
Do I prefer a kind of free-floating existence under a state of risk?  
What are the risks?  
Am I faithful to my own calling, my own vocation, my own message from God?
"There are three words that convey the secret of the art of living, the secret of all success and happiness: One With Life. Being one with life is being one with Now. You then realize that you don't live your life, but life lives you. Life is the dancer, and you are the dance”

- Eckhart Tolle
The
ULTIMATE
Revolution

by Rupert Spira
Well over a hundred years ago the painter Paul Cézanne said, “A time is coming when a carrot, freshly observed, will trigger a revolution.”

Has this revolution taken place, is it slowly taking place, or is it about to take place? And what is the revolution to which Cézanne referred? How could something as insignificant, inconsequential and ordinary as observing a carrot trigger a revolution?

Cézanne meant that if we could see even a simple everyday object such as a carrot, as it truly is, our experience would be revolutionized. But what does it mean to see an object as it truly is? The key is in the phrase ‘freshly observed,’ which means to see clearly, unobstructed by the concepts that thought superimposes on our experience. In fact, most of us are completely unaware that our experience is filtered through a fine mesh of conceptual thinking that makes it appear very different from how it actually is.

As the Chinese sage Huang Po said, some 1200 years ago, “People neglect the reality of the illusory world.” The illusory world? Now that’s even more radical than Cezanne! It’s one thing to look freshly at a carrot, spade, house or world, but quite another to consider it an illusion. What did he mean?

We often hear phrases in the non-dual teaching such as, ‘The world is an illusion.’ But such phrases may create a rebellion in us, for we know that our experience is very real. So how to reconcile these two positions – one, ‘the illusory world’ and two, the undeniable reality of our experience?

Anything that appears must appear in or on something. For instance, an image appears on a screen; a chair appears in the space of a room; the words of a novel appear on a page; a cloud appears in the sky.

What about the mind, body and world? Our only experience of them is what currently appears to us as thoughts, images, feelings, sensations, sights, sounds, textures, tastes and smells. In other words, all we know of a mind, body or world are appearances, and all these are continually appearing and disappearing. We may have a concept of a continuously existing mind, body or world, but we never actually experience such an object.

As Cezanne also said, “Everything vanishes, falls apart.” All we know of the world are perceptions that continuously appear and disappear. However, anything that appears and disappears must do so in or on something. What is that something?

Start with thoughts: wherever our thoughts appear is obviously what we refer to as our ‘self,’ ‘I.’ Our thoughts don’t appear outside of our self! However, we cannot see or find that ‘something’ in which thoughts appear because it has no observable qualities. As such, it is open, empty, transparent. But that doesn’t mean it is not known. It cannot be known as an object and yet it is not unknown.
If we are reading these words we are, by definition, seeing the screen on which they are written, although we may not be aware that we seeing it. If we are reading a novel we are, likewise, seeing the paper. If we are watching a movie we are, whether we realise it or not, seeing or experiencing the screen. If we are seeing clouds, we are experiencing the sky. It is not possible to see the words, novel, movie or clouds without, at the same time, experiencing whatever it is they appear in or on.

So, if we are experiencing thoughts we are necessarily experiencing whatever they appear in. Likewise, if we are experiencing a sensation or a perception – and the only experience we have of a body or world are sensations and perceptions – then we are also knowing or experiencing whatever these appear in or on.

In what does our perception of the world appear? In what do bodily sensations appear? Perceptions of the world don’t appear in the world; sensations of the body don’t appear in a body. Perceptions and sensations appear in exactly the same ‘place’ as thoughts, that is, they appear in the open, emptiness of our self.

However, they do not just appear in our self; they are simultaneously known by our self, for our self is not just present but also aware; not just being but also knowing. Hence it is sometimes known as Awareness – the presence of that which is aware – or the light of pure Knowing.

Now, having discovered that all we know of a mind, body or world are thoughts, sensations and perceptions, and having seen that all these arise within our self, we may ask where they come from and of what they are made. What is their substance, their reality?

If we leave a jar of water outside on a freezing cold night, ice will start to form in it. The opaque ice is made only of the transparent water. However, the ice appears to be something separate from and other than the water. It seems to have its own independent existence or reality.

Likewise, the ice has a form and yet it is made of something that has no form. The ice gives form to something that is itself essentially formless. How is it possible for something that has no form of its own to appear as form, without anything being added to or taken away from it? The formlessness of the water has the capacity within itself to assume all possible forms. In
fact, it is precisely because the water has no form of its own, that it is possible for it to appear as this multiplicity and diversity of forms.

Our experience is very much like this. The multiplicity and diversity of experience – thoughts, feelings, sensations and perceptions – appears in and is made out of our self. This ‘self’, pure Awareness, in which all experience appears, with which it is known and out of which it is made, is itself empty, transparent; it cannot be named and has no form, and yet it is the substance or reality of all names and forms.

All experience arises within our self; this transparent emptiness. And the only ‘stuff’ present in our self, out of which all experience can be made, is our self itself. It is our direct, intimate experience that all we know of a mind, body or world is made out of and is identical to the transparency of our own Being, the light of pure Knowing.

And what is present in our own self, prior to the experience of a thought, feeling, sensation or perception? Just itself, pure Awareness! All experience – that is, all thoughts, feelings, sensations and perceptions – is a modulation of the presence of our own Being, the light of pure Knowing. The entire multiplicity and diversity of names and forms is made out of one transparent, empty, indivisible substance.

Just as the screen on which an image appears is usually overlooked due to our exclusive focus on the image itself, so this open, empty, transparent presence of our own Being is usually overlooked due to our exclusive focus on the objects of the mind, body and world – that is, on thoughts, feelings, sensations and perceptions. However, just as it is not possible to see an image without seeing the screen so, although this Presence is usually overlooked, it is never truly unknown. Just as all we really see when we are seeing an image is the screen, so all we ever truly experience is the transparent, open, empty presence of our own Being, the light of pure Knowing. All It ever knows or experiences is Itself.

Love is the common name we give to experience when the ‘other’ is no longer experienced as ‘other;’ when the subject/object relationship collapses. It is to see the appearance of an image but to know it only as screen. It is to attribute the reality of the image to the screen. It is to know everyone and everything as one’s own self.

It is this transparent, empty Presence that, refracted through the mind, appears as a multiplicity and diversity of names and forms. However, the mind is itself a modulation of that very
Presence. In other words, it is pure Awareness itself which, vibrating within itself, takes the shape of mind and, from the illusory point of view of one of the selves contained within that mind, seems to see a multiplicity and diversity of separate objects and selves, each with their own independently existing reality. In other words, the separate self is only a separate self from the illusory point of view of a separate self.

From the true and only real point of view of pure Awareness there is only its infinite self, refracted into an apparent multiplicity and diversity of finite forms, but never ceasing to be itself. This is what William Blake meant when he said, “If the doors of perception were cleansed everything would appear to man as it is, infinite.” This is what the Sufis mean when they say, “Wherever the eye falls, there is the face of God.” This is what Huang Po meant when he said, “People forget the reality of the illusory world.” This is what Jesus said meant when he said, “The kingdom of the Father is spread out upon the earth, and men do not see it.” This is what Parmenides meant, echoing the words of the Bhagavad Gita, when he said, “That which is, never ceases to be; that which is not, never comes into existence.” This is what Cézanne meant when he said that art must “give us a taste of nature’s eternity.”

All the great sages and artists from all times and all places have said or expressed this in one way or another. This is the one true revolution. At the root of all desire for change is this ultimate desire: to know only the reality of all experience; to know only love.

Unless and until the problems facing humanity are traced back to their ultimate source – the ignoring of this reality – they may be temporarily alleviated but will never be truly solved.

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**About Rupert Spira**

From an early age Rupert Spira was deeply interested in the nature of reality. For twenty years he studied the teachings of P.D.Ouspensky, J.Krishnamurti, Rumi, Shankaracharya, Ramana Maharshi, Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj and Robert Adams, until he met his teacher, Francis Lucille, in 1996. Francis introduced Rupert to the teachings of Jean Klein and Atmanada Krishnamenon and, more importantly, directly indicated to him the true nature of experience.

His two books, *The Transparency of Things*, subtitled *Contemplating the Nature of Experience* (2008) and *Presence* in two volumes, subtitled *The Art of Peace and Happiness* and *The Intimacy of All Experience* (2012) are a profound exploration of the nondual nature of experience. Both are published by Non-Duality Press.

Rupert lives in UK and holds regular meetings and retreats in Europe and USA, in which he explores the perennial non-dual understanding that lies at the heart of all the great religious and spiritual traditions such as Advaita Vedanta, Mahayana and Dzogchen Buddhism, Mystical Christianity, Sufism, Zen etc., as well as the western philosophical tradition of Parmenides, Plotinus and many others, and which is also the direct, ever-present reality of our own intimate experience.

This is a contemporary, experiential approach involving silent meditation, guided meditation and dialogue, and requires no affiliation to any particular religious or spiritual tradition. All that is required is an interest in the essential nature of experience and in the longing for love, peace and happiness around which most of our lives revolve. For further information see http://www.rupertspira.com
The first time I set eyes on Fr. Keating, it was from my spot on the floor of a crowded living room in the old ranch house at St. Benedict's Monastery. It was 1987 in Snowmass, Colorado, and we were gathered for a Centering Prayer retreat with Fr. Thomas, who entered and took his place in a chair just feet in front of me. The gentle rustle of monastic robes as he glided by brought back memories of nuns moving up and down the aisles in my elementary and high schools, from whom I had never heard of such a thing as "the contemplative dimension of the gospel." Yet here I was, ready to explore just that, tipped off to the possibility by what, to me, was a stunning subtitle on Fr. Keating's book, *Open Mind, Open Heart*. Who knew?

Fr. Thomas greeted us and began to speak. Almost at once, my entire being relaxed as I sat, quite accidentally, at the feet of the one who would become a teacher and spiritual friend for the ensuing decades of my life. I won't ever forget the moment when a thought arose and swept through me like a tidal wave, changing everything. "This is True," I thought. "I am sitting in the Truth." I was startled, and I didn't know what that meant. I did know that it wasn't about the words. In spite of my confusion, or perhaps because of it, my heart/soul leapt with the recognition, like the baby in the womb of Elizabeth when Mary, pregnant with Jesus, entered her room. I said yes to it. It was a yes that transformed, and continues to transform, my life.
And that, it turns out, is exactly what Fr. Thomas had in mind. In *Open Mind, Open Heart*, he wrote: "Contemplative prayer is a process of interior transformation, initiated by God, leading, if we consent, to divine union. One's way of seeing reality changes in this process. A restructuring of consciousness takes place which empowers one to perceive, relate and respond with increasing sensitivity to the divine presence in, through, and beyond everything that exists." Centering Prayer was Fr. Keating's answer to those who were turning to the East in the sixties in search of a direct experience of Reality that they could not find in the religions of their youth.

In the late 1960s, the Vatican opened a door and Fr. Thomas walked through it, beginning a new work that would absorb the rest of his life. Encouraged by the teachings of the Second Vatican Council to engage in dialogue with non-Christian religions, Abbot Keating began inviting teachers from other traditions, notably Hinduism and Buddhism, to St. Joseph's Abbey in Spencer, Massachusetts, to share their practices and understanding.

The Vatican had also exhorted clergy to work to revive the contemplative dimension of the gospel. Responding to this, and enriched through the interreligious meditation experiences provided by the visiting teachers, Fathers Meninger, Pennington, and Keating developed Centering Prayer in 1975.

Centering Prayer is a modern method derived from earlier monastic teachings that is designed to facilitate the development of contemplative prayer. The monks began teaching the updated method, first to other religious and

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monastics. In 1983, Fr. Keating taught the first intensive Centering Prayer retreat at Lama Foundation in New Mexico, an intentional spiritual community that welcomes people from all traditions. More retreats ensued, and Contemplative Outreach, now international in its reach, was formed a few years later to support the increasing numbers of people who were being exposed to and taking up Centering Prayer.

In 1984 Father Thomas invited a group of spiritual teachers—Buddhist, Hindu, Jewish, Islamic, Native American, Russian Orthodox, Protestant and Roman Catholic—to come to St. Benedict's to meditate in silence together and to share their own spiritual journeys. The intention was not to convert each other, but to grow in understanding and friendship. The interreligious dialogue, one of the world's longest running, continued for more than two decades as the Snowmass Interreligious Conference.

There were no records kept; no papers published, until a 2004 book entitled *The Common Heart*, edited by Miles-Yepez. Over the years, the group produced and refined a document called The Points of Agreement. Fr. Keating wrote by way of introducing them in *The Common Heart* that they are offered "as a gift to all who will welcome them, to all who will use them to promote understanding." The model for interreligious/interspiritual dialogue developed in the Snowmass Conference provides the foundation for the ongoing Snowmass Interspiritual Dialogue, with Father Thomas remaining as a member and guiding light.

"After fifty years in the monastery, this is what I have learned: The only thing that really matters is love. That's all there is! Just love."

Fr. Thomas has been a regular participant and guide in numerous other interfaith, interreligious, and interspiritual initiatives over all these many years of unceasing service, including the Naropa Buddhist-Christian Conferences that began in 1981; the Monastic Interreligious Dialogue (past president) and the Temple of Understanding, where he is chair emeritus and an ongoing advisor, and by which he was given the Juliet Hollister Award in recognition of his life's work in advancing the interfaith ideal. He has published over 30 books and produced dozens of audio and video programs. He has given innumerable lectures, retreats, workshops, and intensives all over the planet, making him truly a "monk in the world," as Wayne Teasdale says.

During this last year, despite the ups and downs of his health and energy, Fr. Thomas has been making himself available to a small group of us that are exploring the idea of a new, interspiritual model for monasticism, an initiative put forth in one form by Adam Bucko and Rory McEntee (http://www.adambucko.com/HAB/New_Monasticism.html). It was during a gathering of this little tribe last June that I most recently sat with my friend and teacher, in another cozy living room in Snowmass, receiving his presence and guidance as pure gift.
As I sat there, I suddenly recalled a conversation with him that took place many years ago while I was in hermitage at the monastery. In response to some of my sharing, he offered: "After fifty years in the monastery, this is what I have learned: The only thing that really matters is love. That's all there is! Just love. Our only job, our true work, ultimately, is to become a more and more transparent vehicle for the transmission of divine love to each other."

In a flash I felt all the power of the revelation again, but with more awareness. "So this is what that looks like," I thought, wrapped in my shawl and the perfection of the moment as I sat on the couch opposite Thomas. "This is what it feels like to sit in/with the transmission of divine love; this is True and Truth." I realized that it was this that I had sensed all those years ago that had set me on the contemplative path. My bow of gratitude to Fr. Thomas can never be deep enough.

I, like so many thousands of others, am grateful to Fr. Thomas for being one of the first and most relentless modern advocates for the contemplative life in all its varieties and across traditions. I see the work of those who are now participating in the emergence of the interspiritual age as building on and carrying forth a legacy that has been entrusted to any of us willing to advance it.

Perhaps most important to remember is that it is not just the legacy of interspiritual dialogue and action that we have been given to carry on, but a legacy of love; of becoming transparent; of becoming a true servant; of becoming a vehicle for the divine in all its names; a vehicle for the good, the true, the beautiful in all our relations. This is the sweet fruit of contemplative life. May we each and every one help each other to grow into such fullness of being as we continue in our common work and on our spiritual paths, whatever they may be. And may our lives become our thank you to Fr. Thomas and to all the great beings who have come before us, showing us the way.
In the year 1986, in the sweltering heat of summer, Wayne Teasdale arrived at Shantivanam, a hybrid between a Benedictine monastery and Hindu ashram hidden among mango and coconut groves that line the bank of the holy Cauvery River in India. He called himself “Brother Wayne Teasdale”, having been part of a community of lay Franciscan monks in New England at that time. Shantivanam was then under the care of the Bede Griffiths, an interspiritual giant, perhaps one of the most influential cross cultural figures ever to walk this planet. Wayne had been studying Bede’s interspiritual thinking for many years and had come to India specifically to discuss his doctoral dissertation with him. This, I believe, was a pivotal moment in Wayne’s life and destiny, for, until that time, while he had been studying the lofty spiritual thinking of India encoded in Vedanta, Wayne’s lifestyle was still grounded in western monasticism and western cultural expression.

Now, for the first time in his life, while discussing the deep intellectual parallels between Vedanta and Christian theology with Bede at Shantivanam, Wayne was immersed in a sacred environment that was completely Indian in its culture. Since Indian spirituality cannot be separated from its culture, which is infused with tradition’s spiritual power and presence, you can imagine why this is so important. And so, one this special occasion, while Wayne sought to bridge philosophical and theological systems of east and west intellectually, he was simultaneously exposed to the sound of Sanskrit chanting, eating on the floor with his hands and living the lifestyle of India’s ancient yogis.

At the ashram, we sang Indian devotional hymns as well psalmody,
listened to the words of St. Augustine alongside Sri Aurobindo, and we meditated for a full hour in sacred silence at dawn and dusk. The cultural atmosphere of the ashram, especially the connection to the spiritual authors of the Vedanta transmitted through the sounds of Sanskrit chants, helped inspired in Wayne a deep desire to actually tap the experience of the Upanisads, not just intellectually, but spiritually. So Wayne decided to don the saffron robes of a Hindu holy man and become a sannyasi, one who has formally renounced the world and devotes himself or herself exclusively to the one Absolute Reality beyond all name and form.

The reason I know this is because I was there. I had already been a monk for two years at the ashram and had tasted the depth of interspiritual experience from having Bede Griffiths as my mentor and close friend. A child of cross cultural heritage, born into a Christian family with Hindu roots on my maternal side, I had discovered the power of the interspiritual path by being guided to Bede Griffiths and Shantivanam. Here, I been inundated with comparative readings from the scriptures of the world’s religions and had explored interspiritual experience through implementing multiple and diverse spiritual practices that had catalyzed powerful spiritual awakenings.

Wayne and I became close friends the moment he arrived. The three of us – Wayne, Bede and I – together with Judy Walter, an American woman from the Midwest, and my wife to be, Asha, met regularly and discussed our lives and our mystical experience. Wayne was already a mystic but something profound happened to him during his stay in the ashram that summer. He felt that he wanted to shed all his attachments and penetrate the core of Indian mysticism. The only authentic way to do this was to take sanyasa, which is a formal renunciation that must be done through a guru. It is an initiation and an institution that is many thousands of years old.

Wayne realized that becoming a sanyasi went beyond his own initiation. He spoke avidly in public talks at the ashram that such an institution was missing in the west, especially in America. Wayne loved America with the passion that would overshadow a patriot. And it wasn’t just America the beautiful; or America, land of the free; or the America that felt it was responsible for the wellbeing of the whole world that Wayne loved so dearly. It was all this for sure, but the real America, for him, was the beauty of spirit that shone brightly in the American soul, the spirit that characterized all that is admirable in America, that intrinsic goodness and selflessness which had made America so loved and appreciated throughout the world especially after World War II. Wayne was passionate that we have a responsibility today to restore this divine image, perhaps an evolved version of it, not only for ourselves, but for the world at large, and an American sanyasa, he felt, might be just what was need to spearhead such a restoration.

The scope of this article cannot address what exactly Wayne had in mind for an American sanyasa, but suffice it to say, many Americans, including Kurt Johnshon, and the whole interspiritual movement that Wayne inspired after his death, has taken the initiative to craft such a possibility in the present and for the future. An American sanyasa should of course be authentically American but it has to be rooted in the tradition of India. Wayne struggled with this, often quite humorously. In recounting some of these incidents, I sincerely hope that Wayne’s message is not lost or rendered superficial.
Wayne’s sannyasa took place on the banks of the river Cauvery in the sacred predawn period known as *brahma muhurtam*. I was present as he cast off his clothes and plunged naked into the holy water while I chanted some ancient Sanskrit mantras and Bede clothed him in the saffron robes of the Hindu renunciate monk, a color symbolizing the color of the sun, the visible presence of the divine in the human realm that rises in our consciousness each morning.

Typically, sannyasis travel slowly, usually on foot, but they vow never to stay no more than three days in a place lest they get too attached to anyone or anything. To some degree this suited Wayne as he was always darting about from one place to another to spread his message. He liked to call himself “a monk in the world”; but because of his incessant motion, a lot of it in the air by plane, I often teased him about being “a monk in a whirl”.

To reinforce this image, unintentionally of course, Wayne would look at his wrist watch constantly during his meditation. I’m not kidding: he really did this. While Wayne, like a true sannyasi, never missed daily meditation, he did have this strange habit of keeping track of time during his sit. Once, when we were meditating with a group of people in a friend’s home, he did not have a watch so he got this noisy little clock. It was so distracting that, in the middle of the sit, I jumped up, grabbed it, ran to the kitchen and flung it into the freezer. “Now that’s exactly what meditation is about: freezing time”, Wayne quipped, and every little while for the rest of the meditation, he guffawed loudly, to the surprise of the other meditators who were already beyond any real practice.

Sanyasis are traditionally vegetarian for they take the vow of *ahimsa* or non-violence. The vegetarianism, not the nonviolence, was genuinely hard for Wayne. When my wife and I arrived in the States, some years after Wayne received sannyasa in India, we lived with him for a while at Hundred Acres Monastery in New Hampshire. We were both vegetarian and Wayne was keen to point out that he was working very hard on becoming one despite his great weakness for chicken. One day, during a meal, I needed to use the restroom. The door was ajar, so I opened it, and there was Wayne, holding up a half-eaten leg of chicken fried in gravy, eyes wide open in shock, teeth sunk deeply into the tender flesh. “But I thought you were vegetarian, Wayne”, I asked. “I am”, he replied as he munched away, gravy dripping onto his chin, “but it’s only part time”.

Those of you who knew Wayne would be laughing out loud at this, and you’d know how true these stories are given his sharp wit and love of humor; but for those who didn’t, let it not fool you into thinking him frivolous. When Wayne wanted to indulge himself, he would quote a classic line of Mae West: “the way I deal with temptation is I give into it”; but his holiness far exceeded such idiosyncrasies. Everyone who knew him would attest that Wayne was truly an embodiment of divine love, and, because he was in touch with a palpable divine presence, and because he worked so hard at going beyond himself to reach out to others, especially the poor and the marginalized, these little misgivings simply washed under the bridge of his intense connection to Absolute Mystery.

Now, is this what an authentic American sanyasa would look like? I honestly don’t know. But Wayne Teasdale leaves behind an awe inspiring legacy. And I’m sure glad that there is humor to go with it. That element, humor, coupled with a passion to go all the way, might perhaps be that American sannyasa turns out to be; if so, I, for one, would embrace it.
Russill Paul leads an annual pilgrimage and retreat to Shantivanam in India. He is the author of *The Yoga of Sound: Tapping the Hidden Power of Music and Chant* and *Jesus in the Lotus: The Mystical Doorway between Christianity and Yogic Spirituality*. He is also the music producer of several acclaimed chant CDs. Russill's unusual background includes training as a monk and yogi in India as well as performing music professionally and recording in the film music industry. After moving to the U.S.A., he served on the faculty of leading edge educational institutions in California, teaching in graduate and post-graduate spirituality programs for 15 years. He now teaches widely across the US and Canada as well as through his innovative *Yogic Mystery School* that allows students from any part of the world to study with him. To learn more, visit [www.russillpaul.com](http://www.russillpaul.com)
The Power of Listening, Brother Teasdale & the Parliament of World Religions

by Imam Abdul Malik Mujahid

Board of Trustees Chair
Council for a Parliament of the World’s Religions

Imam Abdul Malik Mujahid
I did not know him well. But he gave me a very important lesson in listening.

It was days after 9/11 when we were in a CPWR meeting. We were thinking about the future. Everyone was coming up with good ideas. Interfaith people are so much alike. Their smiles, their language, the way they carry themselves is quite similar. So much so that I developed a level of skepticism toward the “interfaith people” as nice people who hang out with the other nice people.

In the meeting, Brother Wayne Teasdale was quiet, listening attentively. And then he spoke. It was the first time I heard him speak. What he had to say literally woke everyone up from “just being nice”.

It is important, he said, that we listen to the voices which are not normally heard. Why not invite extremists to our Parliament? Why not hear from them about their perspectives? His thoughts somewhat disrupted this gathering of “nice interfaith people.” There was a detectable level of discomfort. My own discomfort was a little higher for other reasons: suddenly everyone was looking at me. He added yes, may be our Muslim friends can arrange for those voices to be present.

Now so many years after I am more used to people looking at me like that. At that time I was a bit offended being looked at as though I had some sort of agency of extremists. But as soon as the stares moved away from me, I was deeply absorbed thinking about his wisdom and courage to say something like that so soon after 9/11.

That was the foundation when we selected the theme for the Barcelona Parliament of the World’s Religions as “Pathways to Peace: The Wisdom of Listening, the Power of Commitment.”

The Parliament of the World’s Religions in 1893 was an extraordinary event but an event nevertheless. The Parliament is, thankfully, no longer an event. It is a movement.

The Parliament has evolved to become a summit of extraordinary human beings who are active in their cities and regions for the common good; articulating the best of their ideals and living them in deliberate relationships with other people of other religions and traditions. They come, they listen, they share, they learn and go back to their homes inspired and informed to re-nourish their communities and expand the sphere of their interfaith universe.

The Parliament program is normally divided in three broad tracks. In one track, people listen directly to others talk about their own religion and tradition, a powerful opportunity for banishing negative stereotypes. Another track invites people to share about their relationships with other faith communities; and yet another track discusses the common issues facing humanity and how religions are working with each other to think, provide, and promote solutions.

The interfaith movement is growing by leaps and bounds. Not only people of faith are founding and expanding this movement, but people of no faith, civil society and government institutions are also looking to interfaith relations as a vehicle of human development.
Brother Wayne Teasdale
1945 - 2004
With that in mind, the Parliament strategic plan has included between Parliament programs to continuously engage the interfaith community with a whole set of learning opportunities about interfaith dialogue, organizing and engagement.

As the forces of fear, anger and hate rise, we believe that people of loving relationship need to be stronger than ever and better equipped with the best practices of interfaith to mediate negativity into the positive energy needed for human societies to grow and flourish.

In the global village, a spark of anger can go beyond burning the neighborhood down -- it can create lasting harm. The Parliament might have been ahead of its time in the past, but it is the call of our time now.

And one of the critical issues of now is the challenge of climate change — this requires behavioral change along with good public policies. It is the people of faith who have the most transformative impact on those who listen to them week after week -- and that is a whole lot of people around the world.

We are not about creating another faith by some odd merging of religions. We are about harmony between people of faith for the common good.

Well. We were unable to get some extremist to the Barcelona Parliament. We did not know them to invite them. Probably the CIA knows their way about. But they are too busy playing drones to kill them as soon as they find their address and if not them, their neighbors and lookalikes.

In the 2009 Melbourne Parliament, however, I did present a talk about “The Street Theology of Anger” to articulate the extremists’ abusive distortion of Islamic teachings. That was inspired by Brother Teasdale’s wish to listen to the difficult voices. I was surprised to see an overflowing crowd and was happy that there were not many loaded stares :).

I am a contemporary, non-dual spiritual teacher leading workshops, trainings and events worldwide. I founded the *Academy of Inner Science* in 2008. This is a research institute for the mysticism of the 3rd Millennium in which a synthesis of innovation, the evolution of humankind as well as the Timeless Wisdom can be found.

The aim of the Academy is to connect the wisdom of the inner world with the wisdom of the outer world. I have been collaborating with others in the scientific community in order to find a common thread between the leading edge of mystical knowledge and the leading edge of brain science. In our three-year program called the *Timeless Wisdom Training* we offer a very deep encounter with the timeless wisdom and the evolutionary expression of life. In the future we will open a branch of the *Academy* in the United States.

**The Mysticism of Our Times**

A modern mysticism always carries the Timeless Wisdom within but it also acknowledges that the outer life continues to develop. We need answers to contemporary questions. God – or the sacred space or the mystic depth dimension – needs a place again in our society. If we give this priority in our life everything else will follow. We will establish an economy and a science, a political program and education system that are aligned with universal principles that support.

What does a modern path of mysticism
beyond a traditional God image look like and which path can we take in order to unite the power of the traditions with the evolution of life?

In the postmodern marketplace we are faced with complex global topics of rapid scientific and technological developments. We need new prospects in order to creatively deal with the demands of life. We want to understand and comprehend life more deeply, as it is only when we are in touch with life on more profound levels of our self that we will receive answers to generic questions.

**Thousands of Years of Knowledge Every Single Moment**

Mysticism is the radical path of awakening through all times and in all marketplaces. That is why we call it the Timeless Wisdom: it is independent of the face of time. However, it expresses itself through this face. It is not limited to a specific form but constantly invents itself anew with the evolution of life and consciousness.

Thousands of years of knowledge can be found in the great wisdom traditions. We see an inner core of the principles and the awakening, and we see an outer casing of the culture that forms around it. In all great world religions like Judaism, Buddhism, Christianity or Taoism there is an inner practice of the Timeless Wisdom.

When we understand it more deeply we will see that there are similar principles everywhere, that life consists of being and becoming, that it contains a deep consciousness aspect that is always present. The principle of the development of the souls and the enlightenment of our soul can be found in every tradition.

**Mysticism for the Rational Thinker**

A contemporary mysticism is a mysticism that no longer needs to hold to traditional God images but opens the space for a rational, scientific evolutionary step. It is a mysticism that reaches rational and scientifically educated people – in a way that they do not experience as regression but as progress. It is this mysticism that also has answers to questions of gen technology, the technological explosion, the global world society, etc. When it moves into economy, politics, education, medicine and science this also means though that these areas are engaged in a constant update, because the evolution of humankind originates in this mystic core. This is where inspiration and innovation originate; this is the evolutionary impulse in action. And with this we want to consciously connect.

When we speak of mysticism, we speak of entrusting ourselves to a practice and engaging in an experiment of consciousness. And this experiment will bring us experiences. The person who has an experience does not need to believe in anything. Mysticism is beyond “I believe in God” or “I do not believe in God.” The idea is to devote ourselves to a practice that aligns us in such a way that we see the effects of this in our reality and that these effects cannot be denied. Thus there will be a point in time at which we simply know deep within. Not only rationally but in our hearts —what we might call the “inner science.”

**Great Perspectives for Great Challenges**

Mystics deepen this inner science in such a way, that they learn to understand the reality more deeply from looking within. A by-product of this are skills: e.g. to see people
more deeply, to anticipate situations, to act in a way that originates in wisdom and spontaneity as opposed to conditioned, learned behavior patterns. All this means more intuition, more insight, more freedom. Mysticism appears mysterious (Greek: *mystikós*) because we enter worlds that we usually do not perceive. The mystic dimension is just the dimension in which we happen without knowing that we happen in it. That is why it is mysterious and draws skills forward that often appear wonderful to us.

The true mystics of all times were, and are, very radical people since mysticism challenges habits anew again and again, so that we stay in the flow of evolution. Habits, individual or cultural, are opposed to the evolutionary flow: we form them, identify with them and would love to anchor them in this way. But life is permanent movement. Life constantly puts up pressure in order to develop us further. If we do not do this, tensions, symptoms and also illnesses occur. If we evolve further expansion happens and we are in the flow. The mystic texts describe the wisdom also as flow of life. This means that we can become conscious in always deeper levels of our self and develop our potential.

**A Sustainable Global Society**

We can evolve from the basis of the alignment before a crisis comes and no longer need pressure in order to take the next steps. It is essential to learn this alignment in order to be able to transform our society into a sustainable global society. Otherwise we will deal with all questions of our lives exclusively from the place of human values and not from that of the more comprehensive, divine ones. This could be too limited and lead to great problems. We need the Timeless Wisdom for the topical questions because the Wisdom is the only place that has a great enough perspective to deal with all the achievements of our modern times.

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He is former chair of the Council of Islamic Organizations of Greater Chicago, and has written extensively on religion, public policy and applied aspects of Islamic living.

Imam Mujahid has initiated a joint campaign between American Muslims and the National Organization of Women to declare rape a war crime.

“He brings to the chair a deep commitment to his own faith tradition,” the Rev. Dr. Lesher said. “He is a recognized leader in that tradition. He has an understanding of how religion is a force in American society and also in societies throughout the world.”
A Tribute to

Brother Wayne Teasdale

by Bill Gorakh Hayashi

Brother Wayne was a friend and teaching colleague of mine at Columbia College Chicago. His Presence was always one of alertness, respect, and gentle kindness. There are several memories that come to mind which account for this general impression.
First of all Wayne seemed to know and welcome everybody, usually by name, whether it be fellow professor, student, or street person. He always greeted everyone with the same respect and love and almost always by their first names. He had an uncanny way of knowing and remembering the names of waiters and people offering service. He greeted them with the same warmth and delight he would have fellow clergy.

I remember visiting him once at his apartment when there was a sudden rap on the door. When he opened it, it was a street-person I recognized by the name of Henry. Wayne greeted Henry warmly and then regretfully told him that he had a current visitor, but that if Henry wanted to come back after 6 PM, he'd certainly be free to talk with him then. Henry agreed and I'm sure returned.

Wayne's friendliness extended equally to all living creatures. I recall once walking down a street with him and his noticing a dead bird that had apparently flown into a store window. Wayne appeared so distressed and sorry and immediately took out his handkerchief and very gently picked up the bird and said that he would give it a proper burial. I'm sure he did, and with appropriate prayers.

What also touched me about Wayne was his innocent and almost vulnerable candor. I remember his coming up to me after a faculty meeting and whispering in my ear to please say a prayer for him since his cancer had returned and he believed it was very serious. There was not the slighted tinge of self-pity nor protest in his voice.

Wayne also usually wore street clothes, but once I saw him in his orange monk's robes. Never having seen this, I commented on it and he immediately spun around and showed off his vestments with childlike delight and innocence. This on a busy sidewalk in Hyde Park, mind you.

Visiting him in his hospital room when it was clear that his transition was impending, I asked him if there were any teachings or reflections he wanted to share. At this point, unable to speak, he beckoned to me to give him pen and paper. When I did, he wrote out this remarkable phrase: "God is infinite sensitivity." This again when he was fully aware of his approaching demise.

I also recall his telling me about a dream or vision that kept reoccurring. He would be standing on the edge of a high cliff and would, for no particular reason, let himself fall off of it into the open air. He asked me what I thought it might mean. I told him that, perhaps, because of the great work he had done, when it was time for him to leave this plane, the vision meant he would gently let himself fall into the open, embracing arms of the Lord.

Apparently on the morning he had left his body, his caregivers found him with the sun shining on his face with an expression of great peace and love and a very gentle smile on his lips. He had apparently "let go" in "full faith" and "all-embracing acceptance."
Those who are concerned that their particular identities will be threatened if they consent, let alone admit, to the concept that the One God or One Truth that defines their being and their community of believers is in fact the same One for everyone, have not experienced God. Neither do they understand that God already exists and existed long before their traditions arrived on the planet, and exists throughout the Cosmos.

People so often talk of an historical God, and the rituals and prayers that grow out of a tradition. But there is a deep difference between faith or belief, and the knowing that comes from experience: when the Power which is God manifests, in any one of countless ways and forms, before you. For the Formless One – Infinite beyond birth and death – not subject to time and space – cannot be “known” by our logical mind, but experienced though our inner practice.

Baba Virsa Singh ji’s message was always, “Turn within.”

I would like to tell you with love that all of us should turn within. There is so much inside us – so much that there are no limits. But we always run outside. Everything is within you. The benefit you will get from within, you will not get from outside.

God dwells within us. God is neither in a particular building nor in a particular country. God is omnipresent. He is always giving light within us; and when we will look from our inner light,
we will see that He is giving light everywhere.

If you mediate and see the Light, you will surely talk with trees, with animals, with the earth, and with the seas. Why? Because the love of God speaks in everything.

I told Steve Prothero that I understood why he omitted Sikhism from his book, as its declaration of faith – one God – is antithetical to his thesis. And then told him that those who declare God is not one have been talking with those running around the base of the “Mountain” trying to attract followers much like hawkers at a fair. They have never been up the mountain and perhaps don’t even know the path to get there. Those who have come down from the Mountain, have never said there is more than one God. They always bring the Light for everyone.

We are so afraid of losing our identities and our power – and yet our identity without experiencing the God within us is false, based on the transient external material experience. It continually reinforces our boundaries and causes conflict from our egocentric, ethnocentric, and might I add, geopolitical perspectives.

Babaji could never understand the idea of conversion: “What is there to change when God already exists? We have to change ourselves. The teachings are all there, just follow them. Changing cars won’t improve the driver.”

He encouraged people to find God within their own tradition – as Guru Granth Sahib teaches: All revelations are true – the Bible, Torah, Koran, Vedas, and Sutras are true. What’s false are those who misinterpret their message.

Without the inner vision, the mystical experience from which all our traditions arose, we can’t possibly bring peace no matter how hard we try – for peace is a matter of BEing, and perhaps becoming, through grace.

That grace is constantly present and accessible, but historically it has always been the “hand” of the guru that has dragged us out of our egocentric predicament – the Divine Gaze that has opened our eyes, the Divine Voice that echoes again and again from within every cell, and from
every hair on our body, until our very being is attuned to God’s Holy Name (in whatever language it speaks to us).

Then we are able to see that God is not only real, but the only Reality within all Creation – and can never be separated from it, and it not from us. This is the inner-spiritual path that is the foundation of Guru Granth Sahib and the Sikh tradition – the path of the Seekers, the disciples of Truth.

We are fortunate that in this age, Baba Virsa Singh ji, for the short time he touched this earth, was able to create a model. He not only taught reverence, but through Gobind Sadan, the spiritual oasis on the outskirts of Delhi, he has allowed everyone who enters to experience the Presence. In Babaji’s own words: “Understand that there is a power by which we are speaking and thinking. There is nothing in which this Power does not exist. People have little knowledge of It. But this Power of God, which is within us is also in animals, plants and flowers, in the entire Cosmos.

“Our program is to help everyone understand that this Power is within us and within the whole Creation. When we have all understood that, we will no longer be able to hurt another’s feeling, to commit violence, to deprive others of their rights, or to accept the evil that we see. Why? When we look with the vision of that Inner Power, we will understand that to injure another’s feelings is to injure the feelings of that Inner Power, to commit violence is to commit violence toward that Power. We will feel, understand, and see that Power which is common to all of Creation, which has placed Its Power within the whole of Creation.”

Gobind Sadan has been called “practical religion.” The work goes on to feed those in need. All the food in the langar is grown with our own hands. The farms not only support the mission, but show how to grow out of poverty. Babaji doesn’t feel that poverty should exist – that our worldwide policies encourage the state of poverty rather than alleviating it.

Overcome terrorism by changing the terrorist mind. God dwells within everyone and is King of the Spirit. According to God’s will our minds can be changed instantly.

Overcoming religious conflict – not just by celebrating all holidays, but encouraging the Why can’t Christmas be celebrated in a Gurdwara, and Guru Nanak Devji’s birthday in a church? They belong to all of us – their message is for all of us.

This is the mission of Guru Nanak Devji as enshrined in Guru Granth Sahib “Everyone is part of my community – I see no one as an outsider” and Guru Gobind Singh ji “Recognize all people as one human race” enshrined in Dasam Granth.

The challenge has always been living with God and allowing God to guide us. As Guru Nanak Dev ji said: Truth is supreme, but higher still is truthful living.

It’s sad that even though our traditions teach the path of inner peace, we spend so much time creating conflict. We hope that Kurt’s great work sparks a renewed sense of purpose – and wish
for all blessings that he continue to hold the banner high.

This is a movement in which we speak as one – many voices and many faces of the same One.

We at Gobind Sadan fondly remember when Brother Wayne accompanied by Babaji’s dear friend, Father Gregorios, sought Babaji’s blessings for his wonderful work. In his message, Babaji said: “Whoever has the touch of God becomes love himself. God is sitting and smiling inside you. Someone asked a saint why he was always happy. He said, ‘My friend is such that He looks at me and I look at Him, and He is always happy.’ If you want to be happy, love Him.”

Baba Virsa Singh ji’ teachings can be found in Loving God, Practical Teachings of Baba Virsa Singh ji. Words of Wisdom, and Arrows of Light, available through www.gobindsadan.org or by writing to info@gobindsadan.org; Ralph Singh’s book A Path to Follow, A Life to Lead, chronicles the path of a devotee at Baba ji’s feet. Ralph’s current work aimed at changing the dominant narrative through reweaving our traditional stories and new understandings into a shared narrative for peace at www.wisdomthinkers.org.
Spiritual Ecology

by Llewellyn Vaughan-Lee, PhD

The Interspiritual Age belongs to our awakening sense of an interconnectedness rooted in the deep awareness of the oneness to which we all belong. This knowing of the unity of being, of the divine oneness of which we are all an expression, has long been known to the mystic and spiritual practitioner, but now is awakening within the collective consciousness of humanity. We are moving from an era of separation into an era of oneness, an awareness of the unity and “interbeing” of all of creation, as expressed in the beautiful and numinous image of Indra’s Net from the Mahayana Buddhist tradition:

“Here the universe is seen as an infinite net; wherever the threads cross there is a clear shining pearl that reflects and is itself reflected in every other pearl. Each pearl is an individual consciousness—whether of a human being, an animal, a plant, a cell or an atom—so a change in one pearl, however small, makes a change in all the other pearls, each one both singular and responsive to the whole.”

An essential part of this awakening into oneness and its living interconnectedness is an awareness of how we are an integral part of the ecosystem of the planet. We can no longer afford to live in a Newtonian era of separation that sees the Earth as something separate from our own
selves, as a resource to be used and abused to support our materialistic, fossil-fuel driven lifestyle. Furthermore, the shift from a Newtonian worldview to one based upon the discoveries of particle physics suggests that not only our actions but also our consciousness directly effects the world of matter. We are part of this planet in ways we are only just beginning to understand.

As we stand at the edge of the abyss of climate change, species depletion and other effects of our continued ecocide, there is a vital need to make this shift into oneness: to relearn how to live in harmony with the whole with which we are so interconnected. We cannot afford to continue our present self-destructive behavior that is pushing us towards the “tipping point” of an ecological imbalance with unforeseeable global consequences.

Many people are responding to this crisis—individually and as groups, with ideas and actions—trying to bring our collective attention to our unsustainable materialistic lifestyle and the ways it is contributing to ecological devastation, accelerating pollution, and species depletion. And yet, sadly, much of this response still belongs to the mindset that has caused the imbalance: the belief that we are separate from the world, that it is something “out there,” a problem we need to solve.

In order to go to the source of our present predicament, we need to reclaim our awareness of the interconnection of spirit and matter. We cannot afford to remain in a consciousness that separates the physical and spiritual: we need to return to a knowing of their oneness and dynamic interrelationship. The emerging field of “Spiritual Ecology” seeks to explore this vital subject with a focus on the spiritual nature of our present predicament. We cannot begin to heal the world or return to a state of balance without a reawakening to the sacred nature of creation.

Within many religious faiths environmentalism is becoming an area of study and advocacy, emphasizing, for example, our role as stewards, or trustees, of God’s Earth. However while religiously-oriented environmentalism is grounded in scripture and theology, Spiritual Ecology is a more recent environmental movement that articulates the need for an ecological approach founded on spiritual awareness rather than religious belief. The individuals articulating this approach may have a religious background, but their ecological vision comes from their own
lived spiritual experience. The difference between this spiritually-oriented ecology and a religious approach to ecology can be seen as analogous to how the Interspiritual Movement moves beyond interfaith and interreligious dialogue to focus on the actual experience of spiritual principles and practices. Spiritual Ecology similarly explores the importance of this experiential spiritual dimension in relation to our present ecological crisis.

The focus of this emerging movement is to bring our attention to the world as a living spiritual being which is now in distress. The earth is calling to us, sending us signs of the extremity of its imbalance through earthquakes and tsunamis, floods and storms, drought, and unprecedented heat. These are what Thich Nhat Hanh calls the “Bells of Mindfulness” awakening our awareness to where it is needed at this moment in time. We cannot afford to do our spiritual practice in isolation, in separation. It is not just about us, our own interior practice, but about the greater whole of which we are a part. We are needed to respond to the cry of the earth.

And although we should be aware of the predictions of scientists, the world is not a problem to be solved; it is a living being to which we belong. The world is part of our own self and we are a part of its suffering wholeness. Until we go to the root of our image of separateness there can be no healing. And this comes from far deeper than Newtonian science and the Age of Enlightenment, but lies in our forgetfulness of the sacred nature of creation, which is also our own sacred nature. When our Western monotheistic culture suppressed the many gods and goddess of creation, cut down the sacred groves and banished God to heaven, we began a cycle that has left us with a world destitute of the sacred, in a way unthinkable to any indigenous people. The natural world and the people who carry its wisdom know that the created world and all of its many inhabitants are sacred and belong together. Our separation from the natural world may have given us the fruits of technology and science, but it has left us bereft of any instinctual connection to the spiritual dimension of life—the connection between our soul and the soul of the world, the knowing that we are all part of one living, spiritual being.

It is this wholeness that is calling to us now, that needs our response. It needs us to reclaim our own root and rootedness: our relationship to the sacred within creation. Only from the place of sacred wholeness and reverence can we begin the work of healing, of bringing the world back into balance.

We cannot return to the simplicity of an
indigenous lifestyle, but we can become aware that what we do and how we are at an individual level affects the global environment, both outer and inner. We can learn how to live in a more sustainable way, not be drawn into unnecessary materialism. We can also work to heal the spiritual imbalance in the world: our individual awareness of the sacred within creation reconnects the split between spirit and matter within our own soul and within the soul of the world. We are interconnected with the spiritual body of the earth more than we know.

We will each have our own way of living this connection, this primal mindfulness of our interbeing with the Earth. There is, for example, a simple prayer for the earth: the act of placing the world as a living being within our hearts when we inwardly remember the Divine. We become aware in our hearts of the sorrow and suffering of the world, and ask that divine love and healing flows where needed. That even though we continue to treat the world so badly, the power of the Divine will help us and help the world—help to bring the earth back into balance. We need to remember that the power of the Divine is more than that of all the global corporations which continue to make the world a wasteland, even more than the global forces of consumerism that demand the life-blood of the planet.

Sometimes it is easier to feel this connection when we feel the earth in our hands, when we work in the garden tending our flowers or vegetables. Or when we cook, preparing the vegetables that the earth has given us, mixing in the herbs and spices that provide flavor. Or making love, as we share our body and bliss with our lover, we may feel the tenderness and power of creation, how a single spark can give birth. Then our lovemaking can be an offering to life itself, a fully-felt remembrance of the ecstasy of creation.

The divine oneness of life is within and all around us. Sometimes walking alone in nature we can feel its heartbeat and its wonder, and our steps become steps of remembrance. The simple practice of ‘walking in a sacred manner’ in which with every step we take we feel the connection with the sacred earth is one way to reconnect with the living spirit of the earth.

There are so many ways to reconnect with the sacred within creation, to
listen within and include the earth in our spiritual practice, in our awareness and daily life. Watching the simple wonder of a dawn can be an offering in itself. Or when we hear the chorus of birds in the morning we may sense that deeper joy of life and awake to its divine nature. While at night the stars can remind us of what is infinite and eternal within us and within the world. Whatever way we are drawn to wonder, to recognize the sacred, what matters is always the attitude we bring to this intimate exchange. It is through the heart that a real connection is made, even if we first make it in our feet or hands. Do we really feel how we are a part of this beautiful and suffering planet, sense its need? Then this connection becomes alive, a living stream that flows from our heart as it embraces all of life. Then every step, every touch, will be a prayer for the earth, a remembrance of what is sacred.

Our present ecological crisis is calling to us and it is for each of us to respond. There is action to be done in the outer world, but action that comes from a reconnection with the sacred—otherwise we will just be reconstellating the patterns that have created this imbalance. And there is work to be done within our hearts and souls, the foundational work of healing the soul of the world, of replenishing the spiritual substance of creation. This is an opportunity for humanity to reclaim its role as guardians of the planet, to take responsibility for the wonder and mystery of this world, for its sacred nature. To quote Wendell Berry:

“The care of the Earth is our most ancient and most worthy, and after all our most pleasing responsibility. To cherish what remains of it and to foster its renewal is our only hope.”

Llewellyn Vaughan-Lee PhD is a Sufi teacher and author. In recent years the focus of his writing and teaching has been on spiritual responsibility in our present time of transition, and an awakening global consciousness of oneness (www.workingwithoneness.org). More recently he has written about the feminine, and the emerging subject of Spiritual Ecology. For a selection of articles from spiritual teachers and others on this emerging subject please visit www.spiritualecology.org. In 2012 he was interviewed by Oprah Winfrey on Super Soul Sunday, and featured on the Global Spirit Series shown on PBS. His forthcoming book is Spiritual Ecology: the Cry of the Earth. For more on spiritual ecology visit www.spiritualecology.org and our facebook page: See also short video Cry of the Earth.
At the heart of Interspirituality is an EXPERIENCE.
What is My Passion for INTERSPIRITUALITY?

by Paul Chaffee

Growing up in Asia in a Presbyterian missionary family led to my passion for interfaith and interspirituality, but not for the reasons one might suspect. For two of my toddler years our family lived in war-torn north China, where famine trailed the massive violence. Several years later, when I was in grade-school, I remember liberated concentration camp prisoners who were guests in our home in Bangkok.

Several times as a teenager, I found myself caught in parades of near rioting people, furious at what they had to put up with – in Bangkok, in Calcutta, even in a north Indian hill-station, Mussoorie, where I attended Woodstock, then a missionary boarding school. I witnessed angry, violent people with good reasons to be angry, it seemed to me.

Juxtaposed against the grandeur of the Himalayan foothills, the poverty I witnessed in my boarding school days in India was stunning, violent in a way that beggars imagination. Breaking and setting a child’s bones backwards as an excuse for asking sympathetic foreigners for coin, for instance. I couldn’t figure out why we, in the Christian missionary community, weren’t taking Jesus’ advice and counsel about this unspeakable poverty, why we were not making their desperation our highest priority. I tried to think of solutions.

A week’s vacation in Calcutta with a
classmate is still vivid to me 50 years later: the city’s sidewalks became wall-to-wall beds by nine in the evening. You had to walk in the street. In the markets, kids ran after you calling, “Come see my sister, mister.” The begging was like a plague, the hunger and disease unending. That week inspired a protracted fantasy – if we could but schedule all Americans to spend a week in Calcutta, surely we as a nation would rise up against the tyranny of extreme poverty for anyone.

My respect and love for Asian culture, its wisdom, imagination, and deep spiritual wells came much later in life. Personally, growing up, the violence and poverty I witnessed (and not just in Asia) convinced me that anyone not trapped by these monsters needs to work for peace, justice, and abundance for everyone, starting with the disenfranchised. That’s more important to me than anything cultural, theological, or philosophical. As Gandhi said, “For the hungry person, God begins in the stomach.” With more than a billion people living on a dollar or less a day, the challenge to those of us with full stomachs and a safe home is as resonant as ever. If I’m not part of the solution, I’m part of the problem.

At one level, then, being an interfaith activist has been my way to say that we must transcend our religious differences and become collaborators in healing the world if any of us want to be true to the deepest values of our individual traditions.

Social justice issues, though, were only part of my spiritual formation. The Christian narrative, the life of Jesus, what he said and did, his preferential care for “the least of these,” informs the core of my faith and practice. But this spiritual DNA was leavened several ways. My mother, a choral musician, made music-making as meaningful to me as the New Testament. Her biggest choirs, the ‘combined’ choirs, were always interfaith ventures. Equally important, my father related to Thai Buddhists, indeed, to people of any faith, with deep respect and friendship. Thank God, they were not trapped by their own assumptions and faith.

And finally, as with so many of us, nature has been and continues to be a huge source of meaning and satisfaction in my daily life. If I had to choose the most spiritually alive
experience of my teenage years, it would be the sunny day I lay down in a field of thousands of wild orchids on a mountain meadow 12,000 feet up in the Himalayas. What a gift!

This background, along with the poetry of Whitman, process theology inspired by Alfred North Whitehead, and the interfaith vision crafted by Howard Thurman, gave me important permissions. Permission to wander beyond my own tradition, to relate to and learn from extraordinary human beings from dozens of different traditions and backgrounds, and to focus on the collaborative opportunities religious communities have when we join hands and work together for peace, justice, and healing the Earth and all living beings, causes we supposedly all espouse.

For me, interspirituality is something that people from different traditions can share, a value-added experience which comes from drinking at each other’s fonts. Interspirituality is not new. Some of the language is new, and we’re still working on our definitions and assumptions. In the process, we have infinitely more information and resources at our disposal than any of our forebears. We have access to wise voices in all our traditions, ancient and modern, a luxury just granted in the past 25 years. Writers like Kurt Johnson and Mirabai Starr are gathering the first fruits of this amazing new access and the ferment it’s creating. Still, the Vedas and Sutras, Rumi, Eckhart, Emerson, Vivekananda, and a host of others have offered the gifts of interspirituality down through the centuries.

What must finally be said, though, is that never has the human race so needed to understand and affirm interspirituality than today, on our shrinking globe. The risks have never been higher – the risks of nuclear war, of escalating climate change, of violence in our neighborhoods, of fundamentalism in all its guises, these and more make the human enterprise increasingly dangerous.

It is reasonable, as pessimists point out day after day, to think that we lack the will or the means to mitigate and transform these cumulative difficulties. But as we’ve seen time and again, the Spirit, in our lives and in our communities, is capable of engendering unreasonable miracles, ‘impossible’ resolutions, and opportunities beyond imagination. Being able to support the Spirit in its multitude of expressions is at the heart of my passion for interspirituality. Or to put it another way, interspirituality is the ‘depth element’ in the training we are collectively doing in preparation for a much tougher century ahead.
A Pakistani Muslim Angel

The URI and the Coming Interspiritual Age

by Charles Gibbs

I don’t know his name but I’ve told the story of our brief meeting all over the world. For me, it is an expression of the heart of interspirituality.

He was a Pakistani Muslim accountant who had lost his job and was driving a cab in New York City in the lingering and still fearful shadow of 9/11.
Among my many identities, I am an Episcopal priest who has served as the founding executive director of the United Religions Initiative (www.uri.org) – a global interfaith network for peace, justice and healing active in 83 countries – for nearly seventeen years.

In 2002 in the predawn hours in lower Manhattan, I stepped onto an out-of-the-way street anxiously hoping to find a cab to the airport. The cab appeared miraculously before my suitcase hit the ground. The driver must be an angel, I thought.

A Pakistani Muslim angel, it turned out. He told me his story – the stress of being a Pakistani Muslim in an America that was fearful, sometimes hateful and sometimes violent to people like him. He’d sent his family home to Pakistan because he felt they’d be safer there.

He asked me my story. I spoke about URI. I work for peace with people of all faiths all over the world, I said, including in Pakistan. Our purpose is to promote enduring, daily interfaith cooperation, to end religiously motivated violence, and to create cultures of peace, justice and healing for the Earth and all living being.

We don’t debate theology, doctrine or dogma. We roll up our sleeves and work together to address issues of violence, poverty, oppression, discrimination, education, environmental degradation – all through interfaith cooperation.

We’ve helped bring peace to decades old violent conflicts in northern Uganda and the southern Philippines. We’ve supported women’s rights around the world, an end to girl child infanticide in India, and the education of women and girls in Pakistan.

We’ve sought out the wisdom of Indigenous peoples and supported the teaching of Indigenous culture and crafts in Panama. We’ve worked to provide positive alternatives for young people who might otherwise be lured into terrorist networks in Uganda. We’ve promoted the Golden Rule as a beacon of peaceful coexistence in Africa and all over the world.

We build bridges across the chasms that divide, put doors in walls that isolate, forge friendships – weaving the fabric of a new global community based on our common humanity and a shared sense of the sacred.

When I finished, my angel cab driver was silent for a moment. Then he said, that’s so important. All my life I have been proud to be a Pakistani, but I’ve always felt that more than a Pakistani, I was a citizen of the Earth. And I’ve been deeply nourished by my faith as a Muslim, but I know that before I am a Muslim, I am a child of God.

I responded, I can’t tell you how many times I’ve said the same thing – but instead of Pakistani, I’ve said American; and instead of Muslim, I’ve said Christian.
“We build bridges across the chasms that divide, put doors in walls that isolate, forge friendships – weaving the fabric of a new global community based on our common humanity and a shared sense of the sacred.”

“We don’t debate theology, doctrine or dogma. We roll up our sleeves and work together to address issues of violence, poverty, oppression, discrimination, education, environmental degradation – all through interfaith cooperation.”
As I’ve shared this story all over the world over the years, I’ve said that I believe the positive future for the human species lies in a transformed consciousness that experiences our primary identity as citizens of the Earth (or of the cosmos, if you prefer), and as children of one Source (no matter how that source is named or not named). From that unitary consciousness, we can grow to appreciate and celebrate our distinct identities as diverse expressions of our fundamental oneness.

URI is a global community of people cultivating this consciousness, shining a light into the better future that beckons, contributing to the coming interspiritual age.

Since 1997, the **Rev. Canon Charles P. Gibbs** has served as the founding executive director of the United Religions Initiative ([www.uri.org](http://www.uri.org)). An internationally respected spiritual leader, interfaith activist, speaker and writer, Charles has dedicated his life to spiritual transformation and work for peace, justice and healing for the Earth and all living beings.
Reverend Dr. Matthew Cobb, a priest in The Episcopal Church and Oblate in the Order of St. Benedict, Camaldolese – New Camaldoli Hermitage, is President of Cross Cultural Studies Program, Inc. and web manager for the Bede Griffiths Trust. Matthew collects his mail in Wamego, Kansas and is on co-pilgrimage with his spouse Erica, teenage son and daughter, yellow lab, miniature dachshund and Paint horse. Matthew is Rector of St. Luke's Episcopal Church and a pilgrimage guide to his beloved India.
My first encounter of the heart with an integral lineage holder and cross culture bearer was with Doug Boyd. Doug gave direct transmissions of spiritual consciousness to all who would receive them. Perhaps, it is similar to the experiences of disciples receiving Shaktipat from their heart guru or teacher. My own experience of receiving from Doug was simultaneously profound and ordinary. I simply acknowledged Doug as a yogi or outlier or master practitioner and the outpouring of his own spiritual consciousness came like water on a sponge. Ever since that moment of openness toward divine vitality and evolutionary love emanating from a transpersonal being like Doug, I have devoted my life to carrying and bridging within an integral dynamic matrix. As one who is in this line of work or lineage, I want to appreciate the witness Doug has imprinted for many peoples and now I blissfully bear as cross culture bearer.

“May that which is best for all of life come to pass”
~ Doug Boyd

(4/15/35 - 10/27/06)

CCSP is a non-profit Educational Foundation serving the ideals of intercultural and transcultural understanding
The flourishing of Doug’s vital contemplative vision and vibrant compassionate action continues today primarily with service learning and transformative leadership projects in Mother India and on Turtle Island. Some of Doug’s work is located in several texts: *Swami: Encounters With Modern Mystics, Rolling Thunder, Mad Bear;* and *Mystics, Magicians, and Medicine People.*

In a 1984 article disclosing the involvement of CCSP in the American Indian Movement, Doug clarified:

“...the essential aim has always remained the same: to help create and support direct person-to-person lines of communication among the peoples of this planet. In any case, cooperative endeavor with our American Indian relations has indeed become a contemporary emphasis. It seems useful to explain why. I might begin by summing up: the future of this planet depends enormously now upon the capacity of those of influence and power on this continent to think and act with empathy and compassion. That capacity will never be achieved by circumventing our own historic omissions and obligations in the area of right relations here at home. In the ongoing journey of my people – in our progress along our own path toward peace or prosperity or whatever plans or promises we pursue – an honest and honorable relationship with our own Native American hosts is a required step. Without achieving this, we cannot proceed with any of our sacred tasks – urgent as they are – for this karmic web has become like a wall in our road and there is no getting around it.”

Later in the same article Doug quotes his friend and indigenous elder Mad Bear:

“IF there is anyone on this Earth who can speak for our people, who can talk of our history and our ways, who can tell of our ancestors, who can say our future, it is the American Indian. We can speak for ourselves – and we just may do so if we’re asked. Our people have been widely researched but seldom consulted. We’ve been more a subject for study than a source of knowledge. And now we’ve been relegated to the past. Well, we live here in the present just like everyone else. And I mean here – right here – not in your textbooks or your libraries or your movies. We are here, and you are living your lives in the midst of our tribal lands and our traditions. You will come to know us as we make ourselves known to you.”

Therefore, let us begin again to learn that it matters more how the world appears to the American Indian than how the American Indian appears to the anthropologist.
Another cross culture bearer who encouraged transpersonal realization and demonstrated in his life’s work an integral dynamic matrix was Father Bede Griffiths, OSB Cam.

Bede pictured here standing in the river Cavery, Tamil Nadu, South India taught us how to integrate an immanent experience of divinity and a transcendent experience of divinity. By following in the footsteps of notable spiritual pioneers Jules Mochanin and Henri LeSaux (Abhishiktananda), Bede was able to touch an idea thread that connected him both to a sense of place (immanence) and urged him to go beyond (transcendence) to the Source. Bede truly embodied the Benedictine charism “to seek God in all things.” An interview during Bede’s 1990 visit to the U.S. illuminates this idea thread. Sam Keen asks Bede about the apparent duality and thereby paradox within modern American life where there is this conscious search for the ultimate, yet consistently reducing everything that holds meaning to physical matter. Bede’s response was to refer to his own experience following a recent stroke that rendered him speechless for a week. Bede describes in detail an advaitic (nondual) experience. Bede interprets advaita as the ruin of egoic consciousness. Bede classifies this as a “death of the mind.” From his stroke and subsequent advaitic experience through an inductive process, Bede discovers the other half of his soul, the divine feminine has risen in his conscious mind. Bede proclaims what may be a primer for interspirituality emergence as an interface between matter and consciousness, masculine and feminine, animus and anima, relative and absolute. What Bede discovers is recorded, “facing unconditional love is the real battle of life.”

Why I am so grateful for Bede as a cross culture bearer comes from this one idea thread that he followed his entire life. It may be the Golden String that led him to the wedding banquet of the Marriage of East and West. By the end of his life Bede has discovered a New Vision of Reality as a way of unknowing that which is total reality, hidden wholeness. Bede has provided each of us with a primer for all things interspiritual and exhorted us to always “go beyond”.
After years of dharma practice, there came a point when I thought: 'This is all well and good for us, but how does it help anybody else?' I wanted to be around people who were manifesting their understanding in the world. So I became a journalist solely to talk to those people (and have an excuse for them to talk to me). I settled down in Cambridge, Massachusetts and I began seeking out what you could call 'the Gandhis of our time'. I interviewed all the great spiritual teachers I could find and specialized in consciousness and activism. I wanted to figure out how our actions in the world are reflections of our understanding.

Enlightenment is not a word I use. I prefer to call this a natural way of being, the most natural actually. I don't use the word “enlightenment” because the term itself is very loaded and implies
a steady state—a Big Bang after which you are eternally in an unperturbed condition called enlightenment. The actual experience is that of deepening into quiet here and now, and allowing phenomena to come and go, even when it sometimes hurts or agitates. It is not a state. It is just relaxing into a natural ease of being and releasing things as they come.

I think this is a time for the rise of women teachers. I see it everywhere, especially in the West where there are a lot of strong women teachers now. Our world, if we are to survive, must turn to feminine principles. This is not to say that there aren't some wonderful male teachers as well as masculine principles. But what is desperately needed now is cooperation, care taking and living lightly but in a grounded way on the earth. Up to now, there has been much emphasis on spirituality being a transcendent escape from the muck of existence, rejecting the world in favor of some imagined paradise or condition beyond. I think that worldview's time has passed—and good riddance. This is the time to combine the beautiful principles of understanding with a celebration of daily life, an appreciation of the feminine.

You know, many years ago I asked Ram Dass in an interview whether he thought we were about to destroy ourselves or were headed to a golden era of evolved consciousness. He gave a great answer. He said: if humankind is on the way to destroy itself, then the best way to prepare for that is to quiet the mind and open the heart. And if we are facing a new world order, then the best way to prepare for that is to quiet the mind and open the heart! I would say something similar.

Really I have no idea where we are headed. In the now you can look around, you can read the newspaper and see that there is a lot of suffering, a lot of madness, a lot of decisions being made that portend badly. And at the same time you see a lot of intelligence coming through as well. Who knows how it is going to develop? We may change this earth into a big desert or we may wise up before we actually do that and make some huge and exciting changes.

I think that living in wakeful awareness is the best plan, whatever happens. Then you can celebrate in the light and you can be helpful in the darkness.

[From Catherine Ingram Interviews at www.dharmadialogues.com, with permission]

Catherine Ingram's events, known as Dharma Dialogues, are a form of interactive meditation in that after she gives a short talk, she then opens the session to one on one dialogues with participants, whoever feels inclined to speak. Each interaction is designed to induce present awareness and a letting go of unnecessarily troubling thoughts. These sessions, which she has led internationally since 1993, “are a context in which we look at life experiences— work, creativity, romance, parenting, service, disappointment, loss, and death-- through the lens of understanding with no attempt to transcend any of these important issues using spiritual jargon or belief. Catherine’s background as a former journalist and social activist informs her practical approach to a spirituality based in reason and kindness. She is also the author of In the Footsteps of Gandhi, Passionate Presence, and A Crack in Everything.
THE ESSENCE OF AWAKENING: The Big Tent of Global Spirit

by Lama Surya Das

As a young child playing hide and seek outside with my cousins and siblings, I learned an early meditation lesson: The more I stopped, and simply tuned in and sensed, directly, in the immediacy of the moment—the more focused and still I got, in body and mind-- the more I saw. And when I was clearer, everything became clearer. This was my youthful introduction to the harmony and oneness available via a heightened, wakeful, present awareness.

Right now, I’m sauntering around in Henry David Thoreau’s Concord woods and lake-rich neighborhood, losing myself and finding my true Self in the sacred transcendentalist thickets of heart and soul; there’s not much more to say. I enjoy turning the pages in the book of nature and getting into the deepest leaves and paths representing the united state of mind and body, heart and soul. Birdsong and dog-voice resonate deeply within my original goodness, my innate Buddha-nature, which I feel and know intimately. Nor is it mine alone, this boundless treasure—the big tent of global spirit.

One of my favorite poets, the mystic William Blake, sings:

To see a world in a grain of sand
And heaven in a wildflower,
Hold infinity in the palm of your hand
And eternity in an hour.

Mystics and sages of all religions and paths speak of a realm beyond change-- beyond birth and death—groundless, luminous and boundless. The awakened recognition of the changeless source is universally considered crucial to human wellbeing and higher development. I love to sit at the origin of all things, at home and at ease, naturally enjoying the entire spectacle. What else is there to do?

So what does awakened awareness mean in this Modern World? What does it look like in our distracting OverInformation Age? Can the non-dual awakened state be shared collectively,
offering a unity consciousness and global banquet table for one and all? This earth our altar, all beings the buddhas and bodhisattvas, gods and goddesses arrayed upon it; this is BuddhaVision. What a wonderful worldview that is and can be. Emaho!

Currently, we appear to have entered a rapid growth cycle, including a nonsectarian and postdenominational organic spiritual tropism: hearts and minds, body and soul reaching not just up to the light but out, down, and spreading in every other possible direction. This is the time for collective awakening and altruism rather than mere self-help and self-improvement projects, not to mention the illnesses of selfishness and narcissism. Unfolding out of our personal identities into a more globally connected awareness, far beyond isms and schisms, we naturally self-fulfill the incisive Dzogchen pith instruction, “Always Buddha Nature, always unfolding.” This expansive interspiritual approach brings tremendous opportunity for the edification and harmonious interbeing of one and all—a high way with many lanes. In India long ago, I heard a master teacher say: “The best form in which to worship God is in every single form.” I savored that. I grokked it.

A combination ofnowness—be here now, or you won’t be there then; and openness, combined with what I call “incandescent presence”, defines what we term as Awakefulness or pure awareness. Letting go has become a buzz word, but it actually means radical acceptance, letting be by letting things come and go—not just trying to get rid of them. Acceptance has its own transformational magic, and should not be confused with mere complacence or indifference. Contentment is the greatest form of wealth, like the cosmic credit card; don’t leave home without it.

This equanimity and spiritual detachment cum acceptance can be cultivated and fully actualized thru the art and simple practice of Presencing, by intentionally paying attention, nonjudgmentally, in the present moment—observing things as they are. This implies practicing mindfulness, which is most simply defined as the opposite of mindlessness and heedlessness. Mindfulness is an attentive presence of mind—nonjudgemental, open and lucidly alert, including a friendly appreciation and intimaey. When cultivated in oneself, and in all relationships, mindful present awareness is the most potent active ingredient in Buddha’s eight-
step path of awakened enlightenment. It is like the pearl beyond price, and the active yeast that leavens the entire loaf.

Someone once asked my late Dzogchen mentor, the venerable Lama Nyoshul Khenpo Rinpoche, how to find peace and happiness. "The whole problem is that everyone thinks their happiness and difficulties come from outside, from circumstances and conditions," he replied. "True happiness is not found there." This is Buddhist wisdom, in a nutshell. Internalizing this can bring a higher form of sanity, autonomy within interconnectedness, and self-mastery.

Sometimes I feel that things need not necessarily always be made too clear. Thus, the even deeper and harder to grasp saying from a Mahayana Buddhist sutra (scripture), which seems fitting:

“Things are not what they seem to be, nor are they otherwise.”

My mind stops here.

Applying Buddhist wisdom is seeing things as they actually are, while simultaneously intuining how they function and interact. If we are to develop the higher spiritual intelligence skill set needed to benefit the many on our troubled planet, it is essential that we learn to distinguish our life needs from personal wants. This frees up all kinds of energy. Otherwise we’re just redecorating our own small prison cells ... over and over again. “There is enough for everyone’s need but not for everyone’s greed,” says Mahatma Gandhi.

Buddhist wisdom teaches that we each have our karma, our fate, our character and destiny in our own hands. We are not merely victims of circumstances and conditions. What we think, say, intend and do make all the difference. It’s not what happens to us but what we make of it that makes all the difference. Everything is subjective. Everything is a teaching and a learning moment, or can be. And in our impermanent world, everything passes; nothing remains. Check it out, and see for yourself.

The Jewish Talmud says that the wisest among men is he who learns from all. We all have lots of experiences, but not everyone becomes a wise and experienced elder. Some simply become old fools:

Lama Surya Das with Ram Dass
jaded, bored, tired and disillusioned. This is because not all reflect on, digest and learn from experience in the same proportion. Thus the old adage, probably stemming from Plato: “The unreflected life is hardly worth living.” Insightful wisdom is an endangered natural resource today, and we overlook it at our peril.

Dr Roger Walsh, learned consciousness researcher and meditation teacher, suggests that the unique task of our time is one in which we must learn to embody and manifest this perennial wisdom within a postmodern world. Conversely, how do we skillfully communicate new, living knowledge and technologies in order to integrate them freshly into our ancient wisdom traditions? How to act as Gnostic intermediaries, bringing the timeless universal wisdom down, like holy fire from the mountaintops, into our own time and place for the benefit of one and all?

This is like a koan, or zen-like conundrum, concerning the creative tension and even conflict between preservation, innovation, and adaptation. It’s a delicate issue in some quarters. How do we change the form and the medium without distorting the essence of the message? There will be some traditionalists who argue that nothing should be changed, that the old forms are sacred, have served us well, and should be preserved inviolate. However, using the symbols and methods of our times seems quite crucial if the essential message is to be conveyed effectively across the chasm of cultures, centuries and language.

Surya Das founded Dzogchen Osel Ling Retreat Center at the request of the late Nyoshul Khenpo Rinpoche
Spirituality is nothing if it is not personal, an intimate matter of body, mind and heart. One size-for-all clothes are not necessarily fitting when it comes to individual spiritual instructions on the transformative path of polishing your unique soul, and realizing ultimate conscious evolution. The best practices are the ones that work for you, personal spiritual disciplines and exercises which you actually do until it feels as if they’re doing you. We should not be deceived by the mere wrappings, the publicity and advertising, the past life resumes of certain gurus, and so forth. To check it out for oneself and maintain a certain amount of critical intelligence is advisable. Through sincere practice we can all become enlightened, as the Buddha did. Moreover, millions have fulfilled this promise. It’s closer than we think. Even shadows are nothing but light. Why overlook this treasure trove?

We come into this world with our own 'karmgo’ (karmic cargo) and are tasked with delivering it, and thus ourselves. Discovering our authentic selves and uncovering one’s true vocation are implicit in this transpersonal existential contract. If we don't learn the lessons this time, we might very well get left back and have to repeat the grade until we do!

How shall we truly recognize and actualize our best selves, our innate Buddha nature and original goodness, here in this gritty world? Nine hundred years ago Tibet’s supreme yogi-saint Milarepa sang, in a high mountain cave: “The ultimate view is to observe one’s mind, steadfastly and with determination.” Everything we seek is within.

Therefore, intentional attention is essential for an illumined life. It helps us to gain objective clarity, deepen self-knowledge, and live more closely aligned with our best selves. We learn to catch ourselves and our priorities before other things catch and entangle us. With this core practice of maintaining alert presence of mind, we naturally begin to live a more balanced and measured life, slowing down, paying attention to things as they are rather than as they ain’t or how we would like them to be. We savor and appreciate more special moments, rather than staggering through our To Do lists on the perpetual motion machine known as “the treadmill of conditioning”, mistaking mere movement for meaning.

We can unfurl into incandescent nowness-awareness, rather than confining ourselves to the hut of conceptual mind afflicted by think-aholism. Thought is a very good servant, but a poor master, as ancient scripture tells us; we are too often under its thrall. In fact, we have become addicted to thinking, and need a higher inner power to save us. Awakened self-awareness is that very power. Authentic awareness is curative. Total nowness-awareness is the ultimate therapy, the vital catalyst for freedom and enlightenment; thus it is known as, in Tibetan, “the Buddha within”.

One moment of freedom and enlightenment is one moment of freedom and enlightenment, the Dzogchen meditation masters tell us. Remember to remember to center in the holy moment, right now; to take a breath break, creating a sacred pause in the hour, amidst the busy day; and to sink your roots deep into the good earth of this miraculous moment, imbibing its nutritious essences. Then open your good heart to fellow travelers, of all kinds, human and otherwise. Wish them well. Continue on together.
Being there while getting there is the essence of my Middle Way message, neither too austere nor too over-indulgent, not too tight or too loose. Not waiting or wishing for anything, nor looking for love in all the wrong places. A happy marriage of dynamic wisdom-oriented inquiry combined with relaxation and wonderment.

Plumbing even deeper: I ask you right now, seekers and friends and companions: Can you drop the entire project you’ve been pushing for so long?

Drop it!

Of course you’re wondering what project, which one, and so forth? Good questions for to ponder. But tell me what fell away in that very moment of inquiry, before the conceptual questions started?

For how long have we, have you, been reifying, reinforcing, perpetuating and re-creating the sense of separate self we’re afflicted by and suffer through? What’s with all this selfing? Does it really help? Constantly reifying and reinforcing our narrow sense of (separate) self absorbs almost all of our energy; no wonder we’re so enervated! Releasing self-grasping frees as much energy as cracking the atom.

Who’s on first, as Abbott & Costello want to know? Who’s experiencing your experience, right now—thoughts, feelings, perceptions, sensations?

Buddha-nature, the Godhead, the Christos—or shnooks and cell mates—who are we?

“Now thySelf.”

May all beings everywhere  
be awakened, liberated, healed, fulfilled and free;  
May there be peace and harmony in this world,  
and may we all together  
complete the spiritual journey.

“I believe deeply that we must find, all of us together, a new spirituality. This new concept ought to be elaborated alongside the religions like secular ethics in a way that all people of good will would adhere to it” ~Tenzin Gyatso, The Dalai Lama of Tibet.

Lama Surya Das is an American-born Lama in the Tibetan Buddhist tradition. A well-known spiritual writer, poet and activist, he has been a teacher and spokesperson for Buddhism in the West and a leader in interfaith dialogue and charitable relief work. Surya Das is the Dharma heir of Nyoshul Khenpo Rinpoche. His name, meaning "Servant of the Sun" of the sun, was given him by his original guru Neem Karoli Baba. He was an early supporter of the interspiritual work and vision of Brother Wayne Teasdale.
I first met my late Brother Wayne Teasdale in Chicago the early mid- Nineties. Over dinner one weekend we shared our mutual passion for practical mysticism, profound spirituality and love of the divine mystery, including the source and sole spirit or energy underlying all the multitudinous variety of religions and paths. Moreover, we shared very similar concerns and even bemusement about the flawed disorganized religions and institutions we had long been part of—in his case, Catholicism, and Buddhism in mine.

Though we were familiar with each other’s works, we were delighted to discover that both of us were called to envision and further the coming together of the world’s religions and spiritual and humanistic traditions in a new way suitable to the post-modern, technological, Over-Information Era. I called it global spirit and postdenominational spirituality; Wayne termed it interspirituality, having found interfaith dialogue wishy-washy at best and too much like preaching to the choir.

I later conferred with Brother Teasdale once again, as recorded by Kurt Johnson and David Robert Ord in their book The Coming Interspiritual Age, just as (after the success of Teasdale’s book The Mystic Heart: Discovering a Universal Spirituality in the World’s Religions) Teasdale was wondering how to bring the interspiritual dream to higher and higher levels of manifestation. I joined as an official “Friend” in support of Teasdale’s Interspiritual Dialogue association (www.isdna.org) which he had formed with Kurt Johnson and others, just as his health situation was becoming more and more tenuous. It is heartening to see how far this interspiritual movement has come with the combined work of Teasdale’s association, the work of Fr. Thomas Keating, the array of friends of Fr. Raimon Panikkar and so many others.

This new movement could and would serve a wide, universal, and hopefully highly positive global purpose, beyond the isms and inevitable schisms from competing claims of superiority, exclusivity, endtime and salvation scenarios. It could help us progressively evolve towards religion today as a force for harmony and respect, equality and the alleviation of suffering, rather than a cause of strife, violence and partisanship—a new spirituality ethical, unifying, nourishing, and effective at awakening our best inner nature; a loving force turned toward a positive future for humankind, and dedicated to becoming part of the solution and not part of the problem. A movement towards ensuring a better future to be possible, that future which begins now.
Johnson and Ord have outlined a bold program for interspirituality in their chapters on interspiritual education in *The Coming Interspiritual Age*, drawing from theirs and the work of Diane Berke (of New York’s One Spirit Interfaith Seminary) and Edward Bastian (an associate of Fr. Thomas Keating).

For my students and mentees, besides their Dzogchen meditation and related chants, prayers and practices, I have outlined this nonsectarian enlightenment program, which I call The Six Building Blocks of a Spiritual Life.

1. Daily-ish spiritual practice (meditation, yoga, prayer or something similar)
2. Spiritual study (theory and practice go together well, and support each other)
3. Inner growth work (self-inquiry, journaling, therapy, support groups, etc.)

This first triad is generally seen as alone-ish. The second triad is generally with others and quite relational.

4. Group practice (community, sangha, satsang, congregational practice etc.)
5. Teacher practice (working with masters, elders, mentors, experts etc.)
6. SEVA/spiritual service (karma yoga, including good deeds such as volunteerism, mentoring, charity work, self-giving, social activism etc.)

The good news, as I see it, is that none of this requires or precludes belief or adherence to any particular religion or group; it requires no permission or authorization; and this forms the groundwork for a well rounded and grounded, harmonious and beautiful life. In fact, most of us are doing some of these things already! Even cultivating just one of these six pillars of everyday spirituality will change your life for the better. It certainly works for me.
Compassion and Its Relationship to Conflict Resolution—And How to Language It

by Elizabeth Banner

In most, if not all, of the religious and wisdom traditions, compassion has been named as an essential ingredient to foster and/or promote harmony, peace, effectiveness, connection, acceptance and love.
In light of the growing global *interspiritual* reality, we must now ask about (or possibly re-examine) our traditional language about compassion and also our understanding of empathic presence. What does compassion mean in the currently emerging global and multicultural context? In the face of historically ingrained patterns of judgment, justification, defensive posture, enemy images and moralistic thinking, how will we access real, effective, compassion in a global age and make it part of a possibly creative and bountiful future for humankind?

As the interspiritual movement has grown and inevitably converged with the refined understandings of the integral and evolutionary consciousness movements, the challenge – as noted in *The Coming Interspiritual Age*—is now one of attaching Interpersonal Skills to the “greater” awareness which is moving the global awakening forward. These skills converge with the manifestations of the emerging Holistic and Global Age in the work of conflict resolution, educational reform, personal growth, conscious parenting, professional therapies, mediation and spirituality.

Marshall Rosenberg
The work of Marshall Rosenberg, author of *Nonviolent Communication, A Language of Life*, suggests a fundamental epiphany—that our angers and conflicts arise from our thoughts and attention being on what another person “should” or “shouldn’t” be doing and communicating in terms of “right” and “wrong.” To Rosenberg, what is *underneath* these thoughts can actually point us toward what we value most and clearly show us which of our needs are being ignored and/or unmet—“needs” being defined as the basic human values we all share.

Examples of such universal needs would be care, consideration and respect. The epiphany in the work of Compassionate Communication is that in translating our judgments/enemy images into our unmet or met needs, we can be brought back naturally to who we are and our true aliveness. Ultimately, it is from this deeper place of self-connection and understanding of our own needs/desires/preferences that real compassion can be birthed.

**Conflict Resolution and the Emerging New Cosmology**

In a globalizing world where people still so often operate from direct reactivity based on judgment and enemy images, what a revolution it would be if humankind could grasp this deeper understanding. Comprehending shared fundamental needs, and identifying what is so often missing for so many, takes the matter back to source—the root *cause* of problems, not just symptoms.

The interspiritual, integral and evolutionary consciousness movements say that what is needed in the currently unfolding Holistic and Global Age is a new *cosmology*, a new cosmology actually operative in and among all the world’s peoples—at “street level”. Obviously, a part of this emerging cosmology would include a universal understanding of the relationship of behaviors to unmet wants and needs. In Conflict Resolution work, even the *harshest* of labels is seen, in Rosenberg’s words, as a “tragic expression of an unmet need. Tragic in the sense, that we are almost guaranteeing that our needs will continue to be undiscovered, unexpressed and unmet.” A cosmology clearly identifying the root cause of this tragedy would certainly be part of the “global awakening” spoken of by Brother Wayne Teasdale the founder of modern interspirituality.

**Honing Human Interpersonal Skills**

In the context of Marshall Rosenberg’s vision, we have a perspective for understanding what compassion means in the unfolding Global Epoch and its essential connection to advancing human Interpersonal Skills at a worldwide level. For example, when people can identify anger as a signal of an internal reflection of our ingrained distracted, judgmental or punitive thinking, the energy inside anger can be turned instead toward understanding and speaking deeply to unexpressed needs and values. This is not only compassion but the beginning of transformation.

When understood clearly, none of these matters need to be complicated in day to day life. How can we approach the challenges of actual problem solving and resolution? First, and foremost,
we can do this by making the quality of personal connection and compassion the priority of our relating. What we can do is actually reframe how we express ourselves and how we hear others. We can create an environment that focuses on being heard and understood at the actual level of our “needs awareness”.

Examples in daily life are countless. For instance, when someone comments about you spending more time with your friends than them, they may be simply yearning to be nurtured, cared for and loved. How one perceives what is going on makes all the difference in the world about how the actual underlying need will be satisfied.

Learning how to differentiate between our needs and the strategies we create to meet them then allows skillful strategies to emerge that are in service to our universally shared life energies. As Rosenberg would frame it-- if we are allowing our words to become conscious responses based on awareness and honest expression of what we are perceiving, feeling, and needing, we are simultaneously giving others empathic attention to what they are feeling and needing as well.

As we hone our interpersonal skills to focus our attention on understanding and meeting actual needs, we then begin to connect in a realm where all persons are the same. And, as the life force within us, expressed as needs, begins to be heard, honored and uplifted, our natural compassion flows outward and the return of this energy to us in “like kind” is truly inevitable. This is an essential and profound contribution that Compassionate Communication can make to the emerging Interspiritual Age.

Elizabeth Banner (www.compassioncoach.net), M.ED., M.P.A. believes that compassion is not only our nature but a conscious choice and has dedicated her life to spiritual transformation. She is an Interfaith Minister (One Spirit Interfaith Seminary), presenter, workshop facilitator, teacher and trainer. Elizabeth enjoys teaching others how to communicate from the place of compassion in ways that are in concert with their values and serves their needs. She was formerly Director of Outreach for the New York Council of Nonviolent Communication and Co-Director of the Peer Leadership Program for the New York Center for Nonviolent Communication (www.nycnvc.org). Currently she conducts practice groups, facilitates workshops/trainings, and is a presenter in the field of compassionate communication in the New York City area. She has a private coaching and mentoring practice and continues to work in diverse environments at the highest levels of spiritual, social, corporate and political leadership. Additional link: The Center for Nonviolent Communication (www.cnvc.org).
HUSTON SMITH: Our Teacher and Guide

by M. Darrol Bryant
It was in the early 1960s when a remarkable book entitled *The Religions of Man* (1958) fell into my hands. I was then a student at a small liberal arts college in Minnesota. As I read the chapter on Hinduism, I remember being so struck by the Hindu view that there were many ways to the divine. I felt that this was a religion that I needed to know more about.

I turned to the next chapter on Buddhism and I thought to myself, “Wow! This is a religious pathway I should know more about.” And so it went as I proceeded through chapters on Confucianism, Daoism, Islam, Judaism, and Christianity. The revelatory experience of reading this book (later re-titled *The World’s Religions: Our Great Wisdom Traditions*) has been repeated time and time again ever since. Throughout my forty years of university teaching, I required my students to read this remarkable text. And for many, their experience was just like mine: the book evoked a sense of wonder and interest in these many pathways of the spiritual life.

The author was Huston Smith. It was two decades later that we finally met. And that too was a great joy, since he turned out to be not only the author of a wonderful book but also a remarkable human being. I learned that he had been born and raised in China, that he came back to the USA for college and that he became a philosophy professor at Washington University (later he taught at MIT and Syracuse University) in St. Louis where he was assigned a course in world religions. He had also been invited to give some television lectures on world religions and that this was the genesis of his book. His book charted a way that led countless readers – more than 2 million copies have been sold – into what we now call the world religions.

Not only a gifted writer on the many faiths, Huston knew them experientially. As a child, he learned much of Christian, Confucian and Daoist Ways. In the 1950s, Huston was deeply influenced by Vedanta and Hinduism. In the 1960s he was immersed in Buddhism. In the 1970s his focus was Islam and the traditionalist school. When his daughter married a Jew, he learned much of Judaism. Yet he never abandoned his Christianity. Throughout his life he practiced the spiritual disciplines of the many traditions.

His *Forgotten Truth, The Common Vision of the World Religions* (1972) was also a major contribution to the emerging dialogue of men and women from the great traditions across the globe.

A decade before the word “dialogue” entered our vocabulary, two decades before we spoke of “interfaith,” and four decades before we learned to say “interspirituality,” Huston Smith pioneered the way.

What a guide!

*M. Darrol Bryant* is Director of the Centre for Dialogue & Spirituality in the World Religions, and editor of *Huston Smith: Essays on World Religion*, Waterloo, Ontario, Canada.
A December 21, 2012

MANIFESTO

"If the world is ending and the Messiah arrives, first plant a tree, and then see if the story is true"

- Rabbinical Teaching

by Don Oscar Miro-Quesada

Supported and aligned, guided and inspired, awakened and welcomed, we stand at a new beginning as prophesied by our Original Peoples of the Americas. Beyond the well-known astronomical alignments, upcoming equinoctial precession and never before witnessed convergences of history, people, place, nature, and cosmos, we are now living a time of great personal and planetary responsibility. In the words of Spanish philosopher Jorge Luis Borges: "Nothing is built on stone, all is built on sand, but we must build as if sand were stone."

We are being gifted a dreamt of historical interlude for evolving beyond our survival based individual obsessions. We are being called into a re-Membering of ourselves as a consciously unified force for change upon Gaia. What lies ahead for humanity once December 21, 2012 fulfills its present 24 hour cycle is not a research project, not a panacea, nor a question hoping for an answer. Rather it is simply an evolutionary process, a natural unfolding and flow of our divine essence at this particular time, a flow that begins with our first breath and may not end with our last.

As humans we are inextricably bound to an ongoing river through which flows the emergence of a universal sentience that has no name, yet we persist in naming: Solstice, Yule, Kwanzaa, Channuka and, most recently, the end of the Mayan calendar. In the flow, merry or not merry, we meet and part and meet again. Yet our meetings are potent, vital, stirring, and can be life aligning, can be profoundly life transforming as the current 2012 visionary convergence has the potential to be. I believe it was Rupert Sheldrake whom I heard once say: "The way we envision the world can restore its soul, and the way in which the world is ensouled can restore our vision." Quite sage advise for a world so desperately in need of experiencing the primacy of
consciousness—in other words the presence of soul—in all things material. We have models for this, ancient and new: the myth of Indra's web—the self-reflexive conscious universe—in which each point of meeting, of joining, is a spherical jewel much like a pearl, and each jewel reflects all others, a mirroring of infinitude, all things vibrating in resonance with all others, non-linear dynamics, as a "cloud of points" posited by Nobel Laureate Ilya Prigogine. More recently, research in a field called Complexity Theory observes the capacity of communities of bees and termites and ants and humans, to come to wisdom and adaptive sustenance together, in resonance with each other, that they are not able to hold in their individual beings, as separate from the whole.

What might you be holding, that I might be holding, that we cannot manifest in our separate selves, but may find together in a hive of process? Is this not what these times are calling us to do? These troubled, uncertain, dangerous, transforming, unpredictably shapeshifting, powerful times? Is it not the time to get to the heart, and most importantly the soul, of what it means to be a human, here and now? To be generative, hopeful, and peacefully befriend the Great Originating Mystery as we delve down into, and learn from, the alchemical sense of the sacred that informed the religious traditions at the root of our modern consumerist holiday season in
the first place? Can we provide an antidote to the modern stigmata of feeling 'not enough,' that too often is sadly sought alleviation with too-muchness--more stuff, more money, more Santa's elves hyping disposable trinkets? Can we feel the real turning of the earth, of the seasons, of the essential divinity within our existence? I say YES, we absolutely can!

As practitioners of Pachakuti Mesa Tradition cross-cultural shamanism our December 21, 2012 calling must be to further assess and winnow from the ancestral wisdom lineages that have shaped us, kernels of resonance that are still vital and alive, sparks of universal gnosis and earth-honoring ritual process still burning, which might, in this seemingly darkest day of the year, light the way towards a viable future, providing warmth, inspiration, and heartfelt sacred community through which we can today be, what humankind might yet become. So is my solemn decree on this apocryphal end date of the Mayan calendar. I have thus shared my fondest dream, in visionary shamanic service to the seven generations, on this 21st day of December 2012!

“By doing one learns; with study one refines; through dreaming one creates; in loving one fulfills—this is the secret art of tending to the sacred garden of our soul.”

- Don Oscar Miro-Quesada

Don Oscar Miro-Quesada Solevo has dedicated his life to the revitalization of ethnospiritual wisdom traditions as a way to restore sacred trust between humankind and the natural world. He is a respected Peruvian kamasqa curandero, UN Invited Observer to the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, OAS Fellow in Ethnopsychology, member of the Birth 2012 Welcoming Committee convened by Barbara Marx Hubbard, originator of Pachakuti Mesa Tradition (PMT) cross-cultural shamanism and visionary founder of The Heart of the Healer (THOTH) Foundation. As a seasoned navigator of non-ordinary states of consciousness, Don Oscar is well prepared to guide people from all walks of life into shamanic realms where multidimensional powers and forces are available for the healing of self, others, and our planet as a whole. A popular international teacher and master ceremonialist, Don Oscar's service work has been featured on CNN, Univision, A&E, and the Discovery Channel.

Please visit [www.mesaworks.com](http://www.mesaworks.com) and [www.heartofthehealer.org](http://www.heartofthehealer.org)

Video: http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=XmGpDLsryTc
One Scientist's Encounter with the Pachakuti Mesa Tradition of Cross-Cultural Shamanism

by Jeff Schmitt

Who am I? What is my purpose? Why is there so much suffering in the world? How might I find meaning amidst all the turmoil and chaos?

Like most seekers, these questions rise again and again in me like the tides. And it was only when I became a student of the Pachakuti Mesa Tradition and Peruvian Folk Healing that my soul became nourished by the answers that began to surface.

My reflections seemed hollow before I became grounded in authentic community and to the living earth. Where once I felt like an island alone in the cult of the individual, I am now part of an ancient sea of connectedness. Every dimension of my life is nourished by the ancient lineage of which I am now part.

Perhaps the great tragedy of our age is that we look upon indigenous culture as mere primitive curiosity. That we consider myth and ritual obsolete relics of a bygone age
denies us of the richest and most orienting dimensions of our human inheritance.

Ritual techniques that connect us to the web-of-life and to the unseen realms provide a vast wellspring of wisdom and practical insight. Over time, a coherent sense of our place and purpose in the universe emerges—a needed foil to the view of scientific materialism that we are an infinitesimally minute planet in some insignificant corner of one galaxy among 100 billion. Philosopher William Barrett in his book *the Illusion of Technique* powerfully suggests that myth and ritual uniquely enable a state of expanded conscious awareness, and that as a result, our actions less destructive to the living planet and ourselves.

I am convinced that humanity isn’t going to innovate our way out of the tangled mess of global political, ecological and health problems we now face. I am so convinced in fact, that I have peacefully said goodbye to a 32-year career as a scientist, innovation junkie and medical center administrator. I am now devoting my life to the Pachakuti Mesa Tradition and the organization that Oscar Miro-Quesada put in-place to deliver these traditions and teachings to the world, The Heart of the Healer Foundation (THOTH). Our mission is to reach the millions of Americans that search yet fail to find effective means of personal growth, spiritual fulfillment and transformation-- to reawaken modern society to ancient wisdom for personal and planetary transformation. We offer programs of study and participation in sacred community. For over a decade, THOTH has been building bridges between the ancient wisdom traditions of Peru and modern society. Through our work, thousands of people are leading healthier, happier and more fulfilled lives. No matter your spiritual path our offerings will enrich and deepen. We enthusiastically invite you to join our tribe! [www.hearthofthehealer.org](http://www.hearthofthehealer.org).

Jeff Schmitt, PhD chairs the Heart of the Healer Foundation Board of Directors and is Adjunct Professor of Biochemistry, Physiology & Pharmacology and Associate Director for Research in the Center for Integrative Medicine at Wake Forest School of Medicine. Jeff is a 32-year veteran scientist, entrepreneur with over 100 publications and patents to his name. He has participated in raising over $100M toward research and innovation to improve human health. Jeff played a key role in the launch of 4 companies and a research Institute (The Bent Creek Institute of the University of North Carolina). As founder of the Wake Forest University School of Medicine Innovation and Entrepreneurship Initiative, he has helped innovators leverage numerous new technologies into the marketplace. He is a dedicated practitioner and student of the folk healing traditions of Peru and North America as well as a musician, chef and martial artist.
One Corporate Citizen's encounter with the Pachakuti Mesa Tradition of Cross-Cultural Shamanism

by Reverend Dorothy Cunha

I was in my 30s when I found Peruvian shamanism. I had been traversing my inner realm without map or compass since I became conscious to this life. I walked away from the Catholic church when I was 11 or 12. I explored life through religion, economics and literature; I wound my way to science and quantum physics. My thinking was informed by Ayn Rand and continued through The Road Less Travelled and on… through psychoanalysis and to John Bradshaw where I was introduced to my inner child. When I took a trip with the Open Center in NYC, my restless heart and soul found home.

Even in these new age days, an ancient wisdom from the area of Peru is an outlier in the pantheon of spiritual paths. Yet somehow it came easily to my life and made itself accessible. In these shamanic arts, I found others who shared a kindred spirituality. This spirituality first materialized as a sense of awe and wonder at this ancient way to relate to life and our relations.
That trip was through the Canyonlands of Arizona – no shops, taxis, sidewalks, electronics – walking by day and camping in the evening. We spent time cleansing our souls. I’ll never forget one unique experience. After one exercise, the leader of the trip blew into the top of my head. I felt an intense sense of a pure love I had not known before; it brought me to tears. This girl from Queens who rode the subway to work each day to her office in Wall Street was experiencing the world and living in it in an utterly profound and unexplored way.

Once you have a spiritual awakening, you cannot go back to sleep. Eventually, I was ready and the teacher appeared.

Apprenticing with Oscar Miro-Quesada in the Pachakuti Mesa was a whole other level of deepening of soul in this worldly reality. It broadened me from self-healing to community and world healing. It has become the heart through which I hear, see and experience life and the world – a unique gift for this Earth walk and these times.

Sweet and heart-centered, Earth-honoring and based in community, the Pachakuti Mesa Tradition offers those who heed the call, a foundation based in ancient and pure ways for putting one foot in front of the other as we contend with how we must walk in beauty on Mother Earth at this time in her history.

Dorothy (D’oro) Cunha, PMP, MBA, Reverend is President of Dorothy Cunha Project Management Inc. She is a project management professional providing services to financial institutions specializing in data management for business divestitures. Dorothy has an MBA from NYU and a certificate in Organizational Development and Consultation from the William Alan White Institute and a certificate in Health Information Technology from Westchester Community College.

D’oro served as the first Chair of The Heart of the Healer Foundation's (THOTH) Project Committee and continued serving as a Board member. She is a founding member of Community of the Mystic Heart and the Interspiritual Dialogue Group which are based on the vision of Brother Wayne Teasdale. Ordained by the Order of Universal Interfaith (OUNI) as a Wisdom Keeper for the Pachakuti Mesa Tradition, she has been ceremonialist for a number of OUNI ordination ceremonies.

D’oro has apprenticed in the Pachakuti Mesa Tradition with don Oscar Miro-Quesada for over a decade and is a THOTH-approved teacher of the Tradition. She also studied the shamanic arts with Alberto Villoldo and John Perkins and completed Spiritual Leadership Training with Harshada Wagner in NYC. D’oro also volunteers her time with the Sierra Club Action Committee in Westchester, NY.
"God is the One Life in and beyond the countless forms of life. Love implies duality: lover and beloved, subject and object. So love is the recognition of oneness in the world of duality. This is the birth of God into the world of form. Love makes the world less worldly, less dense, more transparent to the divine dimension, the light of consciousness itself" — Eckhart Tolle
Part II

Interspiritual Initiatives
Setting a foundation for what has emerged as the modern “interspiritual movement”, for over twenty years, a group of spiritual seekers from many religious traditions met in various places around the United States under general name the “Snowmass Interreligious Initiative”. It took this name from the location of St. Benedict’s Abbey, the home of Roman Catholic interfaith pioneer Fr. Thomas Keating.

These conferences innovated creative forms for interreligious dialogue, where in the experience was intimate and trusting, transformative and inspirational. To encourage open, candid and honest sharing, no audio or visual recordings were ever made, until the most recent gathering in 2012, also hosted in Snowmass by Fr. Keating. No articles or books were written either, until the document *The Common Heart*, published in 2006. Emerging from these decades of dialogue were the now well-known “Points of Agreement” first published in *The Common Heart* and recently elaborated as to content and implication in *The Coming Interspiritual Age*. The “Points” became a fulcrum for the writings of Brother Wayne Teasdale, also a colleague of the Initiatives, in his further elaboration of a “Nine Elements of a Universal Spirituality” around which his now classic book *The Mystic Heart: Discovering a Universal Spirituality in the World’s Religions* was structured. *The Mystic Heart* begin using the now universally recognized term “interspirituality” in 1999, right on the cusp of our current Millennium.

*The Common Heart* contains an extraordinary exploration of the wealth of the world’s spiritual traditions combined with dialogue from the heart about the differences and similarities between the world’s spiritual paths and collective reservoir of wisdom. Participants in the volume included Fr. Thomas kating, Ken Wilber, Roshi Bernie Glassman, Sawmi Atmarupananda, Dr. Ibrhim Gamard, Iman Bilad Hyde, Pema Chodron, and Rabbi Henoch Dove Hoffman and Grandfather Gerald Red Elk. The book was edited by Netanel Miles-Yepez, co-founder of the Sufi-Hasidic Fellowship and Murshid of the Chishti-Maimuniyya Order of Dervishes, and Executive Director of the Reb Zalman Legacy Project in Boulder, Colorado. The book is available from Lantern books and is now considered a classic recordation of the pioneering dialogues of the emerging interspiritual movement.
In 2012, members of the initiative, along with new collaborators met again in Snowmass and will meet again in 2013 in Washington State. Particular emphasis now is the passing on of this legacy of dialogue and innovation to a younger pantheon of interspiritual leaders who can carry forward the momentum of this initiative which has been so critical to the world interfaith movement.

Gathering of generations at the 2012 Snowmass Initiatives to discuss the future of “full commitment” to spiritual practice and sacred activism in the interspiritual context. Left to right: Cynthia Brix (Satyana Foundation), Rory McEntee (Coordinator, Snowmass 2012 Initiative), Fr. Thomas Keating (host); Dr. Janet Quinn (Snowmass Interreligious Initiative participant), Dr. Kurt Johnson (Bro. Wayne Teasdale’s Interspiritual Dialogue association), Dr. Will Keepin (Satyana Foundation), Fr. Matthew Wright (Snowmass Interreligious Initiative participant).
Global Spirit
The First Internal Travel Television Series on Interspirituality

by Stephen Olsson

Global Spirit might just be the first Interspiritual television and web series—and it’s now airing on Link TV and PBS stations nationwide. The series premiers the new documentary The Interspiritual Dialogue, with Father Thomas Keating.

For the first time in 25 years, video cameras were invited to document The Snowmass Interspiritual Conference, led by Cistercian monk and author Father Thomas Keating.

The resulting film illustrates a new era of spiritual consciousness and a new level of communication and exchange among many of the world’s spiritual and contemplative traditions. In interspiritual dialogue, the emphasis isn’t on formal theology, religious law, or external observances, but on that which emerges from the depths of spiritual experience among dedicated spiritual practitioners in an atmosphere of trust. The focus is on the experiential rather than merely the theological, the interior content rather than the external form.

This new film asks the questions: What is the real function of religion? What happens when religious identities and differences are left behind? And it explores answers from a gathering hosted by one of the great spiritual teachers of our time.

From Interfaith to Interspirituality

The Interfaith initiatives of the late 20th century, the opening of dialogue and sharing of wisdom among leaders and practitioners of different religions, have flowered into an exciting new possibility for spiritual exploration and expression. The late Wayne Teasdale coined the term “Interspirituality” to describe this new spiritual perspective, where beneath the diversity of theological beliefs, rites, and observances lies a deeper unity of experience that is our shared spiritual heritage.

The Snowmass Interspiritual Conferences led by Fr. Keating have been a pivotal part of the emerging interspiritual paradigm. Here, the emphasis is not on just a “horizontal” sharing about ideas, beliefs, or creeds but also a “vertical” dialogue from the depths of spiritual experience among dedicated spiritual practitioners gathered in an atmosphere of trust. The focus is on the
experiential rather than the theological—the interior content rather than the external form.

The Interspiritual Dialogue provides a unique view into the experience of committed spiritual seekers from many faiths, coming together to uncover and identify the core truths that lie at the heart of all world religions. Fr. Keating himself provides deep reflection and mentorship for the group throughout this unique event. His commentaries on the process guide us through the film.

More about Global Spirit

“The discussions on the Global Spirit series are sorely needed in this dispirited and disenchanted world. In many ways, it is more important than journalism today” ~ Bill Moyers.

Who are we? What are we doing here? How does life fit together? What does it all mean? These are perennial questions asked by thoughtful humans throughout history. They’re especially urgent now, as religious misunderstandings continue to fuel wars throughout the world and we stand on the brink of environmental catastrophe, and with it, a drastically reduced quality of life worldwide. Current global realities demand more than ever that we come to better understand each other, and finally ourselves.

Global Spirit, the first internal travel series, explores these questions from both cultural and scientific perspectives, featuring experts in science and ancient wisdom traditions from around the world. Produced by Stephen Olsson and hosted by Phil Cousineau, the series presents extraordinary conversations with scholars, scientists and practitioners such as Buddhist teacher Robert Thurman, author and former nun Karen Armstrong, body/mind/spirit teacher Deepak Chopra, philosopher Peter Russell, physicist Ravi Ravindra, Eskimo Shaman Aangagaq, Christian mystic Brother David Steindl-Rast, Sufi teachers Llewellyn Vaughan-Lee and Kabir Helminski, anthropologist Riane Eisler, Mayan spirit healer Flordemayo and many more.

Each “Global Spirit” program highlights the trans-cultural, transcendent dimensions of human inquiry, from the ancient or indigenous wisdom traditions to the latest advances in scientific knowledge. “Global Spirit” has, for the first time on national television, done what the Mars Rover did for space: beam back a celestial wonder, a glimmer of what is possible in the realm of human consciousness, spirit and the mind.

It’s no accident that the series has been scheduled to air in most cities on Sunday morning, traditionally the time reserved for religious and spiritual fare. As our awareness of other cultures around the world expands, along with our desire for peace amongst peoples, so does our need to know, and come to understand others’ belief systems and faith traditions. Each “Global Spirit” episode is a rich, stimulating immersion in this realm, featuring knowledgeable, engaging leaders and practitioners of Buddhism, Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, Shamanism and other indigenous traditions.
The presenting host is John Cleese of “Monty Python” fame, who provides a witty yet meaningful opening and closing commentary for each program. The veteran producer/director of the series is Stephen Olsson, whose credits include National Emmy, Peabody and DuPont-Columbia awards, and whose film sequences, shot in locations around the world—from Vietnam to Tibet to India to the American Southwest—are featured throughout the series, creating a cinematic experiential dimension to the topics being discussed in-studio. While in English, the series is truly global in nature, and is currently being translated and broadcast in 14 countries overseas.

Says Olsson, “As a series, Global Spirit is a vessel for timeless ideas and human wisdom, a vessel you can take to explore a deep topic or philosophical idea, and to travel in that vessel across faiths, time zones, eras and cultures, to perhaps discover some new place, some new understanding of your life or life itself, a synthesis of the ancient and the modern ‘ways of knowing.’”

Summary of Season One

Season One of “Global Spirit” consists of ten hour-long programs:

The Spiritual Quest—comparative religion scholar Karen Armstrong and Professor of Buddhist studies Dr. Robert Thurman.

Forgiveness and Healing—author and psychotherapist Dr. Ed Tick and his wife Kate Dahlstedt. Music, Sound and the Sacred—Rev. Alan Jones, and Grammy-award-winning singer Joanne Shenandoah.

Art and the Creative Spirit—Buddhist artist and teacher Lama Lhanang Rinpoche as well as Pueblo Indian sculptor Estella Loretto.

The Journey Towards Oneness—Physicist Dr. Ravi Ravindra and Llewellyn Vaughan-Lee, Naqshbandi Sufi teacher and Jungian analyst.

Exploring Consciousness: East and West—Sraddhalu Ranade, a Vedantic teacher and scientist and Peter Russell, well known science author and spiritual practitioner.

The Shaman, the Spirit Healer and the Earth—Flordemayo, a Mayan spirit healer, and Angaangaq, an Eskimo-Kalaalit Shaman from Greenland. The Mystical Experience -- Benedictine monk Brother David Steindl-Rast (Christian contemplation), Rabbi Jonathan Omer-Man (Jewish Kabbalah) and Maata Lynn Barron (Islamic Sufi).

Oneness: The Big Picture—renowned writer Deepak Chopra and Riane Eisler, social scientist and best-selling author.
Dreams, Visions and Realities. Global Spirit host Phil Cousineau, psychologist Dr. Stephen Aizenstat and Aboriginal elder “Yidumduma” Bill Harney.

“Global Spirit” debuts July 2 on KQED in San Francisco, then July 8 on many Public Television Stations nationwide. Season One runs for 10 consecutive weeks. “Global Spirit” debuts July 11 on PBS stations throughout the US, and will air on PBS stations for 18 months. The series is currently available in over 70% of US households.

For stations and times visit www.globalspirit.tv

Stephen Olsson is President and Senior Producer of CEM Productions the non-profit organization Cultural & Educational Media (www.CEMproductions.org) creating Global Spirit in collaboration with Link TV (www.linktv.org), the first nationwide network dedicated to providing Americans with global perspectives on news, events and culture.

Phil Cousineau is Global Spirit program host and moderator. He is an award-winning writer, teacher, travel leader and storyteller. “A few years back, I had the very good fortune to be introduced to Phil,” Olsson recalls. “We hit it off, recognizing that in a series like ‘Global Spirit’ we could be more than the sum of our parts. Phil is a talented writer and fellow spiritual seeker, a close associate of both Joseph Campbell and Huston Smith. Like Campbell and Smith, Phil has a unique breadth and depth, coupled with a huge amount of personal integrity, which I think comes across in each program.”
New Global Spirit Episodes on LINK TV

(with introductions and closing commentary by John Cleese)

STARTING SUNDAY, MAY 12TH at 6:00PM & 9:00PM Pacific/9:00PM and 12:00AM Eastern; Broadcast nationally on Satellite Broadcasters Direct TV Channel 375 & DISH Network Channel 9410;

WITH GLOBAL INTERNET SIMULCASTS FOR PREMIERS JUNE 9TH AND JUNE 16TH ON:

WWW.GLOBALSPIRIT.TV

1. RUMI AND THE SUFI PATH OF LOVE
May 12 & June 30 (6:00PM & 9:00PM Pacific/9:00PM & 12:00AM Eastern)

This program transports viewers into the poetry and teachings of the renowned 13th century sufi philosopher and poet Jalaluddin Rumi with sufi shaykh Kabir Helminski, and Rumi filmmaker Parisa Soultani, as studio guests, with video sequences and Rumi recitations from Coleman Barks, Andrew Harvey, John Cleese and others.

2. EARTH WISDOM FOR A WORLD IN CRISIS
May 19 & June 30 (6:00PM & 9:00PM Pacific/9:00PM & 12:00AM Eastern)

This Global Spirit program focuses on the wisdom of indigenous peoples, and the values and practices that have promoted heightened consciousness, spiritual harmony and a life in balance with nature. Filmed at a unique gathering of indigenous peoples from around the world at the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.

3. SOUND OF THE SOUL
May 26 & July 7 (6:00PM & 9:00PM Pacific/9:00PM & 12:00AM Eastern)
http://www.cemproductions.org/globalspirit/sound-of-the-soul/

SOUND OF THE SOUL is a compelling portrait of an Arab country where Muslims, Christians, and Jews have lived together in relative peace for centuries. Beautifully photographed during the Fez Festival of World Sacred Music, this film presents unforgettable performances from groups from Morocco, Ireland, Afghanistan, Mauritania, the USA, Portugal and France, illustrating how music is a unifying, transcendent force, and a powerful starting point for reducing conflict and crossing religious divides.
4. IN SEARCH OF ECSTASY
June 2 & July 14 (6:00PM & 9:00PM Pacific/9:00PM & 12:00AM Eastern)
http://www.cemproductions.org/globalspirit/in-search-of-ecstasy/

This program explores the ecstatic state — a global phenomenon found in all kinds of spiritual, religious, and wisdom traditions. Studio guests Sobonfu Somé, and Andrew Harvey create a lively discussion, which is interwoven with video segments that transport the audience on a journey inside different cultural expressions of divine ecstasy, from the Orisha priestesses of Nigeria to the whirling dervishes of Turkey.

5. THE ART OF LIVING AND DYING
June 9 & July 21 (6:00PM & 9:00PM Pacific/9:00PM & 12:00AM Eastern)

NOTE: GLOBAL INTERNET SIMULCAST; JUNE 9; 6:00 PDT / 9:00 EDT / 04:00 GMT)
http://www.cemproductions.org/globalspirit/the-art-of-living-dying/

Our most basic understanding of life is in many ways determined by our understanding of death. This Global Spirit program presents a powerful conversation between two dedicated spiritual leaders in the end-of-life movement. Harpist, singer and lay Benedictine Therese Schroeder-Sheker, who founded the Chalice of Repose Project, joins Frank Ostaseski, the Zen Hospice Project co-founder and current director of the Metta Institute, to explore how a more conscious relationship to death can radically shift our experience of life.

6. THE INTERSPIRITUAL DIALOGUE WITH FATHER THOMAS KEATING
June 16 & July 28 (6:00PM & 9:00PM Pacific/9:00PM & 12:00AM Eastern)

NOTE: GLOBAL INTERNET SIMULCAST; July 16 ; 6:00 PDT / 9:00 EDT / 04:00 GMT
http://www.cemproductions.org/globalspirit/the-interspiritual-dialogue/

THE INTERSPIRITUAL DIALOGUE with Father Thomas Keating illustrates a new era of spiritual consciousness and a new level of communication and exchange among many of the world’s spiritual and contemplative traditions. Filmed at the Snowmass InterSpiritual gathering, committed spiritual seekers from many faiths come together to uncover and identify the core truths that lie at the heart of all world religions, with Father Keating providing an inspiring combination of reflection and mentorship to all present.
STORY POWER

and the Step to

Sacred Earth Community

by David Korten

Editor’s note: David Korten is a leading voice in world change and has been part of the ongoing interspiritual discussion especially since the publication of *The Coming Interspiritual Age*. In inviting him to contribute to this ezine, we felt it was most important that our readers have a chance to read his essays on the emerging “Integral Spirit” cosmology (from *YES* magazine and other sources) in their entirety. So he has kindly allowed us to link them here, after the brief introduction about his work that he has supplied in the pages that follow.
While writing *When Corporations Rule the World* some twenty years ago, I frequently gave talks on the imperative to restructure our economies and our most powerful economic institutions to avoid potential species self-extinction. I often got a response something like this:

“I think you may be right, but the changes you suggest would be very expensive and involve serious inconvenience. Furthermore, you may be wrong and we would have ended the party for nothing.”

I was stunned, dismayed, and puzzled. How could it be that life has so little meaning? Then I chanced upon this observation by Thomas Berry in his book *Dream of the Earth*:

“For people generally, their story of the universe and the human role in the universe is their primary source of intelligibility and value. The deepest crises experienced by any society are those moments of change when the story becomes inadequate for meeting the survival demands of a present situation.”

We humans live by stories that frame our understanding of our world, our human possibilities, and ourselves. Lacking a sacred story that gives our lives meaning, purpose, and a framework for caring cooperative relationships with one another and nature, we have embraced money and the free market as a religion—allowing them to define our shared purpose and mediate our relationships with one another and our Earth Mother. It is a poor choice.

Earth is sacred. Life is sacred. Money is only an accounting entry—a number on a piece of paper or in a computer hard drive. The free market that automatically transforms individual greed into prosperity for all is a fantasy with no more reality than the belief that alchemists had the power to turn lead into gold.

Resolution of the human crisis depends on a sacred story that gives us reason to put the excesses of our species adolescence behind us, acknowledge the interdependence of all life, and accept our adult responsibility to care for one another and Earth as we care for ourselves.

A striking reality of modern society is the contrast between the life-affirming values and understanding of the stories that psychologically mature humans hold privately in their heart and the money worshipping values and understanding of the stories that shape public conversation and many of our day-to-day choices. The latter bind us to our adolescence. The former offer a path to liberation, if we but take public the truth the human heart already knows through an open and respectful conversation.

Sensing a growing public readiness for that conversation, I’ve been working over the past few months with an expanding circle of organizations and colleagues, including Kurt Johnson, on
initiatives to frame and facilitate that conversation. This engagement has produced a series of blogs and essays exploring a multidimensional sacred story that aligns with indigenous wisdom, what most people know in their heart, the teachings of the mystics of the world’s major religious traditions, and the findings of contemporary science. It is a story that provides a powerful spiritual and intellectual frame for a new economy grounded in a deep respect for the Sacred Earth Community from which all life flows and on which all life depends.

For more than 50 years, I have engaged at the periphery of the human effort to penetrate the deepest mysteries of creation. Since March 2012, this inquiry has become a nearly full-time occupation. The essay “Religion, Science, and Spirit: A Sacred Story for Our Time,” to which many friends and colleagues have contributed, is one result. You may find “The Personal Story Behind the Essay” to be a helpful introduction.

The essay explores how the distant patriarch and grand machine stories underlying much of our current public discourse bear major responsibility for the current human crisis. It goes on to outline an integral spirit cosmology grounded in foundational truths and insights from religion and science that acknowledge the nature and significance of the spiritual ground of creation and provide a framework for deepening our understanding of creation’s extraordinary capacity to self-organize toward every greater complexity, potential, and self-awareness.

This capacity expresses in truly extraordinary ways in the structure and dynamics by which the trillions of trillions of infinitely varied organisms that comprise Earth’s biosphere self-organize to create and maintain the conditions essential to life’s existence and continuing evolution. The

“Let ours be a time remembered for the awakening of a new reverence for life...”
THE EARTH CHARTER
human body is an equally extraordinary expression of this capacity as tens of trillion of individual and widely varied choice-making cells self-organize to create and maintain an organism with physical and intellectual capacities far beyond the abilities of any of the individual cells that comprise the whole.

In recreating human societies and the institutions by which we manage the relationships by which we generate our individual and collective means of living, we have much to learn from life’s self-organizing structures and dynamics. This learning holds the key to defining and creating a new economy that aligns with and functions in symbiotic relationship with the living systems of Sacred Earth.

I explore the connections between the human economy and Earth’s living systems in a recent YES! Magazine article on “What Would a Down-to-Earth Economy Look Like?” and in “The Pursuit of Happiness: A Living Earth Economic Paradigm,” which I wrote as a contribution to the New Development Paradigm Working Group appointed by the King of Bhutan. For more detailed discussion of practical implications and applications, see my recent New Economy blogs and the abbreviated and serialized version of the 2nd edition of my most recent book *Agenda for a New Economy.*

**David Korten** is cofounder and board chair of YES! Magazine, co-chair of the New Economy Working Group, founder/president of the Living Economies Forum, and cofounding board member emeritus of the Business Alliance for Local Living Economies. He is the author of *Agenda for a New Economy,* *The Great Turning: From Empire to Earth Community,* and *When Corporations Rule the World.* He holds MBA and PhD degrees from the Stanford University Graduate School of Business and served on the faculty of the Harvard Business School.
Thomas Hübl and the
Academy of Inner Science

The Academy of Inner Science, a research institute for the mysticism of the 3rd Millennium that synthesizes innovation, the evolution of humankind, and timeless wisdom, was founded in 2008. As a contemporary non-dual spiritual teacher, I lead workshops, trainings, and events worldwide on behalf of the Academy. The aim of our organization is to connect the wisdom of the inner world with the wisdom of the outer world. I have been collaborating with others in the scientific community in order to find a common thread between the leading edge of mystical knowledge and the leading edge of brain science. In our three-year program called the *Timeless Wisdom Training* we offer a very deep encounter with the timeless wisdom and the evolutionary expression of life. In the future we will open a branch of the Academy in the United States.

The Mysticism of Our Times

A modern mysticism always carries the Timeless Wisdom within but it also acknowledges that the outer life continues to develop. We need answers to contemporary questions. God – or the
sacred space or the mystic depth dimension – needs a place again in our society. If we give this priority in our life everything else will follow. We will establish an economy and a science, a political program and education system that are aligned with universal principles that support. What does a modern path of mysticism beyond a traditional God image look like and which path can we take in order to unite the power of the traditions with the evolution of life?

In the postmodern marketplace we are faced with complex global topics of rapid scientific and technological developments. We need new prospects in order to creatively deal with the demands of life. We want to understand and comprehend life more deeply, as it is only when we are in touch with life on more profound levels of our self that we will receive answers to generic questions.

**Thousands of Years of Knowledge Every Single Moment**

Mysticism is the radical path of awakening through all times and in all marketplaces. That is why we call it the Timeless Wisdom: it is independent of the face of time. However, it expresses itself through this face. It is not limited to a specific form but constantly invents itself anew with the evolution of life and consciousness.

Thousands of years of knowledge can be found in the great wisdom traditions. We see an inner core of the principles and the awakening, and we see an outer casing of the culture that forms around it. In all great world religions like Judaism, Buddhism, Christianity or Taoism there is an inner practice of the Timeless Wisdom. When we understand it more deeply we will see that there are similar principles everywhere, that life consists of being and becoming, that it contains a deep consciousness aspect that is always present. The principle of the development of the souls and the enlightenment of our soul can be found in every tradition.

**Mysticism for the Rational Thinker**

A contemporary mysticism is a mysticism that no longer needs to hold to traditional God images but opens the space for a rational, scientific evolutionary step. It is a mysticism that reaches rational and scientifically educated people – in a way that they do not experience as regression but as progress. It is this mysticism that also has answers to questions of gen technology, the technological explosion, the global world society, etc. When it moves into economy, politics, education, medicine and science this also means though that these areas are
engaged in a constant update, because the evolution of humankind originates in this mystic core. This is where inspiration and innovation originate; this is the evolutionary impulse in action. And with this we want to consciously connect.

When we speak of mysticism, we speak of entrusting ourselves to a practice and engaging in an experiment of consciousness. And this experiment will bring us experiences. The person who has an experience does not need to believe in anything. Mysticism is beyond “I believe in God” or “I do not believe in God”. The idea is to devote ourselves to a practice that aligns us in such a way that we see the effects of this in our reality and that these effects cannot be denied. Thus there will be a point in time at which we simply know deep within. Not only rationally but in our hearts — what we might call the “inner science”.

**Great Perspectives for Great Challenges**

Mystics deepen this inner science in such a way, that they learn to understand the reality more deeply from looking within. A by-product of this are skills: e.g. to see people more deeply, to anticipate situations, to act in a way that originates in wisdom and spontaneity as opposed to conditioned, learned behavior patterns. All this means more intuition, more insight, more freedom. Mysticism appears mysterious (Greek: *mystikós*) because we enter worlds that we usually do not perceive. The mystic dimension is just the dimension in which we happen without knowing that we happen in it. That is why it is mysterious and draws skills forward that often appear wonderful to us.

The true mystics of all times were, and are, very radical people since mysticism challenges habits anew again and again, so that we stay in the flow of evolution. Habits, individual or cultural, are opposed to the evolutionary flow: we form them, identify with them and would love to anchor them in this way. But life is permanent movement. Life constantly puts up pressure in order to develop us further. If we do not do this, tensions, symptoms and also illnesses occur. If we evolve further expansion happens and we are in the flow. The mystic texts describe the wisdom also as flow of life. This means that we can become conscious in always deeper levels of our self and develop our potential.

**A Sustainable Global Society**

We can evolve from the basis of the alignment before a crisis comes and no longer need pressure in order to take the next steps. It is essential to learn this alignment in order to be able to transform our society into a sustainable global society. Otherwise we will deal with all questions of our lives exclusively from the place of human values and not from that of the more comprehensive, divine ones. This could be too limited and lead to great problems. We need the Timeless Wisdom for the topical questions because the Wisdom is the only place that has a great enough perspective to deal with all the achievements of our modern times.

www.innerscience.info

www.thomashuebl.com
by Maurizio and Zaya Benazzo

Since the Scientific Revolution, when empirical discoveries began to undermine religious doctrine, tension grew between those who sought truth through rational inquiry based on observation and those who accepted truths based on the authority of religious dogma. While the liberation of science from religion resulted in tremendous advances in science and technology, it also lead to the fragmentation of knowledge and to a science no longer engaged with the big questions: what it means to be human, to be conscious, to be a seeker of meaning amid the vagaries of life.

The annual Science and Nonduality Conference (SAND) which takes place in San Jose, California (Oct. 23-27th, 2013) and Doorn, The Netherlands (May 27th - June 3rd, 2013) creates a unique forum to bring preeminent thinkers from various fields of science into dialogue with spiritual teachers and practitioners, and members of the public seeking answers to the big questions in life, with the goal of contributing to healing the rift between science and spirituality.
SAND is also an expression of a new paradigm emerging in spirituality that is grounded in cutting-edge science and consistent with the ancient wisdom of nonduality—the deep understanding of the interconnectedness of life and grounded in direct experience.

Ultimately SAND is a playground where we come together to explore and share insights or simply reflect on what is emerging in consciousness. Knowing defines life; not knowing reminds us of the mystery and perfection of each and every moment. AT SAND we invite you to surrender to this not knowingness and let life unfold, let the mystery unfold.

At SAND you will encounter a playful intellectual and yet heart centered community which explores big questions with curiosity and lightness, where we share our insights with openness and meet each other beyond concepts in the silence of this moment.

SAND website:
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Spiritual Intelligence:  
A New Language for an Interspiritual Age

by Cindy Wigglesworth

A Logical Language
I don’t believe we have to choose between science and spirituality. There is a way we can talk about things of ultimate concern – about our noblest aspirations– that is logical, sound and helpful. By using a rigorous skills-based approach we can find the both/and of logic and spirituality. By using generic language and allowing for synonyms, three different groups of people can participate and develop their spiritual intelligence – specifically those who identify as:

• Religious
• Spiritual-but-not-religious
• Scientific atheists / secular humanists

The Field of “Intelligence”
Howard Gardner opened the door to discussion of “multiple intelligences” with his book *Frames of Mind* in 1983. He listed seven different types of intelligences:
  1. Linguistic
  2. Logical-mathematical
  3. Musical
  4. Bodily-kinesthetic
  5. Spatial
  6. Interpersonal
  7. Intrapersonal

A Simple Model of Four Intelligences
As an executive coach I have found that there are four intelligences leaders and professionals need to succeed: IQ, emotional intelligence (EQ), physical intelligence (body awareness and skillful use – PQ) and spiritual intelligence (the ability to be compassionate, wise and peaceful under great stress - SQ). These same four intelligences help all of us at home, at work, and in the community.

The bar chart below illustrates that a person can be highly developed in one intelligence (for example IQ) and poorly developed or average in another intelligence.

[Bar chart]

Defining the word “intelligence”:
I define intelligence as an innate potential brought into form through practice. For example, someone with the potential for music would need to practice an instrument and learn the theory and put some effort into the process to develop a musical intelligence. You may have emotions, but that doesn’t mean you will be emotionally intelligent (see the work of Daniel Goleman and Richard Boyatzis and their *Emotional Competence Inventory*). Some would say we are “born spiritual” – and I would agree. We are not, however, born spiritually intelligent. That is a set of skills developed over time.
Defining spiritually intelligence: looking at spiritual exemplars
I begin many of my workshops by asking people – typically working in teams - two simple questions.

1. Write down the spiritual leaders/teachers you have admired in your life
2. List the character traits that caused you to admire these people

I have done this now with thousands of people since 2000. What I find both reassuring and fascinating is that the lists look so similar from group to group. The list typically includes major religious figures from many traditions, global peace activists, local religious leaders, teachers, guidance counselors, family members and spiritual writers.

The traits that caused these people to be considered “spiritual leaders” typically includes descriptors such as: loving, kind, forgiving, peaceful, courageous, honest, generous, persistent, faithful, wise, and inspiring.

What the consistency of the responses tells me is that we already have a general perception of what makes someone “spiritually intelligent.” What have not previously had is a way of describing the skills it takes to get there.

Defining Spiritual Intelligence:
Initially I wanted to define spiritual intelligence as “behaving with love.” But the word “love” is difficult in English as we are sloppy in our use of it. I found a definition of love from the Eastern traditions that says “Love is a bird with two wings. One wing is compassion. The other wing is wisdom. If either wing if broken the bird cannot fly.” From this I defined spiritual intelligence as “the ability to behave with wisdom and compassion while maintaining inner and outer peace (equanimity) regardless of the circumstances.” Wisdom, compassion and peace seem to encapsulate the essence of our spiritual exemplars.

Based on this definition I have created a list of 21 skills that I believe represents the skills of Spiritual Intelligence. They are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SQ21: Spiritual Intelligence Skills</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Higher Self/ego self Awareness</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Awareness of own worldview</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Awareness of life purpose (mission)</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Awareness of values hierarchy</td>
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<td>4. Complexity of inner thought</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Awareness of ego self / Higher Self</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Universal Awareness</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Awareness of interconnectedness of all life</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Awareness of worldviews of others</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Breadth of time / space perception</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. Awareness of limitations/power of human perception</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Awareness of spiritual laws</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Experience of transcendent oneness</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Higher Self/ego self Mastery</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Commitment to spiritual growth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Keeping Higher Self in charge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Living your purpose and values</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Sustaining your faith</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Seeking guidance from Higher Self</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social Mastery / Spiritual Presence</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. A wise and effective spiritual teacher/mentor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. A wise and effective change agent</td>
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<tr>
<td>19. Makes compassionate and wise decisions</td>
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<tr>
<td>20. A calming, healing presence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Being aligned with the ebb and flow of life</td>
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Each of these skills has been described in five levels of skill proficiency. Level 0 is implied, and means that the person has not begun to develop that skill. Level 5 is the highest level we measure with our online self-assessment. No skill or level is considered “required.” And even at Level 5 a person is not considered “finished” as there is always room to grow.

**Rigorously created and field tested:**
The SQ21 assessment based on this model has been created with PhD assistance from the beginning. It has been created, validated, and used in the real world of executive and personal coaching and in leadership development. It is rigorous enough for the scientifically minded, clear and practical enough for corporations to use. It is faith-neutral yet faith-friendly. Application of this tool requires that we hold our language lightly, allow people to use synonyms (see the glossaries available [here](#)) and let people focus on skills they believe are important to them. For scientific atheists this is especially crucial as some skills will be potentially less appealing for them (e.g. Skill 11).

I believe an interspiritual age will require a language and conceptual model capable of transcending and integrating across our usual divisions. I think SQ21 is a practical beginning for us to move in that direction.

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Cindy Wigglesworth is author of the best-selling book *SQ21: The Twenty-One Skills of Spiritual Intelligence*. She has appeared on Oprah, PBS, Fox news, and numerous radio programs. She certifies coaches, consultants, therapists, faith leaders, and others in the use of her SQ21 assessment.

For more go to: [www.deepchange.com](http://www.deepchange.com)

or email: [cindy@deepchange.com](mailto:cindy@deepchange.com)
Interfaith
Multi-Cultural Dialogue:
The Global Harmony Association

by Dr Leo Semashko
Universal and holistic harmony exists on different levels: at the individual level of the person, at the global and local social levels of human society and on an infinite level of the Cosmos, the Universe and God. It is clear that these levels are inseparable and exist only through each other, and mutually interpenetrate, including each other. This determines their infinite complexity and inexhaustibleness of knowledge. Any knowledge of harmony is relative and limited, constantly extending, deepening and proclaiming in the historical process of human knowledge. It is also natural that, for universal, holistic and infinite harmony, there is no single and absolute form of human knowledge that is necessary and sufficient for its knowledge. There are many forms of its private knowledge, necessary but not sufficient, each on its own. There are two main forms of its knowledge: intuition (including faith) and science (as one of the highest manifestations of reason).

In his early book "Toward a True Kinship of Faiths" the Dalai Lama wrote about his trip in 1956 in Chennai (then Madras): "There I was first directly exposed to people, and to a movement, that attempted to bring together the wisdom of the world's spiritual traditions as well as science. I felt among the members a sense of tremendous openness to the world's great religions and a genuine embracing of pluralism. When I returned to Tibet in 1957, after more than three months in what was a most amazing country for a young Tibetan monk, I was a changed man. I could no longer live in the comfort of an exclusivist standpoint that takes Buddhism to be the only true religion." His Holiness has highlighted the need for several religious traditions in this world. He said the concept of one Religion, one Truth may seem to contradict the concept of Several Religions, Several Truths. However, he said that at the individual level having clarity with one Religion, one Truth may be more suitable, while to a community and the society as a whole, Several Religions, Several Truths were something that nobody could ignore.”

This view is fundamental to the vision of the GHA. The Global Harmony Association emblem represents the goddess of harmony as a beautiful woman who inspires our planet by universal scientific knowledge of harmony. This emblem expresses the basic relationship of cause and consequence: harmony is a cause, source, basis and foundation for true peace including the deep interreligious world.

GLOBAL HARMONY ASSOCIATION

www.peacefromharmony.org
Ordinary people everywhere are undergoing a shift to an Awakened state of consciousness which is transforming their understanding of themselves and the world. For some, this shift has been abrupt and dramatic. For others, it has been so gradual that they may not have realized it has occurred. Such shifts, or “awakenings,” are not new: Christ spoke of the “Kingdom of Heaven within,” Buddhists speak of Nirvana, Zen masters of Satori, Hindus of Moksha, but these traditions generally regard these states as rare and difficult to attain.

Many people are therefore skeptical of claims of higher states of consciousness. They find it hard to believe that apparently ordinary friends and neighbors might be experiencing something extraordinary. Maybe they expect Enlightenment to look as remarkable on the outside as it is reputed to be on the inside.

I founded Buddha at the Gas Pump to help dispel skepticism and misconceptions by week after week, allowing otherwise ordinary people to relate their experience of spiritual awakening. The terminology is tricky, because there are no universally agreed upon definitions to describe this experience. Also, enlightenment is not something that an individual person “gets”. It’s not even something that the mind can grasp. It’s an awakening to that which contains the mind and all other things. So it’s not surprising that language is inadequate to convey it.

Perhaps those listening to these interviews will become convinced, as I am, that genuine and permanent spiritual awakenings are not just a pipe dream, but are real and are becoming relatively commonplace.
Having said that, and having conducted 170 interviews to date, several conclusions have crystalized in my understanding (always subject to dissolution and revision):

- The range of spiritual evolution is much greater than is commonly realized. In terms of what might be possible, we’re all relative beginners. As Adyashanti put it, “Even now with me, the mystery is just beginning. Always still beginning.” And to quote St. Teresa of Avila, “The feeling remains that God is on the Journey too.”

- When sufficient “finding” has occurred, seeking relaxes, but exploration and discovery never ceases. The Absolute doesn’t change, but there’s no end to the degree to which its reflection or embodiment can be refined.

- We’re multidimensional beings. Enlightenment doesn’t mean locking into Ultimate Reality and dismissing everything else as illusion. It means incorporating all levels within a greater wholeness, and being able to behave appropriately in all circumstances.

- “Don’t mistake understanding for realization. Don’t mistake realization for liberation.” – Tibetan proverb. An intellectual understanding of Reality can be quite intoxicating, because it is intuitively enriched by the fact that we are that Reality. But decades may elapse between the dawning of this understanding and its significant experiential realization. Yet the internet chat groups are commonly dominated by people claiming to be “fully awake”, and exhorting others to give up all practices and teachers and just realize that there is nothing to seek, nowhere to go, etc. I would advise such people go back to the first point in this list. No matter how “advanced” or “finished” we may be, “the mystery is just beginning. Always still beginning”.

Rick Archer learned Transcendental Meditation at the age of 18, was trained by Maharishi Mahesh Yogi as a TM teacher in 1970, and served in that capacity for 25 years, teaching hundreds of people, lecturing around the world, helping to train TM teachers, and serving at the international headquarters of the TM organization in Switzerland. He earned Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Vedic Studies from Maharishi International University. Rick is no longer associated with the TM organization, having become too eclectic and independent in his perspective to comply comfortably with the organization's policies. Rick is a self-employed search engine optimization specialist (http://searchsummit.com). He created Buddha at the Gas Pump (http://batgap.com) in the Fall of 2009.
The BARKA Foundation is pioneering an interspiritual path toward poverty eradication and development.

The word “barka” is a West African word used across borders and cultures to express gratitude. If you say barka to someone, the appropriate response is to say barka to God. It implies blessing and connotes reciprocity because the person who says barka to another is equally blessed. It shares a derivation with the Hebrew word Baruch and the Sufi word Baraka.

We chose the word Barka as the name of our organization because our lives had been forever changed by the shamans and wisdomkeepers of Burkina Faso with whom we worked for many years and we wanted to say thank you in as big a way as we could. Under the tutelage of Dr. Malidoma Patrice Some, we were brought to Burkina Faso, an impoverished, landlocked nation the size of Colorado located in the Sahel, where we had the great privilege to work with some extraordinary indigenous spiritual healers. Malidoma has put a more integral spin on the subject of shamanism by redefining it as “Indigenous African Spiritual Technology”. He reacquainted us with our indigenous selves and prepared us to enter an indigenous context.
consciously, i.e., with as minimal a disturbance as possible for a westerner (not an easy task).

Hence the fundamental dilemma of our work: how to create greater resilience in communities without doing unto them, i.e., implementing programs as if we know what’s best for them. We may indeed be led by Spirit and The Ancestors, however we take our direction from the people on the ground who have embraced us as family. We too have embraced Burkinabe as our family. This notion that we are all One Family (One Love) is central to our worldview. It is only by fully embracing this that a culture of peace can be achieved on this planet, and that is our highest aspiration for this work.

In 2012, BARKA implemented a water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) project in the small rural village of Tantiaka. This was the result of a discussion among women years before when they agreed to work together with BARKA and determined by themselves that their greatest need (and our first collaboration) would be focused on providing the village with clean water. They participated and took ownership at every step and level and established their own water & sanitation committee to maintain and sustain the well, the improved sanitation and newly created hygiene awareness. BARKA worked integrally not only with villagers, but also with local, national and traditional authorities. In this way, we get out of the way. We see ourselves as a catalyst, a facilitator.

BARKA’s development approach is holistic, interfaith, inter-cultural and inter-generational. If the goal is to permanently break the cycle of extreme poverty, WASH alone is not enough. We are therefore working with Burkinabe to develop programs to empower women, mitigate effects of climate change, create energy independence and bolster food security in ways that are sustainable, cost-effective and culturally appropriate.

Burkina is the only developing country where BARKA works—it will take us the rest of our lives just to yield the results for which we strive. However we also work in the US and hope to soon expand to other developed countries.

The key word is *reciprocity*. This is a word that Malidoma reawakened and contextualized for us. If we’re going to do development right, it’s got to work and flow both ways... it’s no longer just about how we can help them, it’s also about how they can help us. We’ve actually met
some pretty smart people who don’t actually believe the indigenous paradigm has anything to teach post-modern civilization. Such arrogance is what got us into the global mess we’re in right now. The only way out of it is to learn from each other, to open our hearts and share our respective gifts with one another.

This strikes us as a precondition for the coming interspiritual age. What will it take to get there? Education and consciousness building. This is the nature of BARKA’s work in developed countries—to raise awareness, get people involved, motivated, inspired to lead and fulfill their unique life purpose in the process of repairing the world (tikkun olam). When a community in the US engages with a village in Burkina Faso, they are as enriched and benefit as much as the so-called “beneficiaries”—we’ve seen it happen. The Dalai Lama said war was obsolete. We say charity is obsolete. The new development paradigm is one of reciprocity for the highest good of all and we give thanks. Barka.

Ina and Esu Anahata are the Co-Founders of The BARKA Foundation. They received the Shining World Compassion Award by Supreme Master Ching Hai in 2009. They co-directed the feature-length documentary film BARKA!BURKINA! Their essay about their work is published in Hope for Africa by Heatherleigh Press. Anahata is the Sanskrit word for Heart Chakra. In Africa, Ina is known as Pochilo, light of the moon and Esu is known as Yieni Ye, light of the sun.

Esu is a graduate of Williams College and was an actor, television producer and media technology consultant before dedicating his life to Burkina Faso. In 2010 he received a full scholarship to study Social Impact Analysis at the Jameel Poverty Action Lab. In 2011 he studied interfaith religion and social entrepreneurship at Cambridge University as an Ariane de Rothschilds Fellow.

Ina is a nationally licensed reverend with the Temple of the Feminine Divine. She has worked with shamans in the Peruvian Amazon and Ecuador, and with Native American elders and medicine keepers on Turtle Island. She is a trained diviner in the sacred art of cowrie shell, stick and voice divination. Ina is a gifted hands-on healer specializing in her own form of transformational bodywork and sound healing. She is also a published songwriter. Fifteen of her songs are published in the Women with Wings songbook. Her song “Gratitude” is used throughout the world as a prayer. She is a mother of three and grandmother of five.

Please visit http://www.barkafoundation.org
by Marc Ian Barasch

It’s said that in meditation, you should practice as if your hair is on fire. But what to do when the world is on fire--its forests burning, people famishing, the web of life rending, the climate tipping toward chaos?

Several years ago, I wrote a book, *Field Notes on the Compassionate Life*, a journalistic foray into the deep backcountry of empathy and altruism. I didn’t realize then how much the words I put on the page would get under my skin. But hanging out with the folks who do the heart’s heavy lifting—workers in homeless shelter, kidney donors, people who forgave their mortal enemies—changed me. I no longer felt content to bounce media signals off the satellites. I wanted to step up to the bodhisattva vows I’d taken in my twenties.

I decided to perform an ad hoc metaphysical experiment. I’d “ask the universe” to reveal the best way I could do palpable good somewhere, somehow, for someone. Mix one part *wu-wei*,
the Taoist art of “not-doing” with one part benign intention and gently stir. One day, by chance, I met an old man who’d spent his life planting trees. As we talked through the afternoon and into the evening, he explained that trees were the ecological equivalent of one-stop shopping: they could restore degraded soil, increase crops, feed livestock, provide building materials and firewood, sustain villages, bring back biodiversity, and return dormant springs to life—all while sucking climate-changing CO2 from the atmosphere.

I was fascinated. What better expression of compassion…green compassion? A tree is more than an environmental Swiss Army Knife. It’s a gorgeous, iconic symbol of wholeness and abundance, deep-rooted in the human psyche. Putting more of them into the ground seemed like the most generative, creative thing I could think of.

A friend gave me the umbrella of his nonprofit foundation. “The penniless philanthropist,” I joked, as a laptop on the kitchen table became headquarters for what I dubbed, picking a name from a hat, the Green World Campaign.

I conceived an ambitious slogan: “ReGreen the World.” I wanted to enable anyone to directly participate some be-the-change generosity by planting trees in decimated forests and poor communities living on degraded land. I hoped to not just develop a critical global service, but create a carrier-wave for an ethos of wholeness, mindfulness, and compassion.

I decided to work for free, testing the germinating power of pure intent, the fecundity of the void. Willing hands soon appeared. A designer in Kyoto created a logo and a website. A volunteer programmer at the Smithsonian designed an interface to plant trees with mouse-clicks (a revelation back in prehistoric 2005).

There was a flow of synchronicity I soon came to expect but which never ceased to startle me. People seemed to appear as needed: a retired World Bank country director; a Berkeley geospatial expert; an adman who’d been featured in *The Tipping Point*; a former Stanford particle physicist living in Kenya; an animator for Coke ads. Some stayed with it, some passed through, each contributing their time or skill-sets or funds in whichever way and in whatever quantities made sense to them.

When my own savings were depleted and I began to doubt my own sanity, a movie director astonished me by writing a check I managed to stretch for several years. Someone gave me a ticket to Ethiopia so I could see first hand the programs we’d started to fund. One night I found
myself the only foreign face among ten thousand Muslim pilgrims at a backcountry religious festival in the Gurage Zone. Families set up campsites bounded by sheets and chanted and clapped through the night, their silhouettes backlit by smoky orange fires. And I felt enfolded, no longer a stranger in a strange land but a global citizen, permanent home address Earth.

Later, I visited a remote village where the main water pump had been broken for more than a year. The stagnant well was infested with parasites. The young people had to trek for miles each morning to get fresh water, reserving a few gallons to keep some scraggly tree seedlings alive. For under a thousand dollars, I was told, they could get their pump fixed. Done, I said. Kadam! they yelled. Wonderful! I reveled in the joy on the kids’ faces, amazed that by scratching a few symbols on a piece of paper I could renew a village. I was finally getting to build more than scaffoldings of ideas, walls of images, houses of words.

The work has gotten more organized since then, spreading to Uganda; India; the Philippines (agroforestry with cocoa farmers in a conflict zone of Mindanao); Mexico (replanting the decimated oyamel woodlands of the world’s last Tlahuica-speaking community); and now Kenya. There we’re helping restore and protect the endangered Rumuruti Forest alongside thousands of dedicated small farming families. We’ve established a hundred Green World Schools programs around Mombasa, where kids plant up to 2000 trees per school, then bring their knowledge and ethos to their rural farming communities. With funding, we could grow to a thousand such programs.
We taught children to grow the drought-resistant moringa tree, whose leaves contain 30 percent high-quality protein and an amazing spectrum of vitamins and minerals—a true superfood. When their parents and grandparents learned about its nutritional properties, they started growing it by the tens of thousands, regenerating land and creating a bulwark against future famine. The Kenyan Red Cross has asked to work with us planting moringa trees in another 40 locations.

We’re adding conflict resolution, a critical skill for future global citizens.

We brought together intertribal Kenyan youth in a movement for peaceful elections—“Plant a Tree, Harvest Peace”—that grew to included the national Kenyan Scouts and Wildlife Clubs. And we are expanding our sister school program internationally, from Obama’s alma mater, Hawaii’s Punahou School, to nine eco-schools in Malaysia. We’re creating a Green World Map where kids anywhere can geotag trees they’ve planted and share their hopes and dreams for a green and peaceful world.

I still believe in media, in the noosphere and the need to change consciousness: On Earth Day, 2011, we filled a dozen giant Times Square screens with images that went around the world enabling spectators to “Text TREE” and support reforestation via their cellphones. A pop star with 125 million YouTube fans adopted for his national concert tour, while Alan Menken, award-winning composer of “Beauty and the Beast” and “Little Mermaid,” has wrote songs for our Green World Children’s Choirs to be sung as a global “round.”

Surely, it’s not an uninterrupted arc of success. There have been screw-ups, encounters with corruption and betrayal. I’ve been reminded more than once how grasping, aversion, and ignorance ever shadow our generosity and openheartedness. Philanthropy can be a competitive scrum where the most ringing declarations of we’re-all-in-this-together devolve into what’s-in-it-for-me. Our operation still feels hand-to-mouth. And in Ethiopia’s Rift Valley, a mosquito donated a malarial parasite that nearly killed me, proving how small things of no seeming consequence can thwart our loftiest purposes.

I have also learned that as long as you’re willing to have your heart broken, all things are possible. The Bible lauds the mustard seed of faith. It’s said in Hinduism that “the means gather
around sattva.” New Agers reference “the power of intention.” Businesspeople talk about what happens when you put “skin in the game,” while Buddhists refer to tendrel (a Tibetan term that means both serendipity and the interdependence of all things). Whatever’s at work, I’ve had a growing sense of invisible orchestration and behind-the-scenes string-pulling since I started groping for some way to do my part for Gaia.

I’ve also taken note that though time, energy, vision, and love will go an astonishingly long way, funding really, really counts. True, the down-the-rabbit-hole illogic of the financial system can create its own warped logic for the rape of the Earth. And profits are mere number magic when the “bottom of the pyramid” is omitted from the bottom line, and nature’s value is discounted to near zero. (Put on a real green eyeshade and nearly every business on the planet is running deep in the ecological red.) Still, I’ve learned to respect—no, embrace—the dance-partner of illusion: money may not be “real,” but our organization suffers when it tromps on our instep, and we feel the joy of efficacy when it empowers our mission.

Surely, our collective problem is less a shortage of resources than a shortchanging of our imagination. I’ve learned to trust that solutions are self-emergent, and that to ask what the universe wants is not a crazy question.

I think a lot about seeds these days. How is a tiny dot of seemingly inert matter buried in dirt inscribed with the poem that is a tree? A seed is less a physical object than the germ of an idea. It’s the information it contains—what it innately knows— that mobilizes elements in the soil to join the dance that creates these magnificent living structures. Similarly, there’s something within each of us, within each situation, that already knows how to grow; that just needs light and nourishment to potentiate truly magical forces. If we plant a seed of intention and care diligently for its germination, it’s not unrealistic to expect something marvelous to come up.

Addressing the Divine, the poet Rilke wrote:

As a seed, You sleep in what is small;
and in the vast, You vastly yield Yourself.
Groping in roots, growing thick in trunks,
and in branches like a rising of the dead.”

I’ve come to admire the metaphoric elegance of a tree: donating free oxygen, running on solar energy, sheltering all creatures. Since forever, people have gathered beneath trees to parley and palaver, to picnic and to play. Every faith has a Great Tree somewhere in its narrative. Each sapling we help to plant feels like a resurrection of hope, an emissary to future generations.

When people ask me how the Green World Campaign is doing, I say: We’re walking in seven-league boots and running on a shoestring.” We have arrived at a juncture where we’re asking those who believe in the value of the work we’re doing to step up and help us to put this amazing, self-emergent effort on solid footing. Thoreau lauded “building castles in the air,” adding, “now put a foundation under them.”

The U.N. estimates there are 5 billion acres of degraded land in the world capable of being
restored in a ways that help both people and planet, as a living legacy to our children’s children.

The Green World Campaign is in a position to expand landscape restoration and school programs worldwide, plant billions of trees, and invite millions of people to join one of the great challenges for global citizens in the 20th century: to ReGreen the World. We invite you to join us in planting a seed of spirit in the soil of the world.

I started this work with a little slogan, a mantra I apply to both daily increments and grand gestures: *It’s amazing what one seed can grow.* Sown in the ground, planted in the heart, each day it grows a little more true.

Marc Ian Barasch is the author of *Field Notes on the Compassionate Life*, which Archbishop Desmond Tutu called “a compulsory read for all,” and which inspired the recent film, “I Am.” Marc is founder and director of the Green World Campaign (www.greenworld.org). His book *Remarkable Recovery*, a study of spontaneous remission, has been translated into fifteen languages, and is used in medical schools and hospitals worldwide. He also wrote *The Healing Path*, which Dr. Larry Dossey called, “a beacon of science, spirituality, and sanity.” Marc’s book *Healing Dreams*, a study of what Carl Jung called “big dreams,” was hailed by the *Washington Post* as “lucid... courageous...trailblazing.” Marc was writer/producer of the Emmy-winning “One Child, One Voice,” an Earth Summit special (www.earthsecure.org) which aired to a global audience of 2 billion people. He has been an editor of leading national magazines like *Psychology Today, Natural Health*, and *New Age Journal*. Educated at Yale, he helped found the graduate psychology department at Naropa University.
“Co-Ordination”

An Increasingly Popular Outgrowth of the Interfaith/Interspiritual Movement

by Rev. Tim Miner OUnI and Rev. Dr. Kurt Johnson CMH

As the Interfaith and Interspiritual movements have grown worldwide, the idea of clergy becoming ordained in more than one tradition and/or also being ordained with the additional “tag” of Interfaith or Interspiritual Minister has become more and more popular. What has resulted is an interwoven tapestry of clergy whose ministries reflect the increasingly fewer and fewer boundaries among and across traditional religious denominations. Further, co-ordination has allowed anyone who may have run into difficulty with purely denominational ministry, especially because of their own interfaith or interspiritual activities, to find a new community if unfortunately they have been forced to leave the community of their original roots.
One path of co-ordination has grown from the work of the Order of Universal Interfaith (OUnI) (www.ouni.org) which is organized as a religious order in the District of Columbia and has a charter for such ordinations. It formed a partnership with the interspiritual constituency of Brother Wayne Teasdale (www.isdna.org) early in 2010 and the idea of co-ordination has grown ever since. On a cold January evening in 2010, over 50 clergy from a wide variety of faith traditions descended upon Washington, D.C., USA, to take part in the first co-ordination ceremony of OUnI that would provide a dual stature to serve all people of all faiths through the interfaith and interspiritual ecclesiastic religious society of OUnI. After almost 40 months and a dozen ceremonies all over the world, OUnI co-ordained clergy are actively meeting the spiritual needs of the world in many different ways and venues. Seven different subcommunities allow for a variety of expressions of the inclusive theology, spirituality and consciousness that defines the movement. They have created a theology conference to serve as the apologetic and publish on the movement. This event is the “Big I” (Interfaith, Interspiritual, Integral) conference, to date hosted by OUnI at the Scarritt-Bennett Conference Center on the campus of Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tennessee (www.bigiconference.org) and in 2014 in Arizona. These conferences have further breathed a synergy into the entire interfaith, interspiritual and integral enterprises.

The association of multifaith clergy facilitated by OUnI, now on five continents and in twenty countries, has become a living embodiment of the vision that all forms of human spirituality are
diverse expressions of the same spiritual goal—which is to be connected with higher callings and community beyond one’s own self or one’s conventional ethnic, national or religious identities. The idea of a universal order was envisioned in the creation of the Universal Third Order in the 1980’s (and now part of OUnI) and throughout the seminal interspiritual writings of Brother Wayne Teasdale. How that process is beginning to play out through the diverse constituencies now emerging across the interfaith, interspiritual and integral landscapes is an interesting phenomenon to watch.

OUnI has also provided recognition to “clergy level” leadership across traditions that are outside the conventional western boundaries of ministry. Through OUnI’s “Wisdom Keeper” status, the Order has been able to give recognition to the leaders of a myriad forms of human spirituality, many having no other legal recognition. This recognition is important for community and ministry building. Further, it has developed ordination specifically tailored for the diverse need of hospice and chaplaincy ministry. OUnI has also provided clerical status for community building, especially for community action-related programs, to communities who desire to use the terms “Brother” or “Sister” in their ministries.

At a September 2010 co-ordination in Sedona, Arizona, OUnI gave a seminal recognition to “integral ministry” with an ordination of integral teachers supported by philosopher Ken Wilber, author of another important book for our time—*Integral Spirituality*. Ken Wilber is one of nine “Sages” recognized by OUnI, all of whose works have helped define the emerging universal spiritual path. We understand now that communities within the wider international integral community are also looking to co-ordination as a way to create and expand viable integral communities. OUnI has continued to offer its resources in those directions, realizing that its own seminal actions across the co-ordination phenomenon may lead many constituencies across the interfaith, interspiritual and integral landscape to now further think through what educations programs, and ordination, may mean for their uniquely emerging communities. As Brother Teasdale himself said “there are many paths to the tree-top but the ultimate view is the same”.

We have written this short article in response to many inquiries and responses that we have had speaking to how popular the vision of “co-ordination” has become. Anyone further interested in co-ordination as envisioned by The Order of Universal Interfaith is welcome to write to Rev. Miner at thminer@ouni.org.
In the middle of May, I am planning a trip to Lahore, Pakistan. Though Pakistan is a new country, Lahore has ancient roots and is the place where the country was born. The flag, though Islamic, has a white section that represents other religions and religious freedom is one of the founding principles. Another feature that Pakistan has in common with the US is that it is a former British colony, making English widely spoken. Urdu is the most common language spoken in Lahore. Although Islamabad is the Capitol of Pakistan, I think Lahore has the strongest spiritual role. Urdu is spoken in Lahore. It is also spoken in Lahori, India. I will speak on spirituality, interfaith harmony, and peace and education while visiting Lahore and Islamabad.

In my home city of New York City, New York, I am privileged to serve as President of the World Harmony Council & Forum, which I founded, and as Chairperson for Committee on Spirituality, Values and Global Concerns-NY, A Committee of the Conference of NGOs in Consultative Relationship with the United Nations. The global work that I do extends the message of these organizations to diverse audiences worldwide.

The NGO Committee on Spirituality, Values, and Global Concerns (NY) (“CSVGC-NY,” www.csvgc-ny.org) was created to advance a global culture of peace based on justice, solidarity, inclusiveness, shared responsibility, harmony, cooperation, compassion, love, wisdom, goodwill and reverence for the sacredness of all life through active peaceful engagement. Infused with a foundation of spirituality and
values which are universal in nature, transcending the boundaries of religion, ethnicity, gender and geography, the Committee is resolved to help bring about a culture in which we, the peoples of the world, can address together our common global concerns in a positive, holistic and transforming way and live together in peace with one another, thus realizing the core objectives and universal principles stated in the United Nations Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

In honor of the anniversary of the United Nations, 24 October, the CSVGC helped establish the annual "Spirit of the UN" Award Ceremony, during the 'Week Spirituality, Values and Global Concerns' in 2007, to foster the growth of a culture of peace in which “we, the peoples of the world”, can address together our common challenges in a holistic, positive and transformative way. The Week’s activities recognize that spirituality and adherence to universal values, such as those expressed in the United Nations Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, are important keys to providing solutions to global concerns. The aims of the Week are designed to inspire and generate collective engagement in an annual worldwide celebration.

Members of the UN community and the public are invited to participate. The theme for 2013 will be, "Spirit of the UN" - Ten Years Perspective: Sustainable Spirituality at the United Nations - 21-25 October and Award Ceremony, Monday, 21 October at the UN Church Center.

An International Message

People worldwide are joining together in recognition of the universal values shared by all humankind. We could say that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 10 December 1948) represents God's hope. It is not a law; it is a goal... 'a common standard of achievement'... something to strive for. When all people have read it, understand it, and come into alignment with its teaching and wisdom, there will be peace on earth, goodwill towards others, and people will act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.

When we, and all nations, come into alignment with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, citizens of all countries will be free to think and speak and learn and grow according to the truth of their own experience, and do so without denying others the freedom to do the same. And it is in that freedom that people will learn to live together in peace and justice.

All things are possible where there is freedom being expressed in a spirit of brotherhood. In all nations there will be freedom of religion and that means there will be no such thing as a Christian nation or a Muslim nation or a Jewish nation. All peoples must be free to think and to change and to grow and to love. Practicing religion does not give you permission to rule anyone but yourself.

While we are here on earth, we have an incredible opportunity to recognize and rejoice in the

“Unless there is a spiritual renaissance, the world will know no peace”

_Dag Hammarskjold, Secretary-General of the United Nations, 1953-1961_
unity of all being, to stand in awe and wonder at the glory of all that is, and to bring forward as much consciousness, love, solidarity, creativity, sensitivity, and goodness as we possibly can.

Developing and refining this kind of consciousness is a central element in what it means to develop an inner life. And this is one of the central aspects of spiritual practice. So, as I travel to Pakistan soon, I already expect that the tone, tenor—and yes, even the result—of this latest trip in the name of world harmony will be a furtherance of the rich discussion going on worldwide about universal values and the possibility of a future world of hope and prosperity.

Ms. Sharon Hamilton-Getz (http://sharonhamiltongetz.nation2.com/), is President and founder of World Harmony Council & Forum. She is a public speaker at the UN headquarters and across the US, in Europe and throughout the Middle East to a wide variety of audiences. As an interfaith minister, she has traveled internationally, as an ambassador of good will to lead peace conferences and forums emphasizing the importance of mutual respect and better understanding among cultures throughout the world. As previous president of UNA-USA in Laguna Beach, California she focused on education for peace and has shared music, on both Coasts to shine and propagate the message of peace, that is at the heart of all events organized, via the incredible creative abilities and powerful music made. She is Chair and Co-Founder of the NGO Committee on Spirituality, Values and Global Concerns-NY, A Committee of the Conference of NGOs in Consultative Relationship with the United Nations. She was awarded in 2011, the Humanity for Africa award and in 2012 "Leading Women for 2012," from Good Business International.
It has been a few months since the culmination of the One Earth, One Voice campaign's 99-day trek around the world. The journey, which touched six continents and countless lives, culminated on December 21, 2012 by bringing together voices in over 70 countries to sing a song in synchrony, in a musical and impassioned call for the healing of the earth. As the progenitor of the campaign, I walked the earth for 99 days, circumnavigating our planet with a 14-inch diameter glass globe in my arms—symbol of earth's frailty—recognizable as such by people of every walk of life, culture and ideological persuasion.

Since my return I have been engaged in deep reflection on the journey—its impact, its implications, where we go from here. I've conferred with our constituents and advisors worldwide, asking the question, "Is there interest in continuing our efforts, in growing what we've started?" The answer, continent by continent, unanimously, has been a resounding yes, while stories continue to pour in from around the world—villages in Africa, communities in the Pacific Northwest, schools in South America—letting us know that at the moment our song rose up for the earth, they were with us.

What is it about this movement that has touched the hearts of so many around the world? To a person, I have heard something about the restoration of hope, vision, and yes, the re-engagement of their imagination. This movement, this moment on earth, somehow gave them permission to dare once again to dream and work toward a life on earth that is balanced and healthy for all; a life, in short, beyond this crisis. At its most essential, this is nothing less than a
spiritual referendum on the fate of humanity—a late-hour bid for a triumphant human narrative in the long-spun story of earth.

What it will take, therefore, is the reclamation of all things genuinely human: the restoration of imagination, ingenuity and creativity to the very center of the dialogue and course of action in moving us successfully through this crisis. It takes scientists to help us understand the issues and what's at stake. It will take every single one of us, aided by our own creative capacity, to move human hearts, to remind ourselves of why the fight for this planet—and therefore for our own humanity—matters, not just for us, but for those generations to follow.

Imagination and the Power of Symbol
Joseph Campbell once described a symbol as "a sign that points past itself to a ground of meaning and being that is one with the consciousness of the beholder." Our glass globe was met with tears by some and surprised laughter by others, but its effect was remarkably universal in every country and culture to which we have traveled. It can best be summed up by the comment made to me on the flight to Cairo in November. I shared a row with a man from the Hausa tribe, a cardiologist from Nigeria. Our globe took the seat between us. He and I laughed as together we wrapped the globe in a blanket and secured the lap belt around her. "We—you and I—and all of us (gesturing to our fellow passengers)—we are all in this together," he said, pointing to the wrapped up globe. "And she is very, very fragile."

Earth's Frailty and the Human Story: A Brief Summary
As modern, industrialized life evolved, particularly in urban centers of the world, humanity pulled itself farther and farther away from the roots—literally—of the sustaining processes of human life. The cadences of nature became an abstraction, muted almost to the point of invisibility by the manufactured "micro-environments" created through intensive industrialization and its economic derivatives.

Yet, in the unbridled enthusiasm of new discovery and technological advances, we—heirs to Prometheus—were unable, perhaps unwilling, to see and consider all that the flame of insight revealed. In our selective perception, we failed to recognize the causal link between the illuminative light of those advances and the long shadow they cast, first, upon those fellow human beings who were caught as dehumanized cogs in the massive machines of progress, and second, upon the softer rhythms of the laws of the natural world. Even with this dire analysis of how we got here, and where we are at present, I remain fiercely hopeful about our species and the future of our planet. The vast scope of technological advances of
the last century in particular has taught us something as a species, if we are willing to accept the lesson as well as its implications.

We have learned that there are no limits to our capacities of co-creation. We are a hybrid species, one might say—part earth, part spirit—co-conspirators with the cosmos in expressing all that can be manifest in life on earth. It is an immense responsibility, as well as our greatest privilege, particularly as we recognize the frailty of our earth and the degree to which our choices and decisions directly impact the future of life on her body, not just for our species, but for all living creatures.

Nature doesn't shout. She never will. Nature will, however—and is—heaving in her utter exhaustion and in an attempt to restore balance to her systems—to her body. In the end, there is no negotiating with her law. We are either in alignment with it, or we are not. If we choose to stay misaligned, we do so at our own peril. That it is this same law which brought our species into being in the first place only adds to the agonizing poignance of this critical decision-point time in the history of the earth. In short, it is the most fragile time our earth has ever faced, and our species holds the key to its resolution, one way or another. We literally, and figuratively, hold this beautiful, fragile earth in our hands.

**Pointing Us Through—the Power of Human Imagination**

I believe that the environmental crisis and the broader, modernist crisis of existential meaning are derived from the same source of evolutionary thought. In the end, what we are experiencing is at its deepest level a crisis of imagination, struggling with immense fears to let go of the way we have done things on earth until now, to embrace the vast unknown of those new models of living that are the only sustainable ways forward. May the newly reelected president of the United States take heed, take courage and take action. May we courageously raise our own voices as well.

Human imagination and creativity can—and must—guide us through these uncharted waters. Fortunately there are many brave voices among us who are already pointing the way. But a crisis of this scale necessitates that all human beings engage in this imaginative process together, in hearts as well as minds, and that every voice and human heart finds its place in the dialogue. It is for this reason I walked the streets, villages, and cities of the earth, glass globe in my arms and a song for the earth in my heart, for 99 days. And I came to learn that in every step along the way, I was not alone.

**Shyla Nelson** is an internationally-acclaimed classical soprano, holistic voice trainer, and Founder of One Earth. One Voice., an environmentally-focused campaign through song, now in over 70 countries worldwide. Having circumnavigated the planet over 99 days, traveling solo while carrying a 14-inch diameter glass globe symbolizing the frailty of the earth, Nelson and the One Earth. One Voice. campaign brought together people one every continent to sing a Yoruba song, calling for the healing of the earth, on December 21, 2012. One Earth. One Voice. gained praise and support from Kennedy Center Honoree Pete Seeger, multi-Grammy-award winng world musicians Paul Winter and King Sunny Ade, environmental leaders including Bill McKibben of 350. org and Larry Schweiger of National Wildlife Federation, the Yoruba elders of Abeokuta, Nigeria, and Mayan Elder Ac Tah. The campaign enters its second year, preparing for another day of global song for the earth in 2013, calling for a United Nations General Assembly ratification of a resolution to end violence against the earth in all of its forms.
The Contemplative Alliance

by Dena Merriam

The idea to form a Contemplative Alliance, bringing together deeply committed meditation practitioners from across the religious traditions, emerged from the recognition that a new spiritual voice is needed, one that reflects the changing spiritual landscape of America. It was also felt that as a collective we need to tap the wisdom and understanding that comes from deep contemplative practice to guide us through the challenges we now face.

It is clear to many of us that we are at crossroad and are being called to make significant shifts in thinking and behavior. There has been no strong voice to articulate what these shifts entail, and thus there is no model, no clear vision of where we need to go or how we are to get there. Contemplative practice can contribute to this process of creating and clarifying a collective vision in numerous ways.

American society and much of the developed world have been operating with a certain set of thought patterns that have been reinforced again and again through most of the institutions and structures of our society. These thought patterns make up the prevailing narrative of our culture: they define the values and goals of our society and what a good life should be. They define prosperity in a very narrow way focusing exclusively on economic growth and expansion, unlimited consumption, the commodification of nature and the sense that the right to pursue such growth and consumption is almost a “sacred” right, not to be challenged or questioned.

We now see these thought patterns beginning to break down. This is manifesting as deepening cracks in our economic and political institutions. The onset of climate instability, the oil spill catastrophe in the Gulf of Mexico, financial fluctuations, far reaching degradation of the environment, the potential scarcity of vital resources like water – all of these are signs of shifts in the external landscape, which are but reflections of shifts in the internal landscape. To understand what is taking place we need to look more closely at the internal world and see what is coming apart and what is coming together in our collective thought patterns. There is a struggle between the old and the new, and that which is seeking to be born needs support and guidance.
Gathering of the Contemplative Alliance in Monterey, California. Left to right: Dena Merriam, the Global Peace Initiative of Women, Convener; Imam Mohamed Bashar Arafat, Founder & President, Civilization Exchange and Cooperation Foundation; Sr. Joan Chitterer OSB, Roman Catholic activist, contemplative leader and writer; Swami Veda Bharati, Founder, Association of Himalayan Yoga Societies International.
Those who work in the spiritual field know that changes take place first at the level of thought and then manifest as behavior change. Thoughts have force and the power to manifest and so it is said, as we think, so we are. Collective fear, pain or anger manifests in a particular manner and shape an external reality. Similarly changing the way we regard and interact with nature would manifest certain outcomes. Changes in the way we regard prosperity would also manifest as a shift in habits and behavior patterns. A redefining of prosperity and our national wellbeing would help reshape the values and direction of our country. A redefining of prosperity does not mean denying the importance of material development but it may mean bringing into balance our material welfare with other equally vital determinants of wellbeing.

Clearly changes in the way we view prosperity would have economic implications for our country that must be considered. In Germany, for example, the government is trying to convince the population to start again a national shopping spree. The recession led to reduced consumption, and now the government wants consumption to return to its pre-recession levels. But the Germans are being more cautious and have entered a mindset of conserving rather than consuming. Business will suffer unless consumption picks up. Can the society shift from one based on the production and consumption of goods to a new basis, one that is more sustainable? While this shift would produce short-term pains, it would produce long-term gains for the society. But who has called for a serious reflection of what this entails and for steps to make such a transition?

We have the opportunity now to balance economic growth with spiritual growth as a society and culture. We have the responsibility to work more consciously with our communities in shaping the thought patterns that can guide this effort.

As a contemplative community seeking to be of service at this time, there is an urgent role we must play in bringing forth the ideas and concepts that will help transform the way we live and function as a society.

We ask that you reflect on the following questions:

1) What is the single most important change in thinking that can help move our society toward greater wellbeing?

2) To create this change in thinking, a few key messages must penetrate the collective — what would these messages be?

3) How can we best work to foster new thought patterns that can then manifest as changes in our society?

4) What would prosperity look like in a more balanced society where material and spiritual development go hand-in-hand?

4) As we seek to envision a more sustainable society, what would it look like?
I heard author and corporate consultant Robert Cooper give a presentation in Washington, DC about building trust. He told a story about going to Tibet and traveling to visit a sacred Buddhist monastery. When he got there, tired and hungry, he found the monastery closed and a Chinese guard at the gate holding an automatic weapon.

Robert was furious. He had traveled all the way to Tibet, hours by bus, and he was deprived of visiting the monastery. He also was angry at everything the guard represented.
Robert then saw a Tibetan family walk up to the guard, listen to the news of the monastery being closed, and then bow to the guard, saying, namaste. The family then walked to the side and sat down to eat lunch.

Robert approached the family, curious how they could be so calm and polite. They engaged in a conversation and Robert learned the family had traveled for days on foot. The young girl of the family offered to teach Robert Tibetan words in exchange for learning English. Namaste was one of the words, “I bow to the divinity in you that is also in me.”

She then asked Robert how to say namaste in English. Robert was dumbfounded and thought for several minutes. There was no such word in English.

When Robert got back to America, he began an experiment. When he said hello to people, instead of automatically saying “hello” and walking on, he paused, said “hello,” listened for a response and inwardly acknowledged the divinity in each person. Over time, he found that his relationships changed, that more trust was developed.

This story provided a lens to another of Search for Common Ground’s youth activities in Sierra Leone. Elections had been brutal in 1996, with the RUF hacking off people’s limbs. (The movie Blood Diamond would later have a horrific scene where this happens. It was just gruesome, and unfortunately, accurate.)

When the Sierra Leone elections were approaching in 2002, our staff knew there was potential for violence. They also knew that many youths living on the streets had been manipulated for political intimidation and violence. What our staff did was to go interview kids and to ask them about their lives on the streets and their experiences during elections.

Our staff approached the kids as if they mattered, similar to Robert’s namaste experiment.

The young kids responded and talked openly about the harsh economic realities of being homeless. They also talked about how politicians came in with money and promises. After the elections, the elected officials would forget all about the kids until the next elections.

A few days later, our staff went back to the kids with radios and
a bag of rice. They ate together and listened to the radio program with the kids’ voices on the air. The kids were thrilled! They were important; they were being heard across the country.

Through several conversations, the kids were asked what they would like to do, if given the chance. They said they would like to register voters. Our team put them in touch with other local organizations that trained them to register voters. They reached many places where adults were afraid to go. The kids were next trained to become election monitors. The efforts of hundreds of kids monitoring election booths, combined with real-time radio results and other national and international efforts, contributed to the elections being largely violence-free. The youth monitors were visibly recognized and applauded by their communities for their efforts, which only reinforced their positive behavior.

Acknowledging the value of the kids and creating an opportunity for them to be heard created an opening for them to bring forth their positive potential. The techniques were so simple and were ones I found being applied by colleagues in several countries as an integral part of peacebuilding. When I later traveled to Nepal, I was thrilled to be in a culture where the greeting actually was “namaste.” The acknowledging concept and technique was so easy to apply on a daily basis, yet its power of awakening the soul was profound.

Based on these experiences, I started to apply the same technique back in the office in Washington, DC. One of my favorite experiments was to see how long it would take a new receptionist to go from being cool and formal to open and friendly. By slowly greeting and stopping to listen, I found that, within a week or two, even the shyest person would start to greet me with a big smile. What went around came around.

(Excerpted from *God and Conflict: A Search for Peace in a Time of Crisis* by Philip M. Hellmich, with a Foreword by Lama Surya Das.)
Philip M. Hellmich is Director of Peace at The Shift Network and director of The Summer of Peace. Philip has dedicated most of his life to global and local peacebuilding initiatives, including 14 years with Search for Common Ground. He also served for four years as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Sierra Leone where he lived and worked in small remote bush villages. A published writer, Philip is author of God and Conflict: A Search for Peace in a Time of Crisis with a Foreword by Lama Surya Das. He serves as adviser to The Global Peace Initiative of Women. A long-time meditation practitioner, Philip enjoys studying and teaching about the parallels between inner and outer peace.
In a world threatened today by what seems to be a fathomless interconnected web of crises and conflicts, where we humans are far too often unable to act together to address our common problems, the vision of Interspirituality points towards a world of enlightened cooperative resonance. Grounded in an intuitive heart-centered attunement with “the One”, the Interspiritual message points to the common ground of the human heart.

Though our “Crossing Worlds” project, we are exploring designs for social activism based on these core ideas of universal spirit. What could be the basis for a global agreement across all borders, a shared foundation of human understanding and enlightened cooperation? In the vast and diverse context of global community – diverse not only in perspective and world view and culture and language, but also in skill sets, psychological types and critical concerns – we are exploring a conjunction of ideas grounded in interspirituality, and illuminated by ideas from all across the spectrum of human inquiry. Something “integral and holistic” seems to be emerging, driven by a widely-shared passionate concern for humane values and the future of civilization.

Is there a “Global Logos”? Is there a universal form of community inherent in a divine template we mortals can apprehend? Is there a universal logic – of community, of wholeness, of rationality, of authentic understanding – perhaps anchored in a universal divine archetype or template? Could such a template be explicitly defined and emerge as the hub of a transformative network alliance and a new kind of global community?
It seems some new center point of human civilization is emerging, in a convergence from a thousand directions. Through Crossing Worlds, we are helping to facilitate this arising new vision.

http://sharedpurpose.net/crossingworlds.cfm
PART I
MY STORY: CHANGING MYSELF TO CHANGE THE WORLD
You could say that it’s been a lifetime quest. As far back as I can remember I was asking, Who am I? What am I here for? Where did I come from? What should I be doing with my life? I am grateful to my family for not indoctrinating me with any particular religion or belief system. My Father was against it having suffered a sense of sin from his Baptist upbringing. This gave me the greatest gift of all—the freedom to start my spiritual search for the meaning and purpose of life with a clear slate. I attended different Christian religious services with friends, but couldn’t find anything that satisfied my deep inner quest. I knew, even then, that I had to depend on my own experience for the answers I sought.

The Dark Night of the Soul
Becoming a single mom with three children in the 50s living on $150 a week and working two jobs stretched my capacity for survival. Now my questions turned to Is life worth living? For 7 long years I fell into a ‘dark night’ with no answers to my desperate inner plight. Why should I live at all? There seemed to be no meaning and purpose. Finally a day came when a delicate, but radiant pink rose dropped into my mind’s eye. I was breathless contemplating its beauty and with every inner glance my heart began to open wide again. Love. Love. That is the answer. I don’t need to wait to receive love. I need to give love right now — at the grocery store, as I walk down the street, everywhere! Most of us are beginners at true love and I was one of them. Agape love transcends erotic love and is a choice, a decision. And I made the decision that turned my life around. My personal life was no longer important. Giving it up was not a sacrifice, because my passion for interior development and service was so much more compelling.

Discovering Eastern Religion and Esoteric Thought
Shortly after this stunning revelation in the 60s I found Eastern religion and esoteric approaches to spirituality. At last I found some answers. I was so enthralled that I kept reading, reflecting,
reading, and couldn’t stop. I found meditation, consciousness practices, exercises to help me manage my mind and emotions and much more. I was aflame with curiosity and love. I had an extremely difficult time stopping my overly curious mind in order to meditate, but finally I managed, with the help of heavy exercise before dropping into meditation. Here was the new spirituality for me, devoid of dogma and providing me with practices to help me master and develop my own capacities and relationship to the Kosmos. The Buddhist and esoteric paths teach us to believe only what we know in our own experience. I had found my path —life itself brought the lessons I needed to learn. It was important to develop discernment, particularly the difference between conditioned responses and those of the Higher Self. Direct inner guidance was to be my teacher with no intermediaries, along with the learning from my own life experiences. I began to define what spirituality was to me.

**Becoming a Monk in the World**

I learned quickly that I needed to balance solitude and action in the world. Much to the distress of my colleagues I turned the phone off for half the week and was unavailable to the outside world. Cultivating my inner life and spiritual sensitivities became my priority. I now spent three days in contact with the outer world while preserving four days for the rich inner life that speaks to me in silence and images that generate the motivation for my service in the world. I discovered that I was truly a Monk in the World, as Brother Teasdale would say. *Love* that had energized my passion to live in the past now was complemented by *will* and *purpose*. What was the larger Will of the Kosmos that led me so many times to know, ‘not my will but thine be done’? My husband was a mystic who had lived in Kalimpong for a year in the 50s. He was one of the first Westerners to bring Eastern teachings to the West. We founded the Mountain School for Esoteric Studies in the late 60s and held regular meditations and retreats in the mountains. This was the time when teachers from the East were coming to the West to teach, and we had many at our home teaching different practices and methods of meditation.
Pioneering Transpersonal Psychology
In the 70s I was invited to design and develop the first courses in Transpersonal Psychology on the East Coast at Interface, while Esalen was thriving on the West Coast with Michael Murphy, Roger Walsh, and Frances Vaughan. I had to overcome my fears and develop these courses from the inside out. Later I learned that I would be required to do this many more times in my life, just as I had with the development of my own spirituality. We were entering a new era with an emerging new consciousness, culture and civilization. We were moving away from dominating authorities and experts to personal experiential knowing. This meant systemic changes across the board and pioneers willing to define them. Ken Wilber lived near by and he and I shared several meals together in the late 70s. We used his developmental model in all our workshops and courses. We taught meditation, imagery, bodily felt sense, experiential knowing hypnosis, journaling and many more contemplative practices. We helped people contact their Higher Self or Soul as the source of wisdom and guidance. We taught the stages of evolution. Traditional Western religion was unable to meet the hunger for Spirit in so many young hearts, so they turned to alternative means. I taught in classes, workshops, lectures, but mostly in one-to-one meetings as a spiritual guide, based on self-discovery of one’s own journey and path. I loved working with individuals and thought this was my life’s work.

Expanding to Global Spirituality: The United Nations
Suddenly, and much to my surprise, in 1987 I had an inner calling to enlarge the work I was doing to the global level. Now my questions became even larger. How does one apply spiritual principles, developed for individuals to global affairs and all of Humanity? And besides, I thought, I don’t know anything about global affairs. However, by this time I knew the wisdom of overcoming my fears and trusting inner guidance instead of my rational mind. I implicitly trusted that I would be guided from the inside out in this endeavor. Within a few hours I had an apartment in New York City and eventually one opposite the United Nations. The UN is the only place in the world where we find all peoples and cultures represented under one roof. We can intermingle, read each other’s newspapers and get an understanding of global affairs beyond our biased national corporate media. I thrived at the UN. I was consumed with learning about global affairs/global consciousness and making friends with the international community. When one is committed to service, somehow the right colleagues and companions appear to help. And indeed they did. My view of spirituality expanded considerably at this time. All the work we do on our personal lives is just the beginning. It is preparation for larger service to the whole.

From 1987-1991 I continued to learn about global affairs. I was consumed with trying to understand why we fought destructive wars with one another, elected to support corporate profits rather than the environment. Why did nations act in their own self-interest rather than for the common good? What could we do about it? I co-founded the Values Caucus in 1996 and the Spiritual Caucus in 2000 at the UN. Both Caucuses dove deeper into the causes of conflict through discovering the diversity of worldviews and cultural values. We successfully lobbied for language and new concepts in international documents and treaties—for the inclusion of life-long education and spiritual values. I learned about worldwide humanitarian efforts and developed healing techniques for secondary traumatic stress and more with a USAID grant in the former Yugoslavia. My concern was no longer limited to my own country, but to the whole
of humanity. At the UN they say ‘humanity’ is the most common word spoken. This was why I was there. I identified myself not only as a Monk in the world, but also as a global or kosmic citizen.

**PART II**

**KOSMOS JOURNAL: THE EMERGING NEW CIVILIZATION**

In the process of our UN work we began to identify the NGOs, Staff and Ambassadors whose perspectives were global rather than a national and whose policies reflected universal deep values. In 2000 we formed a small group of globally conscious, spiritually oriented people from different continents. This was the beginning of what eventually became *KOSMOS*. As we slowly develop becoming first an integrated personality and later in touch with the soul/heart, the source of wisdom, love, and purpose, we need a vehicle through which to express our life’s work. This was mine. Like other pioneers of the emerging new civilization I was not a trained journalist and did not have any experience in the field. I overcame my fears again for something larger than my little ego and accepted the service I was given with humility. I increased my meditations to help guide me through. What should a journal about the emerging new consciousness, culture and civilization be? Is there a need for such a publication and who is it for?

Kosmos is for those who want to understand and even participate in the era of transition from an industrial society to an information/people’s society—the new civilization. It is for all of us who have been disillusioned with the present culture of greed and materialism, disrespect and deep suffering caused by the inequities in harnessing the world’s resources and wealth. It is for those who want to be directed to the finest, most noble voices that are in touch with some aspects of the new civilization and do not have the time to filter through all the false prophets to find a kernel of truth. It is for those that long to return to a state where the heart is as central to our humanness as our mind. It is for those burning with passion to make a difference and to create a new world based on the generating power of life and spirit.

We continue to evolve with the times and find the emerging new civilization gradually taking form and shape with increasing clarity. Through the years the following streams of wisdom have become essential to *KOSMOS* and are still evolving. Because of lack of space I present these streams in broad strokes and encourage you to read the full articles on our website: [www.kosmosjournal.org](http://www.kosmosjournal.org).

**The Emerging New Civilization: A Time of Transformation**

The first issue of *KOSMOS* was published for $2500 (don’t ever tell anyone you need a lot of money to accomplish a spiritual mission), a gift of Lifebridge Foundation. It was 2001 and we were beginning to see signs of the breakdown and breakthrough of consciousness, cultures, institutions and civilizations. Science had now proven what Contemplatives have known for centuries. We live in an interdependent world and thus this Great Transformation would be global and include all life—body, feelings, mind and spirit. While the modern world emphasizes the individual, the post-modern and integral worlds are bringing forth the collective ‘We,’ and with it new collaborative efforts and global networks to manage the complexity of today’s challenges.
The modern rational, analytic perspective, honors the ego as a separate entity itself rather than understanding the essence of life is its relationships. It rejects subjective experience and ways of knowing and thus eliminates what is most human about us all. It breaks the world into fragmented pieces rather than bringing us together in synthesis as the new consciousness does. People from all countries in the world are feeling the momentous change in consciousness as the Internet and transnational corporations connect humanity for the first time in history. It is only as individual and collective habits break down that we have the extraordinary opportunity to heal personal and societal wounds and create a new civilization that works for the common good. Our vision is bold—tracking the emerging new civilization that not only works for everyone, but that operates on a higher frequency as our knowledge and wisdom expand our consciousness and worldviews. This is the passion of KOSMOS.

**The Heart: Source of Beauty, Truth and Goodness**

*KOSMOS* invites contributors who have both experiential knowledge about the leading edge, but who also listen and speak from the *Heart* (chakra), the source of wisdom and compassion. As fears are overcome the heart center opens to soften and heal. It loses its self-protective function and expands our vision with compassion and kindness. The heart understands social,
political, economic, and human issues in the widest possible context. Heart wisdom is inclusive understanding at all levels of being and becoming— and of creation itself. By combining head and heart, our contributors inspire and stir our loyal readers to purposeful sacred activism.

Beauty has always been an essential complement to inspiring, informative and engaging articles. It is not possible for me to work effectively without engaging both sides of the brain with what Brother Wayne Teasdale calls ‘infinite sensitivity.’ Award winning photographers publish their work in KOSMOS, knowing their artistic creation will radiate through the latest modern technology and color available to create a moving experience of profound beauty. Many tell us that just by holding the journal in their hands they feel the presence of heart and the dynamism of change, breaking down boundaries, and bringing us closer to the divine. Beauty is everywhere in the environment in which we work and in the subtle levels and substance of KOSMOS.

A Wider Vision: Scaling up our Concerns and Responsibilities
Our concerns scale from ego-centric to ethnic-centric to world-centric, to kosmic-centric. Our intergenerational perspective encourages care and concern for and interaction with all generations. We honor and respect past generations that laid the foundation for the new civilization, our present partners and colleagues in discovering and acting upon the new, as well as respecting the needs of future generations who will inherit the world we leave to them. Our widening vision includes the relationship and stewardship of other kingdoms of nature—animals, plants and minerals. We are eager to publish about new capacities for expanded ways of knowing—‘infinite sensitivity’ to other frequencies available beyond intuition, often developed in contemplative practices or spontaneously revealed. Our articles attend to new competencies and skills, such as resilience and adaptation, necessary for living and flourishing in the new civilization. Our concerns continue to widen and deepen as we discover more signs of emergence.

Scaling up our concerns is an inherent part of spirituality in the new civilization. As a global citizen I have been affiliated with the UN since 1987. In 2012 the UN conferred Consultative Status to KOSMOS in recognition of its global work. We have had visitors from 178 countries to our website in the last year and a half. Citizens from around the world, working together, to demand that world leaders take stronger steps to address such urgent global issues as human rights, climate change, sustainable development, poverty alleviation, the prevention and elimination of conflicts between countries, and more. Beyond global our inquiry extends into our place in the universe, as the direction of evolution becomes more and more inclusive. The name of our journal KOSMOS continues to remind us of our purpose to be alignment with this historical evolutionary moment and the spirit (will) of the Kosmos itself.

Integral and Evolutionary Approaches, Sacredness of Nature, Life as The Defining Value.
Integral and MetaIntegral offer the most holistic map on which to wrap our conceptual framework. KOSMOS works with Ken Wilber’s four evolving views of reality: individual interior consciousness; collective interiors including worldviews and culture developed through collective intelligence and dialogic methods; individual spiritual activism and service; and
collective institutions such as governance, economics, education, media and science. Integral spirituality is evolutionary and develops in stages. It involves healing the interior of the individual and expanding our capacities and sensitivity. Spirituality in the New Civilization or Second Axial period also recognizes the external conditions that have created untold injustices and poverty for billions. It understands that it is our responsibility to transform these conditions, not merely to develop our own relationship to a higher power as in the First Axial period of the emergence of the world’s traditional religions, but to truly be our brother’s keeper. For that we need to take responsibility for systemic changes in all our institutions.

Don Beck, founder of Integral Spiral Dynamics is our expert on the evolution of cultural values, applied in conflict situations worldwide. We are now learning how to communicate with the different cultural value systems—tribal, traditional, modern, post modern and integral perspectives and to find the value of each perspective. Barrett Brown writes about this in *KOSMOS* with great clarity. These value differences account for many of the world conflicts—from personal to global. John Stewart (The Evolutionary Manifesto) and Carter Phipps (Evolutionaries) also add to our understanding of evolution as a primary driver of transformation. Further, we present a Kosmic perspective of a living universe (Brian Swimme, Mary Evelyn Tucker, Teilhard Chardin, Thomas Berry, Duane Elgin). Life itself is the defining value. The new spirituality enhances and expands life and works with the fundamental powers of the universe at our disposal. The recognition of Mother Nature as sacred Teacher, nourisher and provider runs through *KOSMOS*—permaculture, biomimicry, and the importance of place as developed by Lifebridge Sanctuary.
Power of the People: Transforming Institutions—Local to Global

A major feature of the new civilization is the transition from dominant hierarchical power to distributive power of the people. We asked many questions on our journey—especially about power and who has the power to make the changes required for a new planetary, compassionate, and sustainable world. From grassroots activists to Mikhail Gorbachev the answer is the same—civil society. Civil Society is now recognized as a driver of power potentially equal to governments and corporations. In addition to finding one’s own gift and purpose in life the new civilization is about networks, collaboration, civil society, international protests for democracy, power, and equality. It is working for the good of the group as an autonomous individual. Collective intelligence/wisdom is needed to deal with the complexity and scale of today’s problems and challenges. Groups are experimenting with such approaches as Collective Presencing that taps the wisdom of a group through contemplative techniques. Occupy is developing amazing horizontal approaches that can include the voice of global multitudes (KOSMOS, Spring 2013), potentially connecting the voices of all Humanity for the first time.

The collusion between markets and states in privatizing and regulating common resources that should be the sovereign right of all citizens from birth, have resulted in extreme inequality in wealth. The Commons movement is rising to preserve for future generations the natural, cultural, digital, resources that we have inherited, created and need for survival. Leaders of this movement publish in KOSMOS, such as James B. Quilligan, David Bollier, Silke Helfrich, Leo Burke and more. P2P, founded by Michel Bauwens, is another strong commons movement stressing distributive power. Subsidiarity, solutions to problems at the level where most are affected is another important principle emerging in the planetary civilization.

Worldwide protests are now at a national level and are just becoming international as the Occupy, April Spring, Indignado, Zapatistas, 15M, Idle No More, Take the Square, Via22, GlobalNoise and more form alliances and innovative communications systems. Michael Badger writes about the coming turn of Occupy from protests to humanitarian efforts, such as Occupy Sandy, that find solutions rather than merely saying ‘No’ to corporations and the establishment. The agendas are the same worldwide—a cry for the end of corporatization and the emergence of direct democracy, justice, and equality. Without these basic operating values it is impossible for the full spiritual potential of individuals to be realized and for the new civilization to arise.

From Contemplation to Insight To Action: Creating the World of Form and Structures that Reflect the Emerging Consciousness

It is a time of systemic transformation in all of our institutions. They must evolve in step with the new consciousness. KOSMOS tracks the most sustainable and compassionate leading edge developments in every field of endeavor by dedicated world servers—armed with a passion and a patient determination to go through whatever obstacles it takes to create a positive future for all. We see new governance proposals emerging everywhere, most focusing on direct democracy and civil society as the important drivers of change. We single out such innovators as Mikhail Gorbachev, Tom Atlee, Hazel Henderson, the Commons Movement and the Constitutional Referendum by the people of Iceland that freed the country from debt in a time of worldwide financial crisis. In Economics we track and publish the work of Schumacher.
Center for New Economics, New Economics Foundation, New Economics Institute, Sacred Economics, and the Commons Movement. In our Journal, you will meet David Cooperrider who’s founding theoretical work in "Appreciative Inquiry" is creating a positive revolution in the leadership of change and Rinaldo Brutoco, Founder of the World Business Academy, who brings 21st century global perspective to business.

One of the features of the New Civilization is education of the whole person—body mind, soul and spirit. Some leaders in this field are Parker Palmer, Arthur Zajonc, and Linda Lantieri. Innovative educators are offering courses by the world’s finest teachers through the Internet, reaching millions of people. In an evolving universe, lifelong learning is now accepted as a necessity worldwide. It is enhanced through Webinars as they continue to flourish. Independent media, often with a citizen’s journalism component, is still at the margins, but increasingly recognized by the awakened as the only avenue to unbiased reporting today. We are learning to discern the propaganda and spin we are fed through television and corporate media to keep us distracted from resisting the increasing ‘crimes’ our governments commit to appease their wealthy donors.

Elizabeth Sahtouris is prominent in the new sciences as well as Arthur Zajonc. And the video and educational materials of Journey Through the Universe by Brian Swimme and Mary Evelyn Tucker are gaining widespread attention from all age groups. Monica Sharma facilitates new transformational leadership based on sourcing wisdom affecting thousands worldwide. And on it goes. These courageous pioneers are the first wave of what will be a tsunami of pioneers dedicated to the emergence of a new civilization aligned with Kosmic intention, based on compassion and our natural creativity. We are here and we are the ones. World—here we come!

The new civilization and culture we all yearn for is based on global human awakening to a giant worldwide reflection and contemplation on who we are and why we are given the gift of life on planet Earth for these few short years. What is our role in the vast universe? What is our responsibility to care for the natural world—our mineral resources, plant-life and animals—that have given us a home and nurtured and cared for us for 3.8 billion years? How can we get along as one humanity celebrating our diversity? Will we be able to organize our institutions and creatively innovate our future in time? Will we use our self-reflexive consciousness to develop our inner capacities to make the transition from an industrial age to a new civilization that benefits all?

These are the burning questions that KOSMOS addresses. We are grateful to our brilliant contributors and ‘infinitely sensitive’ artists, who have sacrificed their personal lives to make a difference. Their commitment comes from a deep place of intuiting the future and caring deeply for our children and future generations who will inherit the earth.

Visit us at www.kosmosjournal.org
by Kate Sheehan Roach

Synergy is happening. We’ve been aware of it for some time, but only as the dawn breaks on the coming interspiritual age will we begin to find our places in the sun. *Contemplative Journal* is one of the fruits of this cosmic convergence. This new, free Web magazine honors the mystical traditions of all faiths, meeting people where they are on their spiritual journey and offering them intellectually stimulating, spiritually nourishing articles on relevant topics. Thanks to modern technology, *Contemplative Journal* reaches into peoples’ lives and draws them into conversation, thus forging a community built upon the wisdom and experience of its members.

Jim Graven, *Contemplative Journal’s* founder, and I, its editor, agree that if we hadn’t begun this project it would have come into being through someone else, perhaps in another form, but surely driven by the same vision. Jim also facilitates a contemplative book group in which people of diverse backgrounds and beliefs come together to study, but more often than not, end up sharing with one another directly from their hearts. Over the past six years leading the Sophia group (named for the coffee shop where the group began), Jim has witnessed and experienced the many valuable benefits this type of communion brings. The group tackles challenging teachings from ancient and contemporary sources, always within a context of respectful dialogue that honors the soul of each participant. *Contemplative Journal* brings this same spirit to the World Wide Web.

The magazine’s preview edition includes a series of individual video interviews on the timely and timeless topic of *Compassion and Contemplation*. Father Thomas Keating, Rabbi Rami Shapiro, Reverend Cynthia Bourgeault, Acharya Judith Simmer-Brown, and Reverend Chris Webb speak eloquently about how the future of humanity lies at the crossroads of spirituality and action. Each teacher sheds distinct light on the subject, casting one harmonious glow.
The Community side of the magazine hosts the CJ Blog, where readers, writers, teachers, and students mingle informally. Moderated forums allow registered readers to interact with one another as we explore the mysteries of the universe through a shared contemplative lens. Simultaneously, the Journal side of the magazine presents articles on topics relevant to business, health & wellness, the arts, education, science & nature, and travel. Specific needs of our readers are met through sections called Step Eleven, for members of Twelve-Step programs, and Grief Support for those in the midst of loss. Book and film reviews and our editorial page round out the magazine’s content.

“Finally!” is the most frequent response we hear as we introduce Contemplative Journal. Indeed, the overwhelming support we’ve received has been deeply humbling. But for those who wonder if the Internet might be the wrong place for contemplatives to gather, we emphasize that Contemplative Journal doesn’t replace the ever important paper-bound manifestations of contemplative teachings, nor does it supplant face to face interactions like the book group that inspired it. To the contrary, Contemplative Journal encourages and inspires us to read more books, go on more pilgrimages with fellow contemplatives, and share more deeply from the heart of our own contemplative experience.

What began as a circle of friends in a crowded coffee shop, huddled together over the writings of our contemplative heroes, has become part of something larger. Yet Jim Graven’s vision to bring a heterogeneous group of people together in harmony to meditate, share, and question remains the focus of Contemplative Journal’s mission. We’ve simply become more aware of the larger implications of this work. As various contemplative paths converge and comingle within the pages of this magazine, we find ourselves pitching our tents at the places where traditions intersect. In so doing, we experience the organic connection between contemplation and interspirituality. In fact, Mirabai Starr’s feature article in Contemplative Journal’s inaugural issue reflects on this very topic.

Contemplative Journal will continue to evolve to meet the needs of the growing contemplative community. We hope you’ll become part of this emerging resource.

Please visit us at www.ContemplativeJournal.com

and sign up as a registered reader
Jim Graven, Founding Publisher of *Contemplative Journal*, thirsts for an experience of the divine beyond religiosity, beyond theology, beyond moral imperatives, and beyond his own self-centeredness. With all of these things falling woefully short of bringing Jim closer to his center of wholeness, he set out on a largely solitary journey to study the Christian mystics, Kabbalists, Sufis, Vedantists, and scores of Buddhist writers (mostly Zen), in conjunction with developing a deep meditative practice. Twenty-six years later, Jim continues the journey, striving to reduce the person created by culture, family, and formal education in order to see more clearly who he is. With a humble heart, Jim finds that with each increment of reduction, God fills his soul with a love and peace that passes all understanding.

Kate Sheehan Roach, *Contemplative Journal’s* editor, comes to this work as the youngest member of an Irish Catholic family of nine. Academic and professional credentials aside, her early childhood friendships of the deepest kind with Buddhist, Jewish, Hindu, and Protestant Christian children in her New Jersey hometown are the foundation of her interspiritual education. Centering prayer, among other forms of devotion, brings her to the place of faith where she is most at home. For Kate, editing *Contemplative Journal* is a labor of love.
A Note on Process:
Theatre Group Dzieci

Matt Mitler
Director

In 1997, following a lineage as beholden to Jerzy Grotowski as to G.I. Gurdjieff, a small group of spirited individuals drew together, embarking on a search for the “sacred” through the medium of theatre. Out of this communal effort was born Theatre Group Dzieci.
In Dzieci we say that the creative act must primarily have a transformative effect on the artist himself. We make no pretensions of altruism. If others are involved in our efforts - as students, audiences, patients - it is because a relationship with them is a natural extension in the context of our own development. What we have found helpful, (in fact a necessity) is to follow a process of inner inquiry. The teachers who have had the most profound influence for us have also been perpetual seekers. They explored timeless mysteries: “Who am I? Why am I here? What do I serve?” Their work was to work on themselves. A work of personal transformation.

Theatre serves as a vehicle for such a transformation, but theatre is not our aim. Our aim is simply to work on ourselves. Such a process is fraught with pitfalls for any individual. With Dzieci, it has only been possible through the cumulative efforts of each member of the ensemble. This collective endeavor does not preclude conflict and struggle – the effort is unrelenting – but we have found a few guidelines to help keep us in balance.

We begin and end performances, workshops, hospital visits, and rehearsals in silence. We return often to silence. We do not seek applause. We share meals. We join in work and prayer with sacred communities. We lead non-verbally through action and gesture. We delve into the unknown. We wear funny teeth. If there is a way to do something more humanely, more organically, or more adventurously, we make every effort to do so.

For Dzieci, performance ultimately becomes an act of purification. We establish seemingly insurmountable obstacles, and we traverse them. We work on strengthening our attention. We expose our fears. The hymns and chants we sing in performance are integral to our service work. As we sing at the bedsides of people who may be in pain or dying, the songs become “coated” by the experience, and our relationship with them is forever altered.

The core company: Rebecca Sokoll, Jesse Hathaway, Yvonne Brecht, Megan Bones, and Matt Mitler
Through creative therapeutic encounters, we learn how to relate to others with simplicity. We see a deeper contact is only possible when we are in tune with our essential nature, so we strive to strip away obscuring layers of personality and habit. Individually, this leaves us vulnerable, so we begin to value, ever more, the strength we find as a group. This strength demands to be tested, so we open our work to the public. We are at risk before an audience, but a complex bond can be made, if we follow our aim; that leads us even further towards self-discovery.

Dzieci came into being fifteen years ago, fueled by seekers with an undeniable attraction to join together to pursue an organic process toward creativity and personal growth. But there is always an impulse to pull away, to protect. We don’t discount this impulse. In fact, we value it. When we feel resistance, uncomfortable, terrified, we know we are proceeding in the right direction. We accept the opposition of forces and invite them to struggle within us. This direction is not for everyone, and Dzieci has had many incarnations over the years, but the company has continued to evolve. And as with the company, our repertory also continues to grow. New works are always in embryo, and pieces, once created, are then re-created as living rituals. No work becomes frozen in time, the process is open-ended, and there is always further to go.

Dzieci at United Cerebral Palsy, uplifting a client

Theatre Group Dzieci, meaning “Children” in Polish, is one of the world's pioneering sacred theatre groups. Founder Matt Mitler was an associate of Bro. Wayne Teasdale and Dzieci performed at the 2004 Parliament of the World's Religions, the year Interspirituality was introduced at the Parliament by the association created around Teasdale's work—Interspiritual Dialogue in Action (ISDnA; www.isdna.org).
In 1998 I came to Peru for the first time for a gathering of healers and shamans from North and South America. I had a strong connection with two Peruvian shamans I met there. I invited them to come to Johannesburg, where I was then living, to teach a workshop about the nature-based Andean Spiritual tradition.

After graduating from Union Theological Seminary in NYC in 1991, I was ordained by the United Church of Christ and began my ministry in South Africa shortly after Nelson Mandela was released from prison. I ran a community outreach program for homeless and unemployed people in the inner city of Johannesburg. I was also involved with the Interfaith community there, working together to address the problems that effected everyone across religious lines.

By the time I went to Peru, I had been running a weekly healing workshop for the community. I was interested in Peruvian shamans who work on an energetic level, not only to heal individuals but to shift the dynamics in a group or community. I had experienced this myself in our community outreach program and I wanted to learn more.

After the Andean workshop in Johannesburg, my Peruvian teacher Regis, shared with me a vision he had of a spiritual center in Cusco’s Sacred Valley, as a place where people from all over the world and many different faith traditions could gather together. As he spoke of it, I knew I was part of that vision. Within a year, I had moved to Cusco to help manifest the vision.
Of course it didn’t go the way I thought it would, as often happens on the spiritual path. I didn’t realize I would be building it myself! But little by little from 2002 to the present, we have a flourishing guest, healing and conference center called Peace and Light (Paz y Luz). We have hosted several Interspiritual gatherings with people from all over the world, the vision made manifest.

Since the publication of my two books, *Cusco: Gateway to Inner Wisdom* (2006) and *Cusco II: The Magic of the Munay-Ki* (2012), I have had the opportunity to teach the Andean tradition in 19 countries on 6 continents, to people from many different religious backgrounds. The Andean tradition is not a religion, but rather a deep connection with the forces of nature and the divine creator, assisting us to become co-creators of the world we can dream into being. Interspirituality at its best.

**Diane Dunn** is an early associate of Bro. Wayne Teasdale and a co-founder of his original Interspiritual Dialogue network. The interspiritual center she, and her late husband Christer Lundin, created in the Sacred Valley of Peru, has provided wonderful opportunities for the world's interfaith and interspiritual communities to gather in this special sacred and historic area of our world.

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www.pazyluzperu.com
Children of the Earth Launches “Global Heart for Oneness” Project

by Nina Meyerhof

Children of the Earth (COE), founded by Dr. Nina Meyerhof in 1990, invests in youth from around the world to become spiritually conscious leaders, through personal and social transformation for the advancement of a peaceful and sustainable earth. Young people are inspired to explore their inner life, be socially responsible and unite in peace building. The intent is to instill and cultivate the concepts of global cooperation, multicultural understanding, spiritual values and ethical living.

Children of the Earth’s programs focus on building the youth spiritual movement for world consciousness. The organization’s diverse undertakings include educational, interactive and
interfaith gatherings, working with local community groups to develop self-sustaining projects and providing young people with a virtual platform designed for positive social exchange. COE has worked in over 60 countries and reached 15,000 individuals through youth inspired action.

**Phase I: The Oneness Project**

COE is convening 12 master level youth Spirit-Ambassadors: COE alumni who have known each other throughout many years. They have agreed to unite daily in meditation with COE elders. All regions of the world are represented including Ghana, Israel, Nepal, Pakistan, United Kingdom, Canada, United States, Romania, Nigeria, Australia, Korea and Japan.

Each of the participants has practiced diverse types of meditation, but this will be a specific process adapted by and for them. They will journal their experiences and interviewed regularly. Their reflections will be posted on the COEWORLD website and on social media to promote the movement and inspire others to join. As more youth join the project, the 12 lead youth will become mentors to new members, causing a ripple effect in youth consciousness to flow.

COE’s role is to synthesize this creative energy and to allow the love, light and unity of the youth movement to heal the Earth, awaken humanity and to build sustainable world peace through Oneness.

**Phase II: Global Heart Campaign**

The Spirit-Ambassadors Oneness project will become the heart for COE’s long-dreamed about interactive website to help grow the spiritual youth consciousness movement. This open-sourced website, SpiritYouth.org, is to connect the planet’s youth in mind and heart. The world-wide-web has united the world through the global mind, and COE believes its time to build the global heart.

The SpiritYouth.org Platform will offer modules, seminars and tutorials to foster the idea of the inter-connectivity of all people, all life. The site will promote and teach youth to foster the ability to learn from each other, practice various types of meditative forms together, have adult mentors to further their knowledge base of spirituality and science intersections. It will be a spiritual home online for all youth. Mentors from a variety of traditions will share and facilitate teachings grounded in accountability and reverence for all living things. International spiritual thought leaders and
social activists will be featured in articles, interviews and live webinars. A section will be offered on social projects rooted in the principles of spirituality and unity consciousness. It will bring awareness and potential funders to assist SpiritYouth programs.

The Global Heart Campaign launches COE’s interactive website and capacity building plans for COE’s future.

To learn more about Children of the Earth, visit www.coeworld.org.

Great Invocation

Adapted for Children of the Earth Group Meditation
“From I to We to ONE”

From the point of Light
within the mind of Oneness
Let Light stream forth into our minds
Let Light descend on Earth.

From the point of Love
within the heart of Oneness
Let Love stream forth into our hearts
May Love increase on Earth.

From the center
where the will of Oneness is known
Let purpose guide our wills
The purpose which the Holy Ones know and serve.

From the center
which we call humanity
Let the Plan of Love and Light work out
And may it seal the door where darkness dwells.

Let Light, Love, and Unity heal our world
Let Light, Love, and Unity awaken humanity
Let Light, Love, and Unity cultivate peace and harmony on Earth.

(Adapted from “The Great Invocation” given to Alice Bailey via Master D.K. in 1945)
Children of the Earth inspires and unites young people, through personal and social transformation, to create a peaceful and sustainable world.

One Earth…. with all her Children smiling!
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If you are planning for a year, plant some rice.
If you are planning for ten years, plant a tree.
If you are planning for 100 years, open a school.

Nina Lynn Meyerhof, EdD, President and Founder of Children of the Earth, has made a life of advocating for children and youth. The co-author of “Conscious Education: The Bridge to Freedom” and handbook, “Pioneering Spiritual Activism,” these books stress inner revolution for social evolution for building a better world. She is recognized as an innovative educator committed to global responsibility through authentic learning. Nina has received many awards for her work from The Mother Theresa Award to the Citizens Department of Peace Award and The International Educators Award for Peace. The State of Vermont also passed a Resolution honoring her for her life’s work in PEACE and Sage Award. Nina is building her legacy and launching the next phase of Children of the Earth through these innovative programs and transitioning into the role as COE Founder, Spokesperson, Visionary and Fundraiser.
Interspiritual Revolution

How the Occupy Generation is Re-Envisioning Spirituality and Monasticism

by Adam Bucko and Rory McEntee
“We must all achieve our identity on the basis of a radical authenticity… [for] it is only in the real world of the person – neither singular nor plural – that the crucial factors influencing the course of the universe are at work” (Raimundo Panikkar, *The Silence of God*, Introduction p. xviii).

There can be little doubt that traditional religious frameworks are no longer speaking to new generations as they have in the past, especially in the West. In a recent article in the LA Times, Philip Clayton, Dean of Faculty at Claremont School of Theology, writes that the fastest growing religious group in the United States is “spiritual but not religious”, containing a shocking 75% of Americans between the ages of 18 and 29. Clayton argues that young people are not necessarily rejecting a sense of God, rather they feel that religious organizations are too concerned with money and power, too focused on rules and too involved in the structures of the political status quo.

The truth is there is a revolution happening among us. People are waking up to the emptiness of their consumer-driven and materialistic worlds, and are beginning to reevaluate what matters. The Occupy movement and the Arab Spring are but early manifestations of something deeper emerging in our collective Soul. Young people are no longer interested in living in a world that doesn't feel like their soul's home, and they are willing to question the way things have been done in the past. It is to this questioning, this questing, that we believe Interspirituality has so much to offer, and can speak to the younger generation in a way that nothing else can. Interspirituality can lead us to the God that is emerging among us, while naturally allowing us to touch the God within and beyond.

To do so, however, we must be careful in how we come to understand Interspirituality, what it means and what it has to offer. There is a subtle danger in allowing Interspirituality to be defined by an amorphous “oneness.” An overemphasis on this can lead to an assumption that the varying experiences of “oneness” are the same (leaving aside for now the sticky question of whether or not this is actually the case), while at the same time implying, perhaps even unconsciously, that an experience of “oneness” is needed for a seat at the Interspiritual table. While the unity of the human race must be championed tirelessly by Interspirituality, we must also leave ample room for the messy complexity, the blood and marrow, that diversity demands.

There are also different ways of being Interspiritual. One may have a solid grounding in one tradition, and from this foundational point reach out to experience and understand the wisdom of other traditions. This has been the way of many of the founders of the Interspiritual movement, such as Father Bede Griffiths and Brother Wayne Teasdale. One may also go the way of “multiple belonging” by fully immersing oneself in multiple traditions, such as Lex Hixon, also known as Shaykh Nur al-Jerrahi, did. This way is eloquently described by Matthew Wright, an Episcopal priest and practicing dervish, in “Reshaping Religion: Interspirituality and Multiple Religious
Belonging.” There is yet a third way, in which one’s primary path is one’s inner guidance, what George Fox, founder of the Quakers, called one’s “inner teacher”, and what Christians have often referred to as the “guidance of the Holy Spirit.” Its emphasis lies on the relationship aspect of the Ultimate Mystery. This way may not lead to being embedded in a particular wisdom tradition (without eliminating this possibility), but instead to taking on, in a mature and disciplined way, differing teachers, practices and service roles throughout one’s lifetime, under the guidance of the Spirit.

Too often this third way has been described as being selfish, flaky, a spiritual “Esperanto”, or arising out of an inability to commit. In fact of matter, it is all about commitment. It is about fidelity to one’s own path, to the inner impulse that arises within us, and the courage to commit to it with all of one’s being, allowing ourselves the freedom of movement that it demands. It shifts us from a reliance on gurus, dogmas and institutions to following one's own inner light. It is not freedom for the sake of freedom, it has a purpose. It is the newest and yet most ancient way, as it is the origin of all the world’s wisdom traditions. Our traditions and elders must come to recognize this impulse in the youth, not as a selfish reliance on one’s “self”, but as nothing less than the breath of the Holy Spirit blowing once again upon the waters of humankind, opening up possibilities for new structures and understandings to emerge. To fail to do so we fear is to relegate themselves to the dustbin of history, making the human race poorer from the failure to pass on the very real wisdom their traditions have safeguarded and passed down for centuries.

Yet, it is unequivocal that a purely subjective guidance tends to be dangerous, as all

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authentic traditions have attested to. This is why we need communities where we can help each other to discern what is authentic and facilitate the immersion into spirit. This is why we need our spiritual elders and we need our wisdom traditions to give us guidance, but we also need a new way to pass down their accumulated wisdom.

The new generation is not interested in the theological structures and formulaic dogma’s embedded in the traditions, and a particular path or tradition too often feels to them like a straight jacket rather than a warm, comforting home.

Neither is it conducive for them to simply latch on to a new framework, whether the four quadrants, the ideal of oneness, or a particular new age path or teaching, for this would but confine the breath of spirit that is guiding them from within. Rather, they need an intimacy in which life is shared deeply, where they can be mentored in a way that brings them into the depths of their own life experience and aspirations, and where they can begin to articulate a new, more universal storyline that springs from their own experience and inner contemplative unfolding, which so often exists outside of a particular wisdom tradition.

Brother Wayne Teasdale, in coining the term interspirituality, said in *The Mystic Heart*, “The religion of humankind can be said to be spirituality itself, because mystical spirituality is the origin of all the religions. If this is so, and I believe it is, we might say that interspirituality—the sharing of ultimate experiences across traditions—is the religion of the third millennium. Interspirituality is the foundation that can prepare the way for a planet-wide enlightened culture...“ (p. 26, New World Library, 1999; italics ours).
We believe this understanding of Interspirituality, as a reciprocal sharing of realizations and contemplative gifts, in which each person’s insights help to affirm, deepen, and direct the other’s journey, is a framework that can be embraced by a new generation of spiritually hungry youth, while also allowing for inter-generational bridges to be built between elders, wisdom traditions and the youth. We call this process *spiritual democracy*, putting aside our egos and relating to each other in a way in which we can be surprised by the Divine, through which wisdom can come through everyone participating and God emerges as the “between” between friends.

If elders are willing to open their lives in a life-giving dialogical relationship with the young, they will find youth who are open to their wisdom and experience. Rather than focusing on passing on their religious traditions and theologies, elders should aim to pass on the *lived experience* of where their tradition has taken them. Then the wisdom of our elders and traditions can be passed down in a way that allows questions, insights, and revelations from the younger generation to be present, and helps us to transition into what Brother Wayne called a global “civilization with a heart.”

This more subtle understanding of Interspirituality puts a premium on the creation of intimate circles of dialogue and community. This is what the Snowmass Interspiritual Dialogue Fellowship, a 30 year experiment founded by Father Thomas Keating, has achieved so gracefully, and what the Interspiritual New Monastic movement, inspired by the spiritual legacies of Father Bede Griffiths and Brother Wayne Teasdale, is dedicated to; to creating intimate contemplative circles that can live and breathe of the Spirit, allowing us to come together in such a way that our gifts are received and nurtured, and where we can speak from the depths of our own authentic experience with a willingness to be changed in the light of the revelations of our brothers and sisters.

Interspirituality is about entering into a *divine milieu*, where “things are transfigured…but in this incandescence they retain—this is not strong enough, they exalt—all that is most specific in their attributes” (Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, *The Divine Milieu*). It is about the uniqueness of the human race itself, and for this to ultimately be discovered in full it needs each of our individual experiences of Life at its lived depths and revelations. It is

![NEW MONASTICISM](image)
then through the sharing of these gifts that a new fullness, a new understanding, can emerge.

What is true for us individually is true for our religious traditions as well. Each religion, we believe, offers a unique way into the Ultimate Mystery and unique fruits, as does each individual journey. We are ready to move into a unity that is full, that welcomes all textures, where the Buddha’s equanimity complements Christ's radical love in action, and where the Hebrew prophetic outrage can be merged with the incarnate spirituality of the prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, and the timeless revelations of the Hindu sages.

Do we, the readers of this page, have something to contribute to this discussion? Do we have the courage to cultivate our contemplative lives, to share our unfolding with others? Do we have the wisdom to receive the revelations of others, and be changed by them?

For it is here, among us, that the Kingdom of Heaven which Jesus spoke of so intimately lies, waiting to be discovered through our intimacy with one another. It is here that our unity as a human race lies, and Inter-spirituality is dedicated to its discovery. This movement will lead to new structures, new narratives, and new forms that live in communities which are cells of a new world; cells connected in networks of friendships, and one day this emerging web of contemplative being and acting will become a center for all of life, not because someone

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For further explorations on our ideas concerning this nascent spiritual impulse in the youth please see New Monasticism: An Interspiritual Manifesto for Contemplative Life in the 21st Century, by Rory McEntee and Adam Bucko:

Interspiritual and Contemplative Approach to Youth Homelessness: www.reciprocityfoundation.org

The Occupy Wall Street movement and protest movements around the world are evidence of a new era of intergenerational activists seeking deeper spiritual meaning in their quest for peace and justice. In *Occupy Spirituality*, authors Matthew Fox, a seventy-two-year-old theologian, and Adam Bucko, a thirty-five-year-old advocate for homeless youth, explore a radical spirituality that is deliberately interfaith and relevant to the world we live in today.

“The dialogue between these two visionary men comes as a fresh, exhilarating wind. It swings wide the doors of our minds and reveals what is surely the most heartening phenomenon of our time. Illumined and honored here are the moral clarity and courage of young activists the world over, as they unmask the deadening abuses of an exhausted civilization. Matthew Fox and Adam Bucko help us hear these voices and catch the spiritual power moving through them.”

—JOANNA MACY, author of *Active Hope: How to Face the Men We’re in without Going Crazy*

“*Occupy Spirituality* is a powerful, inspiring, and vital call to embodied awareness and enlightened actions. ‘Spiritual democracy,’ as it is called in this book, is necessary … if we are not only to survive as a species on this beautiful, sacred planet, but also to cocreate through our conscious, committed actions a world and planet where all beings thrive together. Thank you Matthew Fox and Adam Bucko for such a wonderful book.”

—JULIA BUTTERFLY HILL, environmental activist and author of *The Legacy of Luna: The Story of a Tree, a Woman, and the Struggle to Save the Redwoods*
THE VISTAR EVOLUTIONARY CIRCLE: A Prototype for Humanity

by Ron and Victoria Friedman

For eighteen years, we have explored the power and potential of Collective Evolutionary Consciousness. The Vistar Method unfolded through committed, cutting-edge work in Circles devoted to conscious evolution. This format is uniquely suited for collective awakening, co-creation and conscious communication. It is our conviction that evolutionary law itself is pointing and prodding us in the direction of more conscious human association as an essential emergent technology in humanity’s evolutionary journey.

We are not saying here that development in a group setting replaces the individual’s growth as a unique and creative being. However, our experience has been that a group context not only hastens individual growth, but also introduces possibilities, which are different and essential at this point in our history.

For example, by coming together in a new relationship, we are engaged in a field of ‘spiritual genetic engineering’, adding and combining genes of individuality and talent in an invisible realm, splicing, and positioning positive assets to complement, support and transcend the same
deficient areas. We are extending the number of ‘chromosomes’ to create an entity with completely new qualities and abilities. In effect, a new circle being is born. Tolerance, respect and valuation of each other’s unique abilities create the possibility of working and achieving together in ways we could not have imagined.

In addition, any vision of Oneness that is not tested by dealing with personalities, types and world-views that are so different from ours is not grounded in reality. The Circle is a microcosm for issues that are confronting the whole of humanity. We realize that we carry within ourselves all the forces, which have led to our present predicament as a species. The Circle then becomes a setting where in the presence of all that is authentic and good, these archetypal difficulties can be acknowledged and transmuted.

Our experience with the Vistar Method is that as the consciousness of the Circle increases, its coordinates change, we become like a radio dish pointed to the heavens, tuned to the frequency of another dimension. The Circle becomes a new organ of consciousness. It is now an integration of individual consciousness responsive to the guidance of the Field, that mysterious Presence that connects us all. This is an evolutionary development of the greatest significance and brings dramatic new possibilities for our journey as a species.

**Ron Friedman, MD and Victoria Friedman** are visionaries and pioneers in the field of Collective Evolutionary Consciousness and Co-Founders of *Vistar Foundation*, dedicated to exploring the Power and Potential of Collective Consciousness. Ron, a Pathologist, and Victoria, a Ceramic Artist, developed the evolutionary *Vistar Method for Circles™ (VMC)* for accessing the Unified Field of unlimited possibility for collective awakening, for co-creativity and conscious communication. They have 25 years experience with intensive spiritual group work, and train Vistar Circle Teachers, run intensive workshops, and were instrumental in *Voicepoint* Ensemble, Vistar’s theater company working in Collective Consciousness which has performed at the UN, arts festivals, universities and spiritual centers. Victoria is a ceramic artist and author of “SPIRIT DOODLING: The Effortless Expression of No-Mind” available at www.spiritdoodling.com. Ron is about to publish his new book of poetry, “Unaccustomed Looking.”

www.vistarfoundation.org
While the boundaries between the traditional spiritual paths become less defined by the emerging interspiritual perspective, there is a continued need to identify and empower the new spiritual leadership in cultural and legal systems around the world. Historically, “clergy” have had the natural and historical role of serving the various religious communities of the

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world. Within each culture, individuals answered a “calling” and the society identified that personal as a spiritual leader. “Ordination,” which means to be “set apart,” is the most widely used legal term for that cultural identification of spiritual leadership for an “ecclesia” or “spiritual community.” But where would ordination come from for those leading the interspiritual movement?

The Order of Universal Interfaith (OUIn; http://www.ouni.org/) answered its calling to serve the world in 2009 with a number of innovative approaches to the credentialing and role of clergy in the world’s new interfaith, interspiritual and integral environments. One concept is “Co-ordination”. With “Co-ordination”, as provided by OUIn, a rabbi, pastor, chaplain or other clergyperson, from across any of the world’s recognized traditional religious paths, has the opportunity to be “co-ordained” (or “dual ordained”) as an Interfaith or Interspiritual Minister. As a founding member of the Council of Interfaith Communities (CIC), OUIn provides its endorsement authority as a single “community” of tens of thousands of lay members and clergy with a wide variety of spiritual practices who are located around the world. In some cases, OUIn is able to “validate” and empower the practice itself if non-traditional with a stature of “Wisdom Keeper” which identifies the leader to a specific kind of spirituality. This OUIn stature simply expands the range of ministry that a clergyperson or lay leader can have, beyond just their own tradition and practice.

OUIn has also been a part of the direct creation of Interfaith and Interspiritual clergy along with, and often in cooperation with, the Interfaith Seminaries that are now becoming more and more common worldwide. If a candidate satisfies the educational requirements of a trans-traditional ministry, they receive the ordination or coordination to be an Interfaith-Interspiritual Minister. This credential simply aims at serving the needs of such ministers (who often have wide constituencies) to provide the same rights and privileges in society as traditional clergy persons do. OUIn also provides “ecclesiastic” recognition to lay leadership traditionally identified as Brother, Sister, Monk, or Nun. These opportunities have not only served emerging spiritual leaders and communities from across the interfaith and interspiritual movements, but also the situations of individual clerics, and lay leaders who sometimes may have been dismissed from their traditional denominations because of their ecumenical and interfaith work, and therefore had no stature to continue their valuable efforts.

OUIn continues to examine and expand the future role of clergy and lay leaders in our evolving societies across a number of fields of emerging ministry, including not only those mentioned above, but chaplaincy, hospice and even eco-ministry work. It is the host of an annual conference, the BIG I Conference (http://www.bigiconference.org/) which identifies best practices and serves as the “apologetic” for the entire Interfaith, Interspiritual and Integral movements. OUIn members are located around the world and it is working with a wide variety of legal systems for recognition. Within the Order there are a number of sub-communities each providing soul-care and professional support to the membership through a wide variety of practices and efforts. The result is OUIn “walking its own talk” of interfaith and interspiritual harmony and respect across the broad spectrum of human spirituality.
How do you measure the success of an organization, particularly one that is 53 years old? As one of the oldest interfaith educational organizations in North America, the Temple of Understanding (TOU) had a significant influence on the interfaith movement. As such it has paralleled the interspiritual movement and contributed to both a foundation and a groundswell for the emersion of harmony among religions. The convener of a series of International Spiritual Summit Conferences from 1968 to 1984, the TOU’s founder, Mrs. Juliet Hollister certainly brought together an impressive group of leading thinkers in the fields of religion,
business, politics and the arts: His Holiness the Dalai Lama (supporter after 1968 Calcutta Summit, Carl Sagan (speaker 1988 conference), Indira Gandhi (participant 1968 Calcutta summit), Mother Teresa (speaker 1984 Summit), Fr. Thomas Merton (speaker 1968 Summit), Sir Zafrula Khan (1960 member of Board of Trustees), Fr. Thomas Keating (past President), to name just a few of those who have graced the organization with their support. The groundswell or more subtle aspects of the contributions of the TOU to the interspiritual movement rests in the relationships that were built during those years of gatherings and the lasting effects of the ideas generated by some of the world’s most enlightened thinkers, presenters and participants.

This is also true of the work the TOU has done at the United Nations for the past few decades. Just the fact that ‘interfaith’ has become acceptable at the UN today and that certain nations have taken up the interfaith cause are due to the TOU’s long and solid history as an NGO and yet in such a subtle and indirect way that no one would make such a claim. When Eleanor Roosevelt coined the term, “a spiritual United Nations” in describing the TOU at its inception in 1960, she was intuiting the present and futuristic view that bringing religious and secular leaders together could help forge the path for world peace. Although no one organization could possibly live up to such a title, 50 years later we find that the seeds of TOU’s original thinking have begun to take root in tangible and serious actions at the UN. One such example is Jordan’s World Interfaith Harmony Week, now in its third year every February. Another is the Tripartite Forum sponsored by the Philippines. Both of these are close to Juliet’s original vision which in marvelous and subtle ways are coming to fruition.

Originally Juliet conceived of the Temple of Understanding as a capital project, a building that would house 8 wings in which each religion would have a library with sacred texts and artifacts significant to its history and teachings. But as the reality of where the most good could be done with existing funds, the mission focused more on conferences and lectures organized initially from grassroots membership by an office in Washington, DC before migrating to New York. TOU’s eventual educational mission, to educate the peoples of the world in the traditional religions of one another (Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, Confucianism, Judaism, Hinduism, etc.) and the cultures out of which they were formed, was soon launched. However, Juliet was aware that not religion or sect would want to embrace the concepts inherent in interfaith education.

The concept of interfaith was, in fact, a major uphill battle she had to overcome in the early sixties and seventies. Some religious teachers were concerned that they would lose their followers, particularly among the young. Others saw the value of working with other traditions on world problems, including anti-religiously motivated violence, poverty and inequity. All along the way, the TOU has been careful to honor the uniqueness of every religious tradition and not give the impression of working towards a unity of belief; this is not the purpose of education about religions. This is a very important distinction between interfaith and the interspiritual movement.

I like to think of the interfaith movement as a great river in which the stones of every religious teaching are polished by rubbing against the other to reveal the pearls of great wisdom that exist
as the essence of each teaching and what they can share with each other. This metaphor illustrates the subtle contribution that interfaith has made to the interspiritual movement. Gradually religious teachers and secular leaders have come to see the strength of the interfaith movement as not about any one tradition but a well-honed relationship of many traditions united for peace and justice.

**THE TEMPLE OF UNDERSTANDING**

Early proponents of the interspiritual direction were working within their essentially Christian traditions to hone those pearls of wisdom in a very focused and dedicated manner towards a unity of consciousness. Thus interfaith is essentially a diversity model and interspirituality is at heart, a unity model. Although they have deeply influenced one another, the approaches have been radically different. That said, the profound groundswell of interactions between adherents of both movements is so subtle that it is almost impossible to analyze the influence of one on the other. Like many things spiritual, we can feel much that we can’t quantify.

Juliet Hollister, in an interview towards the end of her life, spoke about the interconnectedness of all things and her desire to emphasize the spiritual values underlying all religious traditions. We can only imagine that her vision and the vision of the leaders of the interspiritual movement intertwined, both pointing us towards the various potentials for an enlightened future for humanity.

templeofunderstanding.org
The term “interspiritual” connotes a refined sense of spirituality between people of diverse traditions and perspectives, grounded by a wide variety of contemplative practices and experiences. “Interspirituality” also implies a societal movement that nurtures shared heart-to-heart experiences that lie at the core of the world’s spiritual traditions. Interspirituality holds the promise of a genuine sharing of our respective spiritual experiences at our core. This emerging inter-spiritual paradigm offers a fresh hope for healing the divide between people of who hold both a religious and a non-religious sense of identity.

The building blocks for inter-spirituality are the contemplative practices that exemplars from all traditions have preserved and passed down through the ages. Thanks to wisdom found in such programs as Father Thomas Keating’s Snowmass Conference and our Spiritual Paths Institute, I have leaned how an inter-spiritual process of contemplation and dialogue can deepen spiritual insights and relationships. Father Thomas’ example, along with those of my Tibetan Buddhist teachers, Reb Zalman Schachter, the Dalai Lama and others inspired me to create the Spiritual Paths Foundation in 2001. This foundation is dedicated to helping individuals create their own spiritual paths based on the contemplative practices found within the world’s great spiritual traditions.

Inter-spiritual practitioners share a love of contemplative practice in all its diverse forms. When we join together, each engaged in our own contemplative practice, there is an immediate and profound heartfelt bond. This bond becomes the foundation for radiating happiness and healing to all beings. Joined by such experiences, we find unity in diversity for, once we are bonded at this level, we remove the obstacle of ‘the other.’

We now have an historic opportunity to create an inter-spiritual educational mission that gives rise to this experience of universal interconnectivity and reciprocity. As we co-create a process of inter-spiritual education, it will be helpful to be cognizant of other forms of religious and spiritual education that have preceded us. In what follows below, I’ll briefly review some existent forms of religious and spiritual education that have preceded us.
forms, while also clarifying the unique path of Inter-Spiritual education.

**Religious Education and Formation**

Generally speaking, education pertaining to a specific religious or spiritual tradition entails an approved curriculum for authentic transmission of doctrines from teacher to student from one generation to the next. Here, religious education presupposes that there is a finite body of information, rituals, beliefs, prayers, and liturgies, etc., to be handed down. Religious and spiritual education is often a formal process of training practitioners and authorizing leaders. This educational process often highlights doctrines that distinguish and separate one tradition from another.

The scholastic approach to religious education seeks to examine and validate essential terminology and to critically evaluate scriptural interpretation. In this way, the intellectual approach to religion can be an ally of spirituality for it can help clarify the meaning and goals of specific spiritual practices.

Within each religion, students are educated to perform specific prayers, rites of passage rituals, contemplation, meditation, lectio divina, and service to others. Although there are similarities between these practices among religions, each has its own metaphysical belief system and soteriology that provide the context and purpose for the practices. Therefore, it can be inappropriate for interfaith and inter-spiritual programs to lift these practices out of their intended purpose and context and blend them together. As such, it is often helpful for a spiritually inclined person to receive a good education in the doctrines and practices of a single tradition as a foundation for comparative study and inter-spiritual engagement.

**Comparative Religion**

Comparative religion or spirituality compares and contrasts two or more traditions. Scholarly approaches to comparative religion claim to adhere to an objective rather than a subjective process, often abiding by the canons of academic methodology, the analog of the ‘scientific method.’ An accurate comparison of religions is a challenging task because of the radical variety of interpretations and beliefs within each religion. Those who engage in the study and teaching of comparative religion are rarely specialists of more than one tradition, contributing to problematic generalizations and dubious conclusions. There are simply too many variables within religious traditions to permit easy comparisons between religions as a whole. Nevertheless, the study of comparative religion helps people to become familiar with the beliefs and practices and can be an important steppingstone in personal spiritual development.

**Inter-faith Education**

Inter-faith education often presupposes a comparative approach to religion. But since their intention is to forge harmony, tolerance, and respect between traditions, they generally choose to neglect the differences and accentuate the apparent similarities. At the same time, the inter-faith approach acknowledges that each tradition has certain “articles of faith” that distinguish one from the other. Therefore, inter-faith educational programs tend to accept the existence of
parallel, mutually exclusive articles of faith. The implicit assumption is that each individual has the right to their own faith so long as it doesn’t provide them with moral justification to impinge on the human rights of those whose faiths are divergent from their own.

**Inter-religious Education and Dialog**

Inter-religious education and dialog among people of different faith traditions often explore both the shared and divergent beliefs and practices with an attempt to reach greater understanding and appreciation between people of these traditions. Inter-religious dialog does not attempt to convert, assert, debate or defend. As with interfaith education, its purpose generally is to promote mutual understanding, friendship, respect, and tolerance.

**Inter-spiritual Education**

Inter-spiritual education is built on the legacy and lessons learned from these previous forms of religious education. We owe a debt of gratitude to the religious institutions and traditions that have preserved the lineages of contemplative practices that have become the foundation for inter-spirituality. And, we have all benefitted from the interfaith and interreligious programs that have set the stage for this new inter-spiritual paradigm. Following are a few topics for inquiry and study that might be included in the formation of an inter-spiritual education.

I often use the term inter-spiritual philosophy, for it literally means “love of wisdom.” Inter-spiritual wisdom is heart-based wisdom, for it rests in the interconnection between all that exists. The realization of this interconnection is the foundation for a universal morality wherein harming another is tantamount to harming oneself; wherein bringing happiness and healing to others is to bring happiness and healing to oneself. This aspiration is found in the “Golden Rule” that is stated in a variety of forms in many religious and secular traditions. Inter-spirituality can help actualize this age-old aspiration.
Inter-Spirituality: Is it a New Religion?

As we co-create inter-spiritual educational programs, it is important that we do not formulate yet another set of religious orthodoxies, uber-metaphysical beliefs and hierarchical institutional structures. We must avoid the creation of new power cliques and in-groups based on outmoded social behaviors, but use such tendencies and behavior as a subject for inter-spiritual inquiry, critique and education.

For example, an inter-spiritual education might examine how pyramidal and hierarchical structures of organized religion have too often stultified individual spiritual freedom and creativity. It might also explore the proposition that spiritual authentication is determined by the quality words and actions rather than by a mantle of institutional anointing. Yet another example is it might explore how fixed religious identities have divided people and provided the pretext for moral supremacy leading to violation of human rights of those of a different faith.

As an antidote to these persisting human characteristics, we might help each individual to become self-aware of ego-based identity, control issues, and the urge to obtain power and privilege, rather than genuine inter-spiritual insight and behavior.

Inter-spirituality: Philosophy, or a Way of Being?

Inter-spiritual education explores inter-spirituality as a type of philosophy or epistemology (way of perceiving) rather than as a new religion with its own fixed set to doctrines and dogmas. As a philosophical approach, rather than religious, this educational process is focused on spiritual questions and processes than on approved doctrinal answers.

An inter-spiritual education awakens a way of existing not bound by rigid orthodoxies. Thus, inter-spirituality can be regarded as a state of mind or a perceptual lens through which we view other people and traditions. In this sense, inter-spirituality is vibrant and alive as a process rather than a fixed end-state.

Celebration of Diversity Rather than One-Size-Fits-All Orthodoxies

Because inter-spirituality does not emerge solely from a single religion or family of religions, we should not automatically assert that it implies an ultimate principle, soteriology, or metaphysical belief, that all religions come from one source and lead to the same conclusion, or that a non-dual spiritual experience is more profound that a dualistic spiritual experience.

Rather, we must now acknowledge, celebrate and participate in the marvelous diversity of metaphysical beliefs, practices and cultural expressions among the world’s spiritual and non-spiritual traditions. It is our spiritual diversity, like our biological diversity, that enlivens and strengthens our human existence.

Therefore, inter-spiritual education is more process oriented than outcome oriented. It eschews the assumption that all people have to believe in the same thing in order to live in peace. It celebrates the marvelous diversity of life, spiritual expression and practice. This process is driven by open curiosity rather than skepticism, cynicism, and dogmatism. It helps each of us to
reveal our own unquestioned assumptions that what is true for us must be true for others. It helps us to broaden our spiritual vision, belief and practice to become inclusive rather than exclusive.

**Inter-Spiritual Meditations, Rituals, Liturgies, and Rights of Passage**

As Father Thomas Keating often says, “silence is the first language of the divine.” Those who have gathered in the silence of inter-spiritual contemplative gatherings attest to this. Silence provides a neutral, universal ground of shared contemplative consciousness.

These silent gatherings, along with my work with contemplatives of various traditions, inspired me to create a process-oriented contemplative practice that we all might do together called “InterSpiritual Meditation” comprised of seven parts. This meditation adheres to the priorities shared with InterSpiritual education as clarified above.

There are a marvelous variety other new inter-spiritual meditations, rituals, liturgies and rights-of-passage that will become part of an ever-expanding curriculum for inter-spiritual education.

**Creating a Personally Meaningful Spiritual Path**

An inter-spiritual education helps each individual to develop their own path from within a single tradition or from a variety of traditions. This is an education of both heart and head, a process acknowledging our interconnection. It might entail a process of integrating our isolated, individual sense self with the interdependent elements, consciousness and energies that animate all of life. An inter-spiritual education might help us to sharpen the lenses through which we perceive the spiritual journeys or others. The education can help us refine the internal mechanisms through which we process and integrate spiritual data, wisdom and experience. This education could help us to create a neutral lens uncolored by the dogma of any particular religion so that we can clearly see others as they are rather than how we project them to be. It could help each student to carefully discern practices and beliefs within a variety of traditions that they can make into their own. One example of this is my work called “Creating Your Spiritual Path:” Awakening our Achetypal Spiritual Styles, Honoring Our Spiritual Questions, and Discerning Your Best Practices.” I also call it “The Mandala Process” for it is based on the Spiritual Paths Mandala that is the center of my work.

**Training for Interspiritual Educators**

As inter-spiritual educators, many of us have been formed within a specific tradition. It is very important that we do not impose our own private biases about inter-spirituality on other students and colleagues. Therefore, as inter-spiritual educators we will also have to undergo a process of discernment about our own beliefs and be aware of our natural tendency to transfer these onto others. In our Spiritual Paths Institute programs we have often used the phases: “We speak from our tradition not for our tradition.”

Using the above guidelines, the inter-spiritual teacher training process can help trainees learn to soften the identities created around one’s spiritual traditions and allow the wisdom of other
traditions to permeate, challenge and refine their individual spiritual consciousness. Ultimately, trainees learn not to project their own biases onto another tradition while they learn to sit in silence with each other, to experience the fruits of shared contemplative consciousness and dialog. Trainees can learn to mentor others in these perspectives and practices.

Some Guidelines for Interspiritual Education and Discussions

In summary, I would like to share the following Principles for InterSpiritual Dialog that I have formulated over the past decade of guiding InterSpiritual programming and teaching classes. These principles acknowledge the fact that it isn’t so much what we communicate as it is how we communicate with each other in an inter-spiritual context. These principles harken back to the etymological meaning of the term education, which comes from the Latin educare, meaning “to lead out.” Through this process we are in fact helping each other to “lead from within” by accessing an inner wisdom that will guide us in our spiritual journeys, our relationships with others and in our everyday lives.

• Embrace silence as a common language and the elixir of shared experience.
• Genuinely celebrate and honor the diversity of all spiritual traditions.
• Soften the personal boundaries of fixed identity of your own religion and belief system and open your heart for sincere sharing and learning from the experiences of others.
• Expand your exclusive identity to one that is inclusive and universal.
• Do not respond to a statement by another person with disagreement, agreement, or affirmation, but neutrally. Simply listen compassionately, allowing the statement of another to rest in contemplative reflection and silence.
• Refrain from imposing or projecting your personal views on others’ traditions, beliefs, or practices on others. Do not try to speak for another person’s spiritual tradition or practice.
• Speak your sense of truth in ways that do not threaten or contradict another’s.
• Refrain from imposing a single universal truth on all religions and spiritual traditions that might not be shared by the traditions themselves.
• If you belong to a specific tradition, speak from it rather than for it.
• Be careful not to misappropriate, or lift out of context, a specific practice from one tradition and graft it onto another tradition or your practice without knowing its indigenous meaning.
• Don’t try to fix, advise, or teach the other. Rather listen compassionately and gently offer questions that might help “lead out” the wisdom of your student, friend or colleague.
Interspiritual Education

Rev. Diane Berke

For the past twenty-five years I have had the privilege of training interfaith ministers, preparing them to be of spiritual service in an increasingly diverse yet profoundly interconnected world. Interfaith ministry has been, since it emerged in the early 1980’s, an expression of a trans-traditional approach to spirituality, which ventures beyond traditional interfaith dialogue to an experiential appreciation for the spiritual richness of the many faith traditions that exist in our world.

In 2002 I founded One Spirit Learning Alliance and One Spirit Interfaith Seminary in New York City to build on this foundation of trans-traditional spirituality and begin to explore the vision of interspirituality originally articulated by Brother Wayne Teasdale in *The Mystic Heart* and recently expanded and developed by Kurt Johnson and David Robert Ord in *The Coming Interspiritual Age*. One Spirit now ordains interfaith/ interspiritual ministers, trains interspiritual counselors, and offers a range of public courses that provide an opportunity to explore interspirituality.

Johnson and Ord point out: “the balancing of individual maturity and collective evolution is central to interspirituality.” One clear implication of this is that interspiritual education must include both of these intertwined aspects of development.

**Individual Maturation**

To support individual maturation, interspiritual education will help students and practitioners understand, appreciate, and cultivate the elements of a mature universal spirituality articulated by Brother Wayne Teasdale in *The Mystic Heart*: actualizing a full moral and ethical capacity,
living in harmony with the cosmos and all living things, living a life of deep nonviolence, cultivating humility and gratitude, embracing a regular spiritual practice, cultivating mature self-knowledge, living a life of simplicity, practicing selfless service and compassionate action, and empowering the prophetic voice for justice, compassion and world transformation.

In order to support these aspirations, **interspiritual education must be practice-based,** not merely conceptual. Spiritual practice is the means for inner development and transformative change, and the interspiritual perspective offers the opportunity for sharing the “technologies of transformation” that have been developed by each of the great wisdom traditions. Practice prepares the inner ground for the direct experience of unity consciousness that is core to the emergence of the interspiritual age, and provides a foundation for stabilizing and integrating that experience into how we live our day-to-day lives.

Andrew Harvey, author of *The Hope: A Guide to Sacred Activism* and founder of The Institute for Sacred Activism, suggests a helpful framework for developing a spiritual practice that supports development and integration. He encourages his students to cultivate a practice that includes **cool practices** (that support inner peace and connecting to the transcendent), **warm practices** (that support opening the heart and connecting to our passionate and compassionate caring and love for the world), **body practices** (that support and prepare our physical bodies to be able to receive, contain, and embody the intense transformational energies now available to us), **prayer practices** (that support humility, spiritual surrender, and opening ourselves to assistance and guidance from beyond our small and limited sense of self), and **shadow work** (that heals the splits in the psyche that undermine authenticity and real connection with others).

In addition to being **practice-based,** **interspiritual education must focus on opening and expanding the heart** as well as developing and awakening the mind. In *The Mystic Heart*, Brother Wayne pointed out that until awakened consciousness has been integrated with the heart, enlightenment remains partial. Kurt Johnson describes interspirituality as “spirituality from the lens of the heart.” And Insight meditation teacher Jack Kornfield points out that “all spiritual teachings are in vain if we cannot love.”

This opening of the heart is essential not only to individual maturation but also to our collective evolution and the emergence of new forms of “we.”

**Collective Evolution**

In addition to supporting spiritual maturation in individuals, interspiritual education must include
opportunities for creating community and exploring new expressions of coming together as collectives.

Bill McKibben, author of *Eaarth*, has written that “The technology we need most badly is the technology of community – the knowledge of how to cooperate to get things done. Our sense of community is in disrepair.” **Interspiritual education must include opportunities to create community** and explore new ways to come together as collectives. These opportunities provide an essential laboratory in which to learn and practice “the technology of community:” to learn to listen deeply with openness rather than defensiveness; to learn how to respectfully hold and resolve differences and interpersonal conflicts; to do our own deep shadow work to reclaim projections that keep us from being present with the fullness of our creativity and gifts; to practice the skills of leadership, empowerment, and creative synergy.

Vietnamese Buddhist meditation teacher Thich Nhat Hanh has said that the Buddha of our time is the *sangha* (spiritual community) – that the “enlightened messiah who has come to save humanity today is not a person but a collective awakening …” (Arjuna Ardagh, *Leap Before You Look*). Eckhart Tolle makes the same point in *A New Earth*:

> As the new consciousness emerges, some people will feel called upon to form groups that reflect enlightened consciousness. These groups will not be collective egos. ... Even if the members that make up these groups are not totally free of ego yet, there will be enough awareness in them to recognize the ego in themselves and others as soon as it appears. ... Dissolving the human ego by bringing it into the light of awareness ... will be one of the main purposes of these groups ... Just as egoic collectives pull you into unconsciousness and suffering, the enlightened collective can be a vortex for consciousness that will accelerate the planetary shift.

The work of creating authentic community is deeply challenging. As Tolle points out, it involves a commitment to compassionately but clearly recognize and acknowledge the ego, in all its overt and subtle manifestations and disguises. Genuine community cannot emerge if we deny the shadow in ourselves and one another, or try to escape the darkness of our egoic consciousness by projecting it onto others or by covering it over with a layer of spiritually-tinged artificial light. Only the true light of compassionate awareness, cultivated through deep inner practice, can shine through and dispel the illusions of separation and fear that form the core of egoic
consciousness. That is why individual maturation and collective evolution go hand in hand. Community requires commitment, courage, and hard work. It also requires the opportunity for relationships to develop and deepen over time. Interspiritual education at its fullest will create structures for people to come together and explore community and collective, not just in one-off types of gatherings or courses, but that encourage and support this deepening over time.

**Conclusion**

There are many other dimensions of interspiritual education to be explored and articulated, but the three elements discussed here – that interspirituality must be practice-based and heart-centered, and must provide a laboratory for creating community – have been central to my experience in the field. One final thing that has been key: that those of us who are interspiritual educators be committed to our own ongoing maturation and evolution and directly engaged in the challenging work of community/collective ourselves. The quality of our own being and the integrity and alignment of our own living with what we teach are essential to the flourishing of interspiritual education.
International Academy
for
Interfaith Studies

Our Academy’s purpose is to train individuals to become practicing Interfaith Ministers and to give existing Interfaith Ministers additional training in spiritual counseling and nonprofit management. We are a new Academy that trains both in-person and online using a platform called Moodle. Being new, our classes are small and we stress not only comparative religion but also a solid grounding in philosophy as it relates to religion. We offer an intellectually rigorous, but extremely practical curriculum based on international educational standards. We also train our students in the basics of spiritual counseling, nonprofit management subjects such as fund raising, and the practical skills of ministry such as the art of preparing sermons and conducting ceremonies. Students are ordained upon completion of their plan of study.

We are particularly interested in international students, especially those who come from areas in which faith traditions and religion are sources of conflict, hostility and sometimes violence. Our hope is that we will train such students to be Interfaith Ministers and that they will return to their homes where they will serve as bridges between and among the faith communities. We anticipate that they will offer a full range of community activities that promote trust and resolve conflict. Lowering tensions in such “hot spots” is critical for building lasting peace in this world and we believe our alumni can be key players in promoting understanding and appreciation for the importance of interfaith fellowship and harmony in the more troubling places in this world.

Our in-person training is conducted in San Miguel de Allende, GTO, Mexico. San Miguel has a beautiful climate year-round and the charm of a 500-year-old colonial city (protected by the UNESCO World Heritage Fund) in the central Mexico. This city of 70,000 has more than 12,000 English speakers who have relocated there. San Miguel has the added advantage of low living costs.

The Academy is incorporated as a nonprofit educational corporation in the USA and Mexico and is recognized as a 501 c 3 by the US Internal Revenue Service.

http://interfaithacademy.org
**Reverend Dr. Thomas D. Lynch** is Professor Emeritus, Louisiana State University. He holds a doctorate from the Rockefeller College, State University of New York in Albany and is a graduate of The New Seminary, NY, where he was ordained in 2003. In 1998, he co-authored with his wife, Cynthia E. Lynch, *The Word of the Light*---a book that chronicles the commonality of the five major religious traditions quoting chapter and verse of each tradition’s sacred texts. He writes on spirituality and virtue ethics and lives full time in San Miguel de Allende, Mexico. He is President of the International Academy of Interfaith Studies. His next book *The Christian Enigma: Back to the Message*, will be published later this year.

**Reverend Dr. Cynthia E. Lynch** is an Associate Professor in the Master of Public Administration program in the University of Texas Pan American. She holds a doctorate from Southern University and is a graduate of The New Seminary, NY, where she was ordained in 2008. She was the president of Scott Balsdon Inc., which is a consulting company working in professional training in the areas of organizational design, ethics, performance measurement and nonprofit management. In 1998, she co-authored *The Word of the Light* with her husband, Thomas D. Lynch. She is a director of the International Academy of Interfaith Studies and is the current editor of the *Global Virtue Ethics Review*---an electronic, peer reviewed journal. She has written many professional conference papers, book chapters and articles in the area of ethics and spiritual wisdom.
Over twenty years ago, the American Institute of Holistic Theology (AIHT) was formed with the intention of offering degree programs to students from around the world on the diverse paths of access to the Divine. The programs continue to grow to reflect greater awareness of the needs of students and those they serve as well as the potentialities of the interfaith perspective.

The word theology describes a study of the Divine. But a holistic study of the Divine includes the varied ways, paths, rituals and practices through which a person might access the Divine.

Therefore, at AIHT, not only do students study the diverse world religions, both singularly and comparatively, but the school also offers studies of the alternative pathways to accessing the spiritual realms such as through the study of the paranormal and the varieties of healing and guiding motifs. AIHT also offer studies that transcend the different faiths, religions, pathways and motifs, leading the student to the more mystical connections to the Divine.
The curriculum focuses both on the student and the ministry or service the student will provide to others. With that intention in mind, AIHT seeks to offer coursework that provokes thought, requires internal reflection and challenges spiritual development, providing its students, through the integrated wisdom of a multiplicity of diverse experiences, with the empowerment to grow and serve. AIHT knows that it impacts not only the life of the student but the lives of everyone touched by that student’s life and service. Therefore, it takes its role in the world very seriously.

The programs offered currently include degrees in Holistic Theology, Holistic Ministries, Holistic Health and Spiritual Care, Metaphysical Spirituality, Alternate Spiritual Traditions, and a Chaplaincy program with internship. Students can earn terminal degrees such as a ThD or a PhD, as well as Master’s Degrees and/or a Ministerial Bachelor’s Degree. AIHT also offers National Board of Certified Counselor’s (NBCC) approved credit for Continuing Education. AIHT’s mission is to provide all of this at an affordable rate that makes it feasible for students from all walks of life to ignite their passions and fulfill their dreams.

Utilizing texts written by the world’s most profound spiritual teachers, AIHT uses a home study approach to distance learning that allows the student to work at his/her own pace. Careers coming from this educational experience are as varied as the number of ways to access the Divine.

Andrea Mathews, LPC, NCC, DD is the Director of Academics at AIHT. A Licensed Counselor providing Transpersonal and Cognitive therapy in a thriving private practice, she has authored Restoring My Soul: A Workbook for Finding and Living the Authentic Self, and The Law Of Attraction: The Soul’s Answer to Why It Isn’t Working And How It Can. She has a third book out this year, entitled Inhabiting Heaven NOW: The Answer to Every Moral Dilemma Ever Posed. Since 2008 Andrea has hosted the Authentic Living Show, currently over 138,000 listeners, interviewing the world’s most profound spiritual leaders.
New Paths to Higher Education

There is an unstoppable culture of cooperation emerging on the planet, a yearning for a heart-centered approach to living life meaningfully. Many are called to be part of this momentum and our global village needs visionary leadership to navigate us toward a world that works for all.

In the spring of 2010, three lively practical idealists, Zach Perlman, Debrah and Andre van Zijl were irresistibly drawn together forging a friendship based on a mutual love for exploring the deeper meaning of life and service in the world. Profound musings often went late into the night. Many parallels emerged as Andre and Zach discovered they had both spent time in a Ramakrishna Order monastery as young monks; and shared a love for ALL sacred studies. They recognized a rare bond of spiritual brotherhood each having had profound transformational “unitive” experiences, “a taste of Cosmic Consciousness”. Debrah’s insights and experience facilitating transformational workshops and retreats, her ability to flesh out and midwife ideas, along with her practical business background added to the alchemy, igniting a dynamic partnership.

Their commitment to a vision of sacred community, underscored by their passion to make a difference, was fueled by a belief that our communities would be much stronger if more people learned interfaith ministry skills. They brainstormed ways to deepen the conversation and create pathways to...
include others in exploring the three essential questions that inspired them: Who am I? Why am I here? What can I do?

“We were interested in creating holistic programming which fosters heart to heart connection while forging a marriage of head and heart. We hope to deepen our sharing and caring for each other, from the inside-out.” ~ Andre van Zijl

Mindful of the emerging global consciousness, they realized that many people are not sure how to actualize their vision of making a meaningful contribution – how to “be the change”. This concern, combined with a passion to serve and a pooling of their gifts and experience, culminated in the birthing of a bold dream that surprised them in its scope - an online Divinity School.

This would be a fluid, student-centered learning environment where one could come to be mentored by experts while exploring ALL THE big questions, completely without dogma or agenda.

The ALL PATHS Divinity School was conceived and created to forge these new inroads to support this need by providing innovative, interfaith degrees in Ministry, Theology, and Religious Studies as well as Interfaith Ordination. A signature aspect of the school is a world-class faculty of leading edge thinkers, academics, religious and spiritual leaders and experienced activists in the world of interfaith. Affordable fees were important so the student not to be burdened with huge debt. International students are welcomed with no travel or residency requirements.

The three ALL PATHS founders are excited by the overwhelming support and encouragement from the interfaith community and from the strong faculty that want to be a part of the evolution of the pioneering school of “higher learning.”

ALL PATHS Divinity School Founders and Directors Zach, Andre and Debrah first met in 2008 when they were board members of the Southern California Committee for a Parliament of the World’s Religions.

Zach had founded Monks without Borders and was working on an idea for an International Museum of Religion and invited Andre and Debrah to be board members. Andre
and Debrah are founders of Awareness Now Projects, emphasizing the arts to create sacred community. Together they began developing ideas for experiential seminars to include themes on enlightened leadership, sacred arts, eco-spirituality, meditation, and more. These think tanks formed the genesis of what was to emerge in 2012 as the ALL PATHS Divinity School.

For more information about All Paths Divinity School, visit us online:

www.allpathsdivinityschool.org

Andre van Zijl is an award winning, international artist, art instructor, poet, scholar and non-dual teacher.

Debrah Daya Friedland-van Zijl is an entrepreneur, educator and workshop leader with a love for connecting people and groups.

Zachary Perlman is a life-long student of comparative religion, using his expertise in website development and online education to bring their vision to the worldwide web.

Truly, they believe, a match made in heaven.

“The greatest of all lessons in life is to know yourself, for when a man knows himself, he knows God.”

~ Clement of Alexandria

Christian Gnostic, 150-215 CE
AMERICAN VEDA
From Emerson and the Beatles to Yoga and Meditation
How Indian Spirituality Changed the West

philip goldberg
Foreword by Huston Smith
. . . and I believe it is, then we should all turn toward India and offer a deep bow of gratitude. Without what I call the Great Transmission of practical wisdom from East to West, this new era in spiritual history would be inconceivable, or at least many decades away from being a living reality.

The principal teachings that came here from India – Vedanta philosophy and yogic methodologies from what we call Hinduism, and, more circuitously, the nondual strain of Buddhism – have made Western spirituality so much broader and so much deeper that the entire framework of how we understand religion and engage our spiritual lives has been radically transformed in the direction Kurt and David describe in their book.

If the Interspiritual Age Is indeed Coming . . .

The “broader” piece is obvious. Not very long ago, interfaith gatherings resembled the setup of a joke: a priest, a minister, and a rabbi walk into a room. The clerics would discuss some aspect of theology or observance from the viewpoint of their own traditions. Everyone would be exceedingly polite, and the speakers and audience would leave feeling very good about themselves for advancing the cause of tolerance and understanding. When imams started to be invited, interfaith broadened a bit, but it was still an Abrahamic party. It remains that way in much of the nation, but in major cities the gatherings increasingly reflect the planet’s spiritual diversity. Representatives of one or all of the four Dharmic traditions – Buddhists, Hindus, Jains, and Sikhs – are often at the table now, thanks in large part to the surge of Asian immigrants after changes were made to U.S. immigration policy in 1965.

This is no small matter. The Dharmic traditions represent not just minor religious variations but a radically different way of addressing the eternal questions of who we are, how we relate to the rest
of the universe, and who or what keeps the cosmos humming. Their presence has been a catalyst for a massive rethinking of the religious impulse.

Which brings me to the “deeper” part of the transaction. Because of its emphasis on direct experience of the Infinite as the *sine qua non* of spirituality, the Indian transmission has turned us inward. It has made us a nation of questers instead of nesters. It gave us models of spiritual development to follow and aspire to, and it supplied practical means to penetrate the depths of being, just as science gave us the means to plumb the depths of matter. The implications extend far beyond the millions who practice hatha yoga or some form of meditation derived from Dharmic repertoire. The rediscovery of contemplative Christianity and mystical Judaism – a turning point in Western religious history, no doubt – began as a direct response to the phenomenal passion for Eastern meditative forms ignited by the counterculture in the 1960s and 70s.

That people on all sorts of different paths – Eastern and Western, mainstream and alternative – are engaging in comparable practices is the main reason we’re saying interspiritual, not interfaith. It is one thing for perennialist scholars to comb sacred literature and demonstrate, in writing, that mystics from all traditions have similar-to-identical revelations. It is quite another
for ordinary practitioners to discover it for themselves through direct experience. The famous Rig Veda dictum, *Ekam sat vipraha bahudha vadanti*, commonly translated as “Truth is One, but the sages speak of it by many names,” or simply “One Truth, Many Paths,” has become not only a commonly accepted premise in America, it has become a living reality for a large and growing segment of the population.

That 180 shift, from exclusivist, outer-directed, belief-oriented religion to pluralistic, inner-oriented, experience-driven spirituality is as irreversible as it is profound. Without it, the fastest-growing category in surveys of religion, the eclectic, unaffiliated seekers – aka the “Nones” or the Spiritual But Not Religious (SBNR) – would be inconceivable. In itself, the modern separation of “religion” and “spirituality” constitutes a mighty sociological and theological development, not just a linguistic twitch. The meditative methods birthed in ancient India gave people who were indifferent to, alienated from, or hostile toward conventional religion authentic ways to be spiritual. It even gave atheists, secularists, and science-oriented rationalists ways to be spiritual on their own terms.

These developments have been two centuries in the making. The Great Transmission, which I chronicle in *American Veda*, began when the first decent translations of, and commentaries about, Hindu and Buddhist texts arrived on our shores and found their way to progressive thinkers. They had a formative influence on Emerson, Thoreau and other Transcendentalists. Read Emerson in that light and you can see why I call him America’s founding Advaitan. Other 19th Century spiritual luminaries also drew from the Indian heritage in formulating their own spiritual enterprises, including Madame Blavatsky (Thosophy), Mary Baker Eddy (Christian Science) and Charles and Myrtle Fillmore (Unity Church). Indeed, the entire New Thought movement, including the popular Science of Mind created by Ernest Holmes, is laced throughout by Vedantic principles, although most adherents have no idea that the founders were so indebted to the East.

The transmission advanced through a variety of rivers, streams and tributaries, with new adaptations, modifications, and blends arising along the way. The principle source, of course, were the gurus, yoga masters, roshis, lamas, and other esteemed teachers who came here from Asia. Some were famous figures whose impact was both colossal and global, such as Swami Vivekananda, who electrified the World’s Parliament of Religions in 1893 and established the

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**Philip Goldberg** has been studying India’s spiritual traditions for more than forty years, as both a practitioner and an author. He is the author or coauthor of nineteen books, including *Roadsigns on the Spiritual Path* and his latest, *American Veda: From Emerson and the Beatles to Yoga and Meditation, How Indian Spirituality Changed the West*, which was named one of the top ten religion books of the year by both Huffington Post and American Library Association’s Booklist. A skilled public speaker and workshop leader, he has given presentations at venues throughout the country and has appeared in national media. He is an ordained Interfaith Minister and spiritual counselor, and blogs regularly on the Huffington Post and Elephant Journal. His websites are:

- [www.PhilipGoldberg.com](http://www.PhilipGoldberg.com)
Vedanta Society; Paramahansa Yogananda, who made America the headquarters of his Self-Realization Fellowship and authored the seminal *Autobiography of a Yogi*; and Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, who burst into the spotlight when the Beatles took up his Transcendental Meditation and kick-started scientific research on meditation. The list of other influential gurus – Muktananda, Satchidananda, Srila Prabhupada, et al – is, of course, too long to list here. Ditto the Buddhist equivalents, from Shunryu Suzuki half a century ago to the Dalai Lama today. Each teacher brought forward a different aspect of the vast body of teachings that evolved in the East since the Vedic era, and each appealed to a different segment of the population.

But Dharmic ideas and practices also came to us via prominent Westerners whose lives and work were transformed by their exposure to the East. These disseminators adapted the teachings to various disciplines and areas of expertise, skillfully reaching huge numbers of people who were not attracted to foreign gurus and, in many cases, were not even aware that Asian sources were reshaping their lives and their worldviews.

The transmitters included public intellectuals like Aldous Huxley, Joseph Campbell, Huston Smith, Alan Watts, and Ken Wilber; psychologists such as Abraham Maslow, Richard Alpert aka Ram Dass, and a large cadre in the Transpersonal camp; physician/philosophers like Deepak Chopra, Dean Ornish, and Mahmet Oz; religious leaders like Thomas Merton, Bede Griffiths, Wayne Teasdale, Thomas Keating, and the Jewish equivalents); poets – Whitman, Eliot, Yeats, Ginsberg, Snyder – and novelists – Hesse, Maugham, Salinger; and musicians, including several giants who were influenced by the late great Ravi Shankar: Yehudi Menuhin, John and Alice Coltrane, Philip Glass, and of course George Harrison, for whom the lure of the sitar led directly to meditation and Krishna chanting and the Beatles’ monumental sojourn on the banks of the Ganges, which seemed to tilt the planet’s axis so that everything Indian could flow more swiftly in this direction and change Western spirituality forever.

The Great East-West Transmission continues apace, in new and different forms – the hatha yoga boom, the kirtan craze, mindfulness research, etc. – and I suspect it will continue to nurture the interspiritual age in ways we can’t anticipate.
Allen Ginsberg

Henry David Thoreau

Ravi Shankar and George Harrison

Swami A.C. Bhaktivedanta
Decades of work as a political activist have convinced me that peace begins as an inside job. My work to achieve nuclear disarmament may at first seem like a purely external, public pursuit, but in fact it has taught me much about the power of a prayerful inner life and the centrality of love and prayer to success. Since I speak as a full-time political activist rather than
as a religious leader, readers need not fear that my goal is proselytization for one religion or another when I say that the transformative power of prayer is crucial to our personal growth and political struggle for global peace.

The evidence of real prayer is whether it opens the heart to love, regardless of whether we pray quietly, out loud, within a tradition, out of a tradition, facing the east, the west, up or down. If it's prayer, it opens the heart to God's love. If it doesn't, it's not prayer.

As Bawa Muhaiyadeen said:

If each of you will open your heart, your action, your wisdom, and your conduct, and look within, you will see that every face is your face ... all sorrow is your sorrow.... When that state develops inside you, that is God's love ... If that love develops, you will not hurt any other living thing. You will not cause pain, you will not reject any life. And you will not torture any other life. Because if you hurt anyone, it will hurt you.

Feeling the joy and sorrow of others brings one into an active sense of responsibility, awakens conscience, and leads to action. Being effective in the realm of action means using skills, intelligence, political insight, and practical knowledge, but always in the service of that greater responsibility to the Source.

Without developing an inner character based on love and compassion, the instability of the mind, the harshness of the world, and the challenge of facing our mortality will breed fear. Fear is responsible for closing down dialogue and denying our interconnectedness. Fear too often can trump reason. But fear cannot overcome authentic experience-based love.

A culture that overemphasizes competition reinforces a false sense of disconnectedness. Reliance on science and technology to solve human dilemmas does not lead to peace. And the threats of nuclear annihilation and war certainly give anyone adequate reasons for fear. The modern world does little to remind us of our humanity. General Omar Bradley, a man familiar with the horrors of battle said it clearly: "We live in an age of nuclear giants and ethical infants, in a world that has achieved brilliance without wisdom, power without conscience. We've solved the mystery of the atom and forgotten the lessons of the Sermon on the Mount."

When fear is central to the public discourse we can be sure the least insightful among us will use it to profit from cycles of armaments and war, which reinforce the causes of fear. In fact, since the end of the Cold War, the world has spent more than $10 trillion on armaments. The United States alone spends more than $100 million every day to keep its nuclear arsenal at ready.

But those of us who have opened our hearts and felt the unity of humanity know that love is the manifest dynamic that weaves the mysterious infinite web of life of which we are but a part.
With such understanding, we must commit to creating cycles where cooperation and trust reinforce disarmament, which in turn reinforces our good qualities. We are the place where the cycles begin. From the glorious place of inner courage and freedom, we can change the cycle: no more fear inside and no more squandering of assets based on illusory quests for power. When individuals act from the place of the open heart, everyday life is enriched with the sacred; when groups act with resonance from this treasure, social change for peace and justice emerges. This is not a new insight. It is just a reminder that love is the healing force for each person and the strongest force for social change, even today.

[Excerpted from writings of Jonathan Granoff with permission of the author and Tikkun magazine.]

Jonathan Granoff is an interfaith leader, attorney, author, and international advocate well known for his work on human development, nuclear disarmament, peace, and security. President of the Global Security Institute, he advises numerous international organizations and United Nations NGO’s and writes for and advises periodicals worldwide. His name is well known from his ongoing role as a delegate and convener of the Nobel Laureate Summits in Rome sponsored by International Peace Bureau. A list of his prolific writings on international subjects can be found at:


Jonathan Granoff (center) convening Nobel Peace Prize Laureates in Rome in 2003 (courtesy of International Peace Bureau)
The EICSP was founded in December 2007 to provide educational opportunities and an international forum for understanding, experiencing, and participating in the rich diversity of the world’s spiritual traditions. The EICSP continues the spiritual work previously undertaken by the former Edinburgh International Centre for World Spiritualities, EICWS, 1995-2008. For details of some of the past activities undertaken by the former EICWS (see www.eicws.org).
The EICSP is an events-led Scottish Charity, SC038996, that works with the world’s spiritual traditions, both in Scotland and internationally, seeking understandings of the nature of spirituality, and of interspirituality and intraspirituality, in its diversity. The EICSP advances education of the public in Scotland, and elsewhere, concerning spirituality, culture and peace.

The activities of EICSP are educational in nature, ranging from international conferences, talks, dialogues, cultural and spiritual forums, retreats, workshops, spiritual practice events, deepening of spirituality events, open space events, networking and social gatherings, exhibitions and displays, book launches, education processes, school visits, visits to places of spiritual significance locally, training sessions, times for reflection, media engagements, hospitality events, service events, community and library hosted events, arts and cultural events - including film, theatre, music, dance and movement, storytelling, poetry, visual arts, photography, printmaking, calligraphy, crafts, among others, as well as participation in national and international events of a spiritual nature.

There is increasing awareness of the potential contribution of the world’s spiritual traditions to wider society, and the need for dialogue, shared understanding, and cooperation between these traditions. Scotland has a distinctive role in meeting this global challenge. In response to this challenge the EICSP has initiated a series of events which will illustrate the potential contribution of the world’s spiritual traditions to wider society and to the critical issues in contemporary culture and society. The EICSP will also engage with secular forms of spirituality, and with critical issues arising in secular society.

**Some specific initiatives of the EICSP:**
- Annual Edinburgh International Festival of Middle Eastern Spirituality and Peace, MESP.
- Visits to Scotland by globally important spiritual leaders.
- EICSP participation in initiatives to attract national and international spiritual events to Scotland.
- EICSP participation in national and international spiritual events.
The annual Edinburgh International Festival of Middle Eastern Spirituality and Peace (MESP): The Festival is jointly organised by the Edinburgh International Centre for Spirituality and Peace, EICSP, Scottish Charity, SC038996, and the Edinburgh Institute for Advanced Learning, EIAL, supported by their networking, planning, management and coordinating role. The Festival was co-founded by, and is co-directed by, Neill Walker and Dr Neil Douglas-Klotz.

In MESP twelve thematic strands to the Festival will be explicit, to allow a range of entry routes into the Festival, and to allow a range of participation identities, namely:

1. Spirituality, Interspirituality and Intraspirituality;
2. Peace, Conflict, Reconciliation and Justice;
3. Education and Learning;
4. Arts and Culture;
5. Health, Wellbeing and Healing;
6. Equality, Diversity and Communities;
7. Environmental Responsibility and Climate Change;
8. Engagement with Science and Medicine;
9. Engagement with Communication Media;
10. Engagement with Business and Industry;
11. Engagement with Government, Parliament, NGOs, NPOs and Civic Society;
12. Celebrating Scotland and the Middle East.

The Festival positively affirms the diversity contained within the spiritual, educational, artistic and cultural, ethnic, national and international traditions of Scotland and the Middle East. The Festival avoids taking fixed positions on political, ethical or cultural questions, and allows for challenging and evaluative perspectives as well as affirmative and celebratory opportunities. We intend to create a forum in which we can listen to one another deeply and learn with an open mind and heart.

The Festival brings together at least three different kinds of presentations. First, we hope to learn from each other about our shared traditions, as well as those that form the unique voice of any one of us. Second, we will hear from those who have been active in peacemaking on a spiritual and secular basis on the ground in the Middle East. Third, we invite participants to share in the musical and spiritual practice presented, in order to gain an experiential view of the traditions that we discuss.

One of the Festival’s overriding aims is to contribute to peace and mutual understanding through dialogue, spiritual and artistic practice, and improved mutual understanding among the spiritual, secular and cultural traditions that have arisen in what is now known as the Middle East, and more generally among those who have found a home in Scotland. Accordingly, the Festival seeks to engage a progressively wider and more diverse range of participants who have
been active in spiritual, secular and artistic and cultural approaches to non-violent conflict resolution and world peace. No speaker represents, or can represent, the totality of any tradition, and indeed, experiential, evaluative and visionary perspectives are particularly welcome.

Festival participants are invited to shape their own experience during the Festival, and to take personal responsibility for participating as peacemakers and community builders. In particular, participants are invited to take personal responsibility for processing any conflicts or obstacles to peace that they experience, and for self-evaluating their own participation as peacemakers and community builders for the benefit of their wider life experience.

Conflict and obstacles to peace are of central importance in the lives of peacemakers and community builders. They hold seeds for our spiritual, personal and creative development and can provide energy to sustain such development. The Festival provides many opportunities to engage spiritually, creatively and non-violently with conflict and obstacles to peace in supportive and non-judgmental environments, allowing participants the opportunity to transform conflicts and obstacles to peace into new perspectives, insights and actions.

The Festival is managed as a charitable event for wide public benefit, and all events in the Festival should reflect, and all participants in the Festival should respect, the Festival Equal Opportunities Policy.

Collaborating with and supporting the EICSP:
If you would like to propose any specific events that the EICSP might organise and host, or if you would like to explore possible collaboration with the EICSP, or if you would like to sponsor activities of the EICSP, then please feel free to be in contact.

The Edinburgh International Centre for Spirituality and Peace, EICSP, Scottish Charity, SC038996.

Contact: Neill Walker, Co-Founder, Co-Director and Executive Secretary.
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T : www.twitter.com/_EICSP

Photos:
EICSP commissioned exhibition for MESP 2009, Peacemakers of Israel and Palestine Photography Exhibition - December 2008 visit by photographer Angela Catlin and journalist Billy Briggs, with funding from Awards for All.

http://www.angelacatlin.com/
Tara Jaff
Desert Wisdom Photo
Can interspirituality transform the structural gender injustice that afflicts every spiritual and religious tradition? Patriarchal oppression and male domination have characterized every major religion East and West, and the devastating consequences have never been more apparent—denial of women’s spiritual leadership, blocking LGBT membership in churches, innumerable sexual scandals, denial of ordination for women and non-heterosexuals. A spiritually grounded approach to transforming this systemic “gender apartheid” between men and women is urgently needed—and this presents both a major challenge and profound opportunity for the emerging “interspirituality movement.”

A new approach called Gender Reconciliation has been developed over 20 years and tested in eight countries by Gender Reconciliation International. How does it work? Let us illustrate with...
an example—dropping the reader right into the thick of an advanced five-day Gender Reconciliation workshop with 12 men and 13 women at a Catholic retreat center in Johannesburg, South Africa (names changed for confidentiality):

“I don’t know how to be a man anymore,” said Tebogo, a 24-year-old from Soweto, “I feel traumatized.”

Tebogo was visibly shaken, as were several others in the room. They had just heard Siboniso, one of the women, share her story of being brutally raped four months earlier.

We sat in circle – the women on one side and the men on the other – facing each other. An hour earlier, during the Truth Forum, participants were invited to step into the center and share their truth of pain and suffering as women and men.

“When we share, we speak not as victims,” instructed the woman facilitator, “but as witnesses to our personal stories.” Looking around the circle at each woman and man, she continued. “It is important that we speak truth and acknowledge the stories of our lives.”

Siboniso had been preparing herself for this moment, and summoning great
courage she moved to the center. “I was raped,” she began slowly, “and next week I will face my rapist in court.” Siboniso had come to the Gender Reconciliation workshop as a way to prepare for testifying in front of the man who raped her, and the judge who would rule on the case. “I feel safe with all of you, and I want to tell you what happened,” she said as tears began to well up in her eyes.

For the next several minutes, Siboniso recounted in graphic detail the horrific story of her rape. The men sat frozen in their chairs, as many of the women wept. None had ever heard a rape story told in such a direct, personal way.

Siboniso was trembling as she completed her story, and the other women lovingly gathered around her, gently enveloping Siboniso as if in a protected womb. Feeling their tender touch after sharing so openly, Siboniso collapsed into their arms like a flower wilting from the blazing sun.

Across the circle, the men held a deeply compassionate space as they witnessed all that was unfolding before them. With great sensitivity honoring the women’s process, the male facilitators guided the men to move slowly around the women keeping a respectful distance. Silently they prayed, as the women completed their grieving process together (see photo). Eventually the deep silence in the room was gracefully pierced by the clear ring of the meditation bell.

“You don’t know how to be a man
anymore,” one of the male facilitators quietly reflected to Tebogo, “because you have truly heard and opened to Siboniso’s pain. You have taken her pain into your own heart, and so you feel traumatized . . . as we all do. Before, Siboniso carried that pain by herself. Now, you are carrying part of that pain with her. This necessarily changes your identity as a man.”

This example offers just a brief glimpse of the healing process for transforming gender relations between women and men developed by Gender Reconciliation International. Extensive facilitation training and experience are required to bring a group of women and men through an intensive healing process such as this one. The premise of Gender Reconciliation is that both women and men are afflicted by gender injustice, and each needs the other for a true and complete healing.

Gender Reconciliation International has begun training religious leaders, psychotherapists, activists and other professionals. We are creating a partnership with the Desmond and Leah Tutu Legacy Foundation, directed by Rev. Mpho Tutu, daughter of Archbishop Desmond Tutu. Our approach is to apply the principles of truth and reconciliation to transforming the gender injustice that afflicts all social and religious institutions. Professional trainings are underway in South Africa, the United States, India, and Australia, with new trainings scheduled for Kenya.
and Colombia in 2014.

If indeed “God enters through a wound,” God enters more deeply through a deep wound. Gender Reconciliation moves beyond mutual respect between men and women to mutual reverence. The duality of gender eventually dissolves into oneness of being—a revelation affirmed by all the esoteric religious traditions—and this awakening emerges spontaneously when the veils of gender conditioning fall away. Gender Reconciliation thus holds tremendous promise for a spiritual transformation of ‘gender apartheid,’ which offers a profound contribution within the budding field of interspirituality.

For more information, please visit www.GRworld.org and www.satyana.org

Rev. Cynthia Brix and William Keepin, PhD are co-directors of Gender Reconciliation International (www.GRworld.org) and the Satyana Institute which is organizing the Dawn of InterSpirituality Conference (www.satyana.org). Their books are Divine Duality: the Power of Reconciliation between Women and Men (2007), Women Healing Women (2009), and The Song of the Earth (2012).
Building a GROUNDSWELL Virtual Community
Empowering Grassroots Interfaith Communities
When a dozen twenty-somethings gathered in my tiny living room in the fall of 2010, vexed about the firestorm of protest against Park 51, an Islamic center planned in Manhattan known as “the Ground Zero Mosque,” we had no idea that we were planting the seed for a movement.

We were Christian, Muslim, Jew, Sikh, Buddhist, Hindu and Humanist Millennials who had come of age in the decade after September 11, 2001. All of us were tired of witnessing religion wielded as a weapon to destroy, denigrate, and demonize others. This time, through drumming up controversy around Park 51, a small conservative network had succeeded in spreading widespread fear of Islam. When a pastor in Florida sparked riots around the world after threatening to burn the Qur’an, we gathered in my apartment to ask what we could do to stop the madness.

Kicking off a strategy session, I looked into the beleaguered faces of my friends and decided to try a different approach. I asked us instead to envision the world that we wanted. Literally. We closed our eyes and imagined what our street corner would look and feel like in a society where every human being lived, worked, and worshiped without fear.

Something surprising happened: a sense of ease and openness filled the room. The frenetic energy and anxiety which characterizes so much of public interest work
melted away, and we felt a sense of calm and connection we had felt in church, or in the woods, in prayer or in meditation.

We began to share what we saw – the respect for all people of faith, the freedom to be openly gay, the ability for immigrants to come out of the shadow, the capacity for women to care for their own bodies… the list goes on. These were not mere pictures of social or political progress: we were expressing a shared moral vision. The concern that brought us together in the wake of Park 51 was part of a larger concern for human dignity in our society.

**A New Approach**

It seemed to us that the conventional way of fighting – for one’s own rights, issues and peoples – is woefully inadequate. Growing up in the era of Facebook and Twitter, our generation’s notion of “community” already stretches beyond color, class, faith, and nation. We often see ourselves in one another’s struggles: we knew we could not achieve racial justice without also securing the equality of women, economic justice without also protecting our climate. We wanted to fight in a way that matched our worldview. How might 21st century digital tools connect and support us – and others gathered in living rooms across the country – in a common struggle for human dignity?

A 200-year old seminary in New York City was ready to explore this question. Under the leadership of its new president, the Rev. Dr. Katharine Henderson, Auburn Seminary was refashioning itself into a force for movement-building. They invited me to join their staff in 2011 to build an initiative that would help equip people of faith to “trouble the waters and heal the world.”

**Groundswell was born**

Groundswell (http://action.groundswell-movement.org/) is a digital platform that gives faith leaders and communities the tools to wage campaigns as part of a national multifaith movement. We bring together people across faiths and backgrounds in actions; we amplify the voices of faith leaders in the public arena; we connect issues that are typically fought separately.

In our first year, Groundswell led campaigns to defend religious pluralism, stand for LGBTQ dignity, fight human trafficking, support disaster relief, and organize for reform in the wake of mass shootings in Oak Creek, WI, and Newtown, CT. Now in our second year, thanks to the leadership of Isaac Luria (director of Auburn Action),
Groundswell has become open-source: people across the U.S. can now launch their own online campaigns on the same platform as part of a networked movement.

Today, the Groundswell community is 60,000 people strong.

When I travel the country, I meet congregations, faith groups, and informal circles like the one in my living room who want to do more than traditional service projects to fight injustice – they want to become political. Today, these groups can leverage the authentic voices of their priests, rabbis, imams and young leaders of all kinds in campaigns, whether to stop budget cuts to the homeless shelter down the street or call for federal gun control. Groundswell can equip these groups with the right digital tools and connect them together – like nodes in a constellation – so that they know they are not doing the work alone but as part of a broader community.

To be sure, nothing can replace the feeling of community when gathered in a living room, sharing ideas and drawing up blueprints for concrete action. Groundswell is meant to support – not replace – the thousands of faith-based, spiritual and humanist communities on the ground who are already committed to social justice. It connects campaigns and communities online, whether organizing for marriage equality, women’s rights, climate justice, gun control or immigration reform.

For centuries, faith leaders have helped lead the greatest social movements of U.S. history, from women’s suffrage to civil rights. People of faith and moral conscious have always had the ability to transcend small-minded politics and appeal to the greater human spirit of love and justice. In a time of soaring social inequality, environmental degradation, civil rights violations and gun violence, our nation needs these prophetic voices more than ever. Groundswell is one of many emerging ways to lift up these voices in the months and years to come.

The light of social justice flickers in brave corners but can fizzle in isolation. To achieve meaningful change in a networked society, that light must shine in a bold constellation. From my living room to yours, may we envision a better world together – and in the darkness shine a light.

[Adapted from writings of Valarie Kaur, by permission of the author, the Parliament of the World’s Religions, and The Interfaith Observer.]

Valarie Kaur (www.valariekaur.com) is a third-generation Sikh American named by The Center for American Progress among 13 national faith leaders to watch in 2013 where she was called “a standout figure in the world of interfaith organizing and activism” and “one of the most exceptional speakers and thinkers”. An award-winning filmmaker, civil rights advocate, and interfaith leader, she is the founder of Groundswell at Auburn Seminary, a non-profit initiative with a base of 80,000+ people that equips people to mobilize for social action using 21st century tools. She also founded the Yale Visual Law Project, where she makes films and trains students in the art of visual advocacy at Yale Law School. She is a prolific public speaker and frequent political contributor to the Melissa Harris-Perry Show on MSNBC. Her opinion essays regularly appear on CNN Opinion, The Washington Post, The Huffington Post, Salon, and the New York Times and will deliver the Baccalaureate address for Stanford University in June 2013.
The Universal Song

by Kristin Hoffmann

Throughout human evolution, music has played the important role of teacher, guide, healer, sage, historian and storyteller and has been a powerful vehicle for prayer, communion, growth and bonding between individuals and groups of all sizes. It is the one true, universal language, in this dimension, that is not separated by barriers and can immediately be felt, understood and experienced by any and all who choose to "tap in." In today's complicated, modernized world, where ideas of separation, personal power, and ego dominate much of everyday human experience, the role of "Spiritually Awakened" music becomes ever more important as a mirror and reminder of our true nature and interconnectedness.

As a musician, I have had the honor to create and share my craft in many capacities, from hundreds of sets in busy New York City to the peaceful shores of Mexico and mountains of Peru. I have found that no matter where I am, if I "tune in" to higher levels of energy and respect the sacred space that is called upon through music, suddenly a whole gathering of people can almost
instantly re-connect to Source, remember our Oneness, and expand in awareness together. It is a truly remarkable shared experience, and at the same time, so natural!

As with all things, I have found that the intention behind the creation of music plays a key role in its ability to be a catalyst for awareness. I recently released a new record entitled "The Human Compass," which explores the light and shadows of the universal human experience of “searching for direction.” It concludes that if LOVE is in all of our actions and thoughts, we will align with our true soul path and always discover and know our way. Another multimedia/music project, that I’m honored to be a part of, called Bella Gaia, created by Kenji Williams, takes audience members on a journey to view planet Earth from outer space. By "zooming in and out" of different cultures and experiencing live music, dance and visuals from those places, viewers are ultimately reminded that “we are all one.” Its mission statement reads, "BELLA GAIA is an audiovisual presentation that illuminates the connections between natural systems and human activities and inspires audiences to act as stewards for our shared resources." I am excited to share and celebrate our human connection through the vehicle of music during this time of
"Great Awakening!" After all…We Are vibration…expressing our infinite, glorious harmonies and colors…playing and singing the song that always was…and always Is. You can taste some of this music at:

www.kristinhoffmann.com and www.bellagaia.com
http://vimeo.com/46343461
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hHtFaqiH8GY.

This music reminds of the poetry of Rumi, St. John of the Cross, and St. Teresa of Avila, falling into the embrace of the universal Beloved.

**Kenji Williams** is a filmmaker, audiovisual composer, electronic music producer, and virtuoso violinist. He is founder and director of BELLA GAIA, which celebrates Sacred Earth in music and art. **Kristin Hoffmann**, vocalist for BELLA GAIA, is a New York composer and singer known internationally for her deeply moving compositions and enchanting voice.

www.bellagaia.com

Vocalist Kristin Hoffmann

The band and dancers in White Sands National Park
Edgar Mitchell, Apollo 14 astronaut and sixth man to walk on the moon, described an epiphany he had on his return trip that left him with no doubt about the interconnectedness of and sacredness inherent in all things. This inspired him to found the **Institute of Noetic Sciences**: to bring rigorous science to the study of deep inner experience, and to use this knowledge to help our planet flourish. Since 1973, the Institute has conducted **groundbreaking research** on the paradoxical apparent separation on one hand between one another and between mind and matter, and on the other hand the experiential and now increasingly very real physical reality of interconnection and oneness.
From IONS early leadership by Willis Harman, who envisioned a coming “Global Mind Change,” that would be necessary for our evolution and survival, to our continuing scientific investigations that investigate consciousness, IONS has long been interested in bringing wisdom from the world’s spiritual traditions to inform scientific investigation. Based on the idea that if some wisdom is perennial, appearing across widely varying spiritual and religious traditions and across millennia, it may be pointing to a more robust insight about the nature of reality, we conducted a series of studies over the course of ten years that searched for common understandings across spiritual, religious, and indigenous wisdom traditions about how people make transformations that result in greater meaning, purpose, wisdom, love, and compassion. The results, described in our book *Living Deeply: The Art and Science of Transformation in Everyday Life*, pointed to the idea that positive changes, in essence, spring from a *fundamental shift in worldview* – from exclusivity to inclusion, from one way of knowing to many ways of knowing, from separation to interconnectedness, from fear of new things to curiosity about them and so on.

Now, we’ve take these understandings to create a program for middle and high school students entitled “Worldview Explorations.” This program contains a teacher’s guide, a set of 22 lesson plans, a student workbook, conversation cards, hundreds of activities for deeper learning, explicit connections to mandated educational standards, and an emerging online community of people who are facilitating Worldview Explorations in their classrooms and beyond. People are using the work not only in secondary schools, but in colleges, community groups, healthcare settings, and other groups. The curriculum focuses on teaching learners, first that they have a worldview that has been developed through their culture, upbringing, religion, region, education, and life experiences, second, that everyone else has a worldview of their own, and that learning to investigate a diversity of worldviews can open a whole new way to learn and take action in the world. Visit [www.noetic.org](http://www.noetic.org) to learn more about our work.
Further Evidence of Oneness

Bizah suddenly got up and headed to Akina’s, not knowing why. When he arrived, he found Akina sitting on the floor nursing his bleeding knee.

“Goodness, what happened, Akina?” Bizah asked.

“Oh, I wasn’t looking and tripped over a fallen tree branch on my way home and scraped my knee badly,” replied Akina. “But why are you here now? I didn’t expect to see you here.”

“That’s a good question,” Bizah responded. “I really don’t know, other than that I was just sitting quietly at home, then my body got up, and I knew I had to come see you.”

“Hmm,” replied Akina. “More evidence that we are becoming very attuned to one another. You sensed something was wrong with me and just came.”

“I guess so,” said Bizah. “But how does that really happen—that we become so attuned, we can sense what’s happening to each other?”

“Well, we sure spend a lot of time in stillness together. During these times, we experience an inner presence that isn’t personal, but universal. It’s in all things. So as we cultivate this inner presence, we must become closer.”

“Why?” asked Bizah.

“Because there is not your presence and my presence, there is simple presence. We are in truth all one, and our spiritual practice is bringing us into this realization through our experiences.”

“Awesome!” exclaimed Bizah. “Should we tell the Master?”

“I think he already knows,” said Akina.
The Power of Now is in hardcover, softcover, and CD formats.

Stillness Speaks is in hardcover and CD formats.
Interspiritual

Movie Review

“Life of Pi”

by David Robert Ord

The movie *Life of Pi* raises a question about the basic nature of civilization. Is civilization a mere convenience to facilitate human existence? Or is it the tip of the iceberg of something more basic to existence itself?

I read *Life of Pi* when it first came out as a book, then saw the movie twice—one in Phoenix, and a second time among a group of college students in Jinan, China. I was fascinated to see how they responded with the same feelings that I, a Westerner, experienced—right down to the subtle humor.

My first viewing of the movie was on a day when 109 workers burned to death in a garment factory in Dacca, Bangladesh, the result of shoddy electrical wiring. Someone had cut corners to line their own pockets.

The factory fire was a largely unnoticed tragedy in the West, a fleeting headline that caught my attention during a 24-hour period when a smattering of news, much like any other day, included people killed by bombs in Nigeria as the result of sectarian violence, ten children dead in fighting in Syria, and
19 slain bodies discovered in a northern state of Mexico.

Of course, these were but the tip of the carnage that characterizes any single day here on planet Earth. Indeed, the mountain of human suffering in any single second of a day, were we able to capture it in a bird’s eye view, would be intolerable for any of us.

An event of a quite opposite nature occurred in the same time-period. In Eureka, California, a couple died and their 16-year-old son went missing as they tried to save their dog, which had chased a stick and been pulled into the ocean by waves. The dog managed to get out of the raging foam on its own. Here was a sense of connectedness, leading people to risk their lives, gone awry.

Civilization, often associated with towns and cities, if not with westernization, finds its roots not in our buildings, economic structures, governmental institutions, or even social organizations. It goes far deeper than the mere requirement of human beings to get along with one another for their mutual prosperity and indeed survival—a requirement that at times breaks down, though as history reveals always only for an interlude.

On the surface civilization can look like a mere necessity, not something deep in our veins, let alone our souls. But Life of Pi probes what being civilized, whenever we find it in ourselves to be so, really witnesses to.

Pi, a vegan by upbringing, tells a story of being cast onto the ocean in a lifeboat following the sinking of the steamer on which he, his mother and father, and his brother—along with a flotilla of zoo animals bound for a life in North American circuses—were taking passage to Canada.

Pi finds himself at sea with a zebra and a vicious hyena that kills the zebra. He then kills the hyena. He’s shocked by his impulsive slaughter of this creature.

Another surprise awaits Pi when
a tiger from the zoo appears from beneath a canvas. As a young boy, he had eyeballed this tiger up close through zoo bars, when he had attempted to feed it by hand and been snatched away from the danger by his father. On that occasion he had seen in the tiger’s eyes a sentient creature—indeed, a soul—whereas his father saw only the potential of his young son’s demise as tiger prey.

The incident points to two very different ways of seeing reality. But what if both are true? What might this say about God?

The tiger bears the name of Richard Parker. When the tiger becomes hungry, he’s once again a threat to Pi. So Pi now kills again, this time fish to feed the tiger. Pi’s face is being rubbed in the raw realities of everyday survival on this planet of ours.

Pi and Richard Parker are destined to be at sea together some 227 days. In time they achieve a standoff, guarded by the threat of mutual injury if not death, until the 450-pound Bengal tiger’s energy wanes as a result of thirst and its existence becomes endangered. Pi takes the noble creature’s head in his arms as he contemplates its seemingly imminent demise—an event averted by the unexpected discovery of a Pacific island.

*Life of Pi* introduces us to the concept that civility is ultimately far more deeply a part of our nature than the thin veneer of civilized behavior that can so easily be ruptured by a threat to our survival. It invites us to recognize a kinship in all creatures, a fundamental oneness that must ultimately undercut our barbarism and move us to a deeper sense of connection, manifest in a practical caring for each other in everyday reality—such as not cutting corners in electrical wiring codes in factories to make a buck.

Pi’s discovery of kinship with Richard Parker in an instant of recognition through the bars of the zoo must undergo a slow and treacherous unfolding in the days aboard their life raft. Isn’t this true of all our experiences of connectedness? It takes time for the surface recognition to deepen to its roots in our ultimate oneness.

*Life of Pi* suggests that the veneer of civilization which sustains a majority, while daily failing masses of humans, is in the final analysis thicker than water—thicker even than blood. It is rooted in a connectedness that is seeking to emerge in a growing consciousness of our ultimate oneness in God.

The movie is advertised as “The Journey of a Lifetime,” with its double meaning including not only Pi’s journey at sea but also ours in daily life. The venture afloat on the ocean serves as a metaphor for what it takes for individuals with differences of creed and culture to recognize their common participation in a divinity that doesn’t intervene to calm the waters, but whose presence is nevertheless not absent even in life’s most violent, chaotic, raging storms.

The book and movie address the question of God. Is there a God? And if so, where is this God to be found? Pi began life as a young boy who wanted to get the flavor of a variety of different faiths. Why shouldn’t he draw from his Hindu background, Catholicism, and Islam? His father
tells him he needs to choose one path and practice it.

*Life of Pi* leads us to the conclusion that the divine isn’t experienced in only one faith, one set of circumstances, but in everyone and everything—and yet the movie shows that we each lead lives and experience situations that are unique to us and can never be entered into by another in the same way. Nothing shows this more than Pi’s relationship with the animals aboard his Pacific Noah’s Ark, especially his relationship with Richard Parker.

Differentiation is therefore called for, defined as the ability to be separate as individuals who can be true to ourselves while also profoundly connected in our ultimate oneness. Differentiation allows us to be close and yet unique, neither becoming fused with the other nor having to pull away and distance ourselves to retain our sense of individuality.

Where is God? The movie answers that the divine is in the tenderness, the love, the caring that is characteristic of the oneness; but also in the diversity of the material world, including the raging storm of the sea, the hunger that leads to killing the fish—and the fact that, despite their time together on the ocean, Richard Parker ultimately strolls off into the jungle without even a glance back at Pi.

Some of the human characters in this story are rather unsavory. Yet *Life of Pi* wants us to realize that even here, the divine isn’t absent. The divine is truly omnipresent.

The point I take home from the book and movie is that despite the presence of God in everything and everyone, there is diversity in the way our oneness is expressed. Consequently we each have our own paths to tread—Richard Parker his, and Pi his. We may choose a personally preferred path, but the key is to do so in full recognition that we are one with the whole shebang, learning from each other what the fullness of existence implies. This deep connectedness is the taproot of all civilization, the ultimate oneness that needs to drive all our many ventures in the material realm.

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**David Robert Ord**, Editorial Director, Namaste Publishing, is a former Presbyterian (USA) minister and graduate of San Francisco Theological Seminary, part of the Graduate Theological Union of Berkeley. He is coauthor with Dr Robert B. Coote of *The Bible’s First History—From Eden to the Court of David with the Yahwist; In the Beginning—Creation and the Priestly History; Is the Bible True? Understanding the Bible Today*; and author of the Namaste Publishing book *Your Forgotten Self: Mirrored in Jesus the Christ* and audiobook *Lessons in Loving—A Journey into the Heart*. 
An Interspiritual Way of Understanding Jesus

Order
Unpacking the story of *The Little Prince*, written in 1944 by Antoine de Saint-Exupery and still an international bestseller, *Lessons in Loving* takes us on a journey into our own center where, beneath all of our pain, there exists an unbroken peace, boundless joy, and infinite love. Here, in our own essence, we find the creativity to re-imagine our broken lives—and our broken world.
Introducing the **Global Declaration of Interdependence** as a Blueprint for Entering Our New Age of Global Spirituality

**by Ashok Gangadean**

On December 1, 2012, on the occasion of celebrating the planetary “Birth 2012” rite of passage for our human family We inaugurated a Global Town Meeting at Haverford College reaching out to *We the People* calling for a deep dialogue on **The Emergence of Global Democracy: Our Unfinished American R-Evolution**. (See the poster that accompanies this article.)

The intent here in the Philadelphia vicinity, the birthplace of American Democracy, to honor the miraculous Founding of this Democracy, and build on the spiritual energy in moving now to a truly **Global** Declaration of Interdependence in our unfinished R-Evolution.

As the drafter of this **Declaration** I steeped myself in our original founding documents, I visited the sacred sites of the drafting of these great founding scripts in historic Philadelphia and sat on the very bench in Christ Church where George Washington sat in moments of great crisis with other founders such as William Penn and Thomas Jefferson. I felt their energy and I was led to see and feel that they were opening the way to and tapping the Global Light of Reason—the Light of Logos—that is the spiritual and moral source of planetary Wisdom and Spirituality.

It was in this living, power energy field that I was moved in drafting our **Global Declaration of Interdependence**. In reading our Declaration of Independence I was struck with the opening “Principle” that calls upon us to “separate” from any political force that violates or compromises our Sacred Humanity. It then dawned on me that this powerful principle at the heart of the Declaration of Independence was tapping the Global Light of Reason and, in fact, this very founding axiom showed that all these years since our founding this potent Axiom has been moving the life of the people to live up to its Truth.

It became clear that our Founding American Revolution was just a beginning, and our culture was still laboring under repressive forces in the still dominant egomental and monocentric patterns of culture making and self governance that held us captive. It was clear that we still face our
unfinished R-Evolution, and that when we truly accomplished our Spiritual and Moral Independence from oppressive self-governance we would naturally come to clarity of our inherent Spiritual Interdependence.

It is clear that this first step in moving to "independence" from external oppressive forces is just the beginning. Separating from the “British Monarchy” does not yet renovate our patterns of self governance from "in house" local forms of violence and oppression: free the slaves, permit women to vote, stop the violence towards our indigenous First Nations, stop the civil war, remove racism, sexism and homophobia from our culture....It is clear from the light of Global Wisdom that we have not yet sufficiently evolved from the chronically entrenched patterns of “self” oppression and “other” oppression in the cultural patterns that hold us together. Our Civic Space is chronically fragmented, there is serious failure of real dialogue, we are not yet we the people and we are nowhere near E Puribus Unum. Our "democracy" is in disrepair and in evolutionary crisis. And this is not just in the US, but also the UN and across the planet.

In short, the wealth of our Global Wisdom: Global Light of Reason, of Global Logos teaches that when we are truly "separated" from the dysfunctional patterns of self governance in our culture we will see that our Evolutionary Elders (scriptures, religions, spiritual teachers) have been urgently calling on humanity to mature, grow up and rise from dysfunctional monologue and make a dimensional shift in our “literacy” to a culture of Dialogue—a shift from "I...It" to I Thou; from /ego sapiens/ to Logo Sapiens. This is where we may rise together to a Culture of Global Democracy to realize, for example, ML King’s dream for us, and to fulfill our American Ethos that our Founding Visionaries were tapping.

Thus, we have not yet fulfilled our Declaration of Independence which calls us to fully “separate” from the patterns of culture making (self governance) that keep us “enslaved” (and in patterns of polarization and breakdown in communication) and that is vital and urgently needed now for a thriving Democracy here and abroad.

This is our unfinished American R-Evolution. When we realize our Independence from the / colonial mind/, not just the external "British rule", we will then see clearly that We the People are profoundly Interdependent: in other words: true independence from inner self tyranny means interdependence: Life, Liberty, Well Being.

This is what our draft of The Global Declaration of Interdependence seeks to bring to light for our Interspiritual Age. And if and when we get this fundamental point, We the People will converge in synergy and light up with compelling evolutionary force. This is the intent and context for our Declaration.

After all, this Birth 2012 is a celebration of our Evolutionary Shift to Global Consciousness and Our Moment of Choice: this is the Birth Event of our Awakened Human Family. This is our Rite of Passage and our Right of Passage.

Here is our Declaration which was presented for Dialogue and Signature. This draft is composed in a meditation flowing from The Global Light of Reason.
In the Course of Events, as our ongoing Evolutionary Drama unfolds, it has become clear that We the People have entered an unprecedented Global Age.

With the intensified encounters and growing awareness of the living realities of our diverse cultures, worldviews, religions, ideologies and diverse forms of life on a planetary scale and in the marketplace of our Global Village we are able to open ourselves as never before and listen deeply to our Other, and tap the enormous endowment of our Global Wisdom through the ages.

It is clearer now that our diverse Wisdom and Spiritual Traditions concur that the heart of our Human Reason is global, ecumenical and lights up beyond local ideologies and dogmas. It is clearer now in our evolving Global Age that this Global Light of Reason is the funding source of our diverse cultures, worldviews and forms of life, and is the original source of our diverse global self evident truths.

Further, in this Global Light of Reason it is self evident that we humans co-originate from a Common Source which is the ground of our individual dignity, the sanctity of our personal space, our inalienable right to Life, Freedom and Well Being.

This Light of Reason shining through our Collective Wisdom further reveals that in our boundless sacred diversity we are nevertheless woven together in a Primal Unity which is the self evident truth of E Pluribus Unum. Thus our Personal Space and Shared Commons, our Polis, are both primary and co-constituted.

Our Planetary Wisdom further reveals that We are as we Mind, that we co-create our living realities through the conduct of our mind, our level of literacy, our mental patterns of making our selves, cultures, worlds and our experience.

And in the evolutionary course of events it has become unmistakably clear that when we humans are lodged or entrenched in monocentric or egomental patterns of self making and culture making this level of literacy and development produces fragmentation, polarization, alienation, de-humanization and boundless forms of personal and cultural dysfunctions. Our Personal, Cultural and Ecological crises trace to such mental practices.
In this Light it is self evident that when we Humans mature beyond this monocentric “I==It” pattern of life to a more evolved Dialogic “I==Thou” form of life, literacy and culture making we shift from monologue to Dialogue, from ”I==It” to “I==Thou” Ethos which lifts us to our higher Human Form and opens sacred space for We the People.

Furthermore, it is now evident in the Global Light that our entrance into our evolved Global Age urgently calls on us, Individually and Collectively, to declare our Independence from all personal, inter-personal, and cultural patterns of self governance that eclipse, suppress, repress, compromise or violate our Sacred Right to Life, Dignity, Freedom and Well Being, at the Personal and Collective sanctified spaces.

Finally, the Ecumenical Light of Reason teaches that Diversity-in-Unity is sacred, and that all Persons are Equal across Gender, Ethnic, Racial, Religious, Ideological, Political, Economic and Generational lines, and, as such, are entitled to the highest degree of Life, Freedom and Well Being.

Accordingly, We the People, rising now together into our Global Age, beyond all artificial borders, leaving behind Personal and Collective dysfunctions, now acknowledge and affirm that our Democracy is Ecumenical and Global in origin, scope and power, beyond ideology, dogma and egomental patterns of life.

We hereby recognize that We Humans are and always have been intricately interwoven together in the Fabric of Life, in the Dialogic “I==Thou” Commons of Personal and Civic Space, Interdependent with each other, with all life and with Sacred Nature and Earth.

Thus, in Light of the above, and in the Presence of the Light of Global Reason, we hereby acknowledge and Declare our Sacred Interdependence and hereby resolve to do all in our power, and with highest urgency, to collaborate across all borders, to co-create mindfully, nurture and bring forth our more evolved Shared Form of Life wherein our planetary Human Family may flourish together, individually and collectively, with our Sacred Earth.

Signed this Day:

Respectfully Submitted
Ashok Gangadean
Margaret Gest Professor of Global Philosophy
Right Relationship

Cultivating Deeper Connections to Self, Earth, and Community

by Weston Pew

There is a wonderful quote from the late theologian and ecologist Thomas Berry who stated "the universe is not a collection of objects but a communion of subjects." To me this simple yet profound statement captures the essence of the transformation or collective rite of passage our species is undertaking today.

We are faced with the task of moving from a perspective of separateness and competition in our world into a place of relationship, collaboration, and communion.

Recent research in social psychology by individuals such as Cindy Frantz thankfully shows us that the best way to cultivate just and ecological behavior in people is through cultivating their relationship to self, earth, and community. Arne Naess, one of the pioneers of Deep Ecology, coined the term "a self-actualized individual" in reference to any person who has an active awareness that embodies the interdependent relationship between self, earth, and community. Aldo Leopold referred to this perspective as ecocentric. One of many, many examples today of this collective urge to move toward deeper relationship is the Declaration of Interdependence.

On a personal level, the through line of my own work and passion has been dedicated to
exploring ways to help individuals cultivate this self-actualized awareness. Over the summer I finished a four-year project called the Sacred Door Trail (SDT). The SDT is a 170-mile interfaith pilgrimage trail located in western Montana, which is dedicated to spiritual unity, peace, and our connection to earth and community. This past summer I finished the guidebook for the trail and facilitated the opening ceremonies, which brought people and leaders from various faith-based and indigenous traditions together to bless the land in their own ways to establish the trail as a shared sacred space.

Currently I am working to plant this interfaith pilgrimage trail template in the heart of New York City. The goal of this urban interfaith pilgrimage would be to broaden people’s awareness of the sacred and to remind them that the sacred is not just found in churches and temples but manifests in all aspects of our culture.

The path will not stop at any temples or churches but instead will direct people through the 9/11 memorial, central park, the Museum of Natural History, Wall Street, polluted zones, and other cultural points. The hope is that this will encourage people to reflect on what we are creating as a society, what's working, what isn't, where we want to go from here, and how can a deeper more encompassing connection to the sacred help guide our vision and creation? Ultimately these interfaith pilgrimage paths serve as tangible symbols and anchors of the coming interspiritual age!

Another tool I have discovered to be effective in fostering these deeper relationships is a nature based Rite of Passage (RoP). Using a pan cultural model developed by Stephen Foster and Meredith Little through the School of Lost Borders, I have created an organization called Inner Wild which facilitates RoP's for individuals and groups 16 years of age and older.

Rites of passage experiences are deeply imbedded in our collective human history and sadly we live in a culture and a world that has all but forgotten the importance of such an experience. In indigenous cultures the RoP was used to help shift the individual from the "I" perspective into the "We" perspective. This awakened a self-actualized awareness in the individual and at the same time helped them to better understand their own gifts and how they could use those gifts to be of service to the greater community. If a healthy RoP model is not available to youth, they will make one up for themselves. It may be joining a gang or a fraternity, or running away. All of these are forms of an RoP.

An important aspect of our work at Inner Wild is with elders. We recently created a program called the Elders Initiative, which seeks to empower ecologically-centered elders who understand the linkages between human experience, culture, and ecosystems, and can communicate such knowledge trans-generationally through mentorship, rites of passage, and other types of nature connection experiences. The goal here is twofold: to help revive nature based Rites of Passages in communities around the world while at the same time helping elders to reclaim their role as wisdom keepers and mentors in our communities.

Over the past two years my work with Rites of Passage has evolved into deeper community development-style workshops that focus on leadership cultivation through the lens of Integral
Theory. Currently I am co-creating a sustainable community initiative (Pine Ridge Restoration) for the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota through an organization I recently cofounded called Full Circle Community Restoration. We are partnering with community leaders on the Reservation as well as other cutting edge leaders from across the country in the Sustainability Movement to help create a resilient community model that fosters vibrant economic, environmental, social, and spiritual wellbeing for both individual and collective growth.

Our framework is based on principles found in integral theory, youth, adult and systems development, deep ecology, contemplative practices, leadership development, mentorship, sustainability, and nature connection. Through our leadership workshops, community programs, and sustainable building service learning projects we seek to empower communities from the bottom-up and the inside out, cultivating self-reliance and economic independence, while at the same time nurturing deeper ecocentric relationships.

Though there is a tremendous amount of healing that needs to be done on reservations, the young leaders we are working with at Pine Ridge see tremendous potential for sustainable transformation on the reservation. Ultimately our goal is to create a completely sustainable community model so that the reservation becomes in a sense a closed loop system that is in no way dependent on the U.S. government or surrounding culture. This project offers tremendous potential to explore new paradigm models in sustainable housing and infrastructure, education, government, as well as alternative currencies that are not based on debt. Ultimately the question we are holding and exploring with the young leaders at Pine Ridge is what would a societal structure look like that fosters deeper relationships to self, earth, and community, and what steps need to be taken to get there?

There is tremendous vision in our world today for what new community models could look like, and now it is time to turn that vision into action—and perhaps reservations and developing countries and communities around the world are the perfect ground to start testing these visions? If successful at Pine Ridge we will have a template to take to other reservations and other developing communities around the world that are looking for a different model, an alternative to debt-based capitalism and consumerism. As Buckminster Fuller said, "To change something, build a new model that makes the existing model obsolete."

Healthy connections lay the foundation for any vibrant system whether that system is our bodies or the world we live in. The more we can engage people in fostering these deeper ecocentric connections, the more our society and culture will reflect these bonds. It is my wish and prayer that through the collective rite of passage our world finds itself in today, we find the gift of communion that brings us into right relationship with ourselves, the earth, and each other.

Weston Pew currently splits his time between Brooklyn New York and Bozeman Montana. He is the founder of the Sacred Door Trail, a 170-mile interfaith pilgrimage trails in western Montana and facilitates rites of passage and community development workshops through Inner Wild and Full Circle Community Restoration. He is also currently attaining a Master Degree in Regenerative Community Development through Prescott College in Prescott, Arizona.
New York City

by Kurt Johnson and David Robert Ord

One can’t complete a compilation about interspirituality without special mention of New York City—not only a multicultural and economic hub, but an interspiritual hub. It was here that, in 2002, Bro. Wayne Teasdale and seven friends incorporated the Interspiritual Dialogue association (today Interspiritual Dialogue in Action, www.isdna.org and multiplex.isdna.org) with the help and support of the Spiritual Caucus at the United Nations (and today the UN NGO Committee on Spirituality, Values and Global Concerns).

This was a time when the word “interspirituality” was hardly known. In fact, in 2004 when Bro. Teasdale and this association sponsored an entire morning on “interspirituality” at the Parliament of the World’s Religions in Barcelona, Spain, the word was still hardly heard of. If you “google” it today (or “interspiritual”), you get hundreds of thousands of “hits”. If you “google” *The Coming Interspiritual Age* you get 30,000.

World interspiritual pioneers are honored at www.thecominginterspiritualage.com and www.isdna.org. New York City’s interspiritual pioneers cannot go unmentioned, especially those who were unable to contribute to this ezine. They are not only New York’s interspiritual leaders, but they are also New York’s hosts for myriads of events and programs pointing to the emerging world of the transnational, transcultural, transreligious and worldcentric.

You will see many of New York’s leaders in the ezine, but we wanted to also recognize these pioneer contributors to the interspiritual unfolding in America’s largest city: 1. **Alan Steinfeld**, founder of New Realities and New Realities TV (www.newrealities.com); everyone in New
York City knows Alan from hundreds of programs, videos, and CDs that spread the word about world change and transformation. 2. Drs. J. J. and Desiree Hurtak, founders of The Academy for Future Science (www.affs.org); Drs. Hurtak are frequent guests on programs and shows in New York City and worldwide. 3. Rick Ulfik, founder of We The World (www.we.net); Rick hosts leaders from around the world in programs on world shift and change. 4. Gerard Senehi, renowned mentalist, is also a regional and world leader in transformative vision and work. 5. Jodi Serota, founder and host of New York City’s “Meta Center,” a major venue for programs on awakening and shift (www.metacenterny.com). 6. Bernard Starr, author, syndicated columnist, and psychologist; host of myriad New York programs (www.bernardstarr.com).

New York City venues for the transformative age include not only NGOs but also the cutting edges of America’s entertainment industries: 7. Linus Roache (star of “Law and Order”) is a frequent host and speaker across New York City on subjects of transformation and change. 8. Jane Gignoux, founder of FolkTale Publishers (www.lifedeathbeyond.com), is a leader and frequent speaker on “changing our world story.” 9. Mitchell J. Rabin, host of A Better World radio and television (www.abetterworld.tv) has been a national voice for change and transformation for decades. 10. The late Emily Squires, six-time Emmy Award winner for Sesame Street, off-stage also created magnificent programs on shift, change, and environmental protection on both our East and West Coasts. 11. Monica Willard (www.doonething.org) serves as coordinator or religious NGOs at the United Nations, hosting religious leaders from around
the world. 12, 13. Steve Nation and Barbara Valocore host the Spiritual Caucus at the United Nations and the bustling Lifebridge Sanctuary retreat center (www.lifebridge.org) just outside of New York City. 14. Diane Williams (www.sourceofsynergyfoundation.org) now resides in Italy, but as a New York leader was recipient of the “Spirit of the United Nations Award” in 2012 for her interreligious and intercultural work. 15. All these people were part of New York’s seven-year experiment with “WE”—the Coalition for One Voice (logo of the butterfly!)—which brought together 150 spiritual and transformative organizations in New York City, and some 1500 people for programs featuring Deepak Chopra, Andrew Cohen, Andrew Harvey, Caroline Myss, and Matthew Fox, to mention only a few, as well as some of New York City’s largest environmental protection events.

We salute all these leaders in America’s largest city, truly a world hub. Without them, we think, the interspiritual movement as we see it today would have come alive much more slowly. And we wish them well in all their serving work.
LINKS

Major Links for Interspiritual Organizations associated with the interspiritual legacies of Bro. Wayne Teasdale, Fr. Thomas Keating, and Fr. Bede Griffiths:

Interspiritual Dialogue in Action and The Interspiritual Multiplex:
www.isdna.org

Community of The Mystic Heart:
www.communityofthemysticheart.org

The Order of Universal Interfaith:
www.ouni.org

Spiritual Paths Foundation and Institute:
www.spiritualpaths.net

Awake Awareness Institute:
www.lochkelley.org

Satyana Institute:
www.satyana.org

One Spirit Interfaith Seminary and Learning Alliance:
www.onespiritinterfaith.org

The Bede Griffiths Trust:
www.bedegriffiths.com

Russill Paul:
www.russillpaul.com

Contemplative Life Blog:
www.contemplativelife.ning.com

Tribute Website to Brother Wayne Teasdale by early friends:
http://home.comcast.net/~brotherwayne/index.htm

Seven Pillars House of Wisdom (Pir Zia Inayat-Khan):
www.sevenpillarshouse.org

Spirituality and Practice:
www.spiritualityandpractice.com

The Coming Interspiritual Age book website:
www.thecominginterspiritualage.com
Advance Praise and Perspective
on
The Coming Interspiritual Age
from
Across the
WORLD’S RELIGIONS
**Integral**

*The Coming Interspiritual Age* is in part about just that—the emergence, happening now and gaining momentum—of an interspiritually unified world. It has its basis in a background coming transformation—that of the Integral Age. Kurt Johnson and David Robert Ord give a clear, compelling, highly readable account of this coming transformation, which indeed could prove world changing. If you’re not sure what all this means—and even if you are—get this visionary book and find out what all the excitement and enthusiasm is about. It might very well change your world!

~ Ken Wilber, The Integral Vision

*The Coming Interspiritual Age* is in part about just that—the emergence, happening now and gaining momentum—of an interspiritually unified world. It has its basis in a background coming transformation—that of the Integral Age. Kurt Johnson and David Robert Ord give a clear, compelling, highly readable account of this coming transformation, which indeed could prove world changing. If you’re not sure what all this means—and even if you are—get this visionary book and find out what all the excitement and enthusiasm is about. It might very well change your world!

~ Ken Wilber, The Integral Vision

A new integral world has begun to come into view, and a new human being is beginning to be called forth. This new humanity is capable of living responsibly and cooperatively in this radically self-transforming world. The implications will be world-changing. Drawing from the inspiring legacy of Brother Wayne Teasdale, Kurt Johnson and David Robert Ord do us all a great service by bringing the sweep of this panoramic vision into focus in this wide-ranging volume.

~ Terry Patten, author Integral Life Practice; founder, Beyond Awakening

*The Coming Interspiritual Age* is at once an insightful historical overview of the burgeoning interspiritual movement, an urgent call for transformation in the face of the many pressing social, ecological, and spiritual challenges of our time, and a passionate manifesto for the flowering of a new, integral culture that embodies the highest ideals of all the world's great wisdom traditions, ancient and modern. I am happy to recommend this book to readers from any religious background, or none, who are inspired by the possibility that a better, more just and enlightened world awaits us in and through the miracle of "We." This text promises to be a valuable resource for all interfaith and integral religious students and practitioners; it is one I will be using in my classes on these topics going forward.

~ Bruce Alderman, John F. Kennedy University

**Evolutionary Consciousness**

*The Coming Interspiritual Age* presents a magnificent post-postmodern integral vision, heralding a new kind of spirituality already aborning. While it is written with passion, the authors Kurt Johnson and David Robert Ord are well-grounded in the knowledge of science and of integral and evolutionary theories to make the book at once a systematic narrative of the past, both cosmic and human, a systemic interpretation of the present, and a splendid vision of the
future. At the heart of all spiritual traditions is the “Mystic Heart” that connects us to the Heart of the Kosmos and enables us to unconditionally embrace all beings with Love and Compassion. The authors propose that in this New Axial Age it is time for the Mystic Heart to be luminously lit in the hearts of all humanity to transcend the differences and disagreements that have plagued the human family through spiritual alignment eternally existing in the Heart of our hearts. This is a timely book that transcends time.

~ Yasuhiko Genku Kimura, Founder, Vision-In-Action

Kurt Johnson and David Robert Ord set a wide context of the evolutionary development of man and the earth, setting spirituality in a global and historical developmental context with hints as to its future potential. Backed up by abundant scientific evidence and global polls, they make the case for the marriage of science and religion. But the main message shining through is that of an experiential spirituality of the heart that beats through every living being and is the basis of the new emerging Interspirituality. If you want to keep abreast of the leading edge of spirituality, this book is a must read.

~ Nancy Roof, Founder, Kosmos Journal

This remarkable pioneering book, *The Coming Interspiritual Age*, taps and brings to the fore this deeper evolutionary narrative that is the lead event facing humanity today. This evolutionary drama of our maturation as a species takes the reader through a holistic and comprehensive journey into the emergent frontier of Interspirituality. The authors, deeply inspired by the groundbreaking lifework of Brother Wayne Teasdale, brilliantly help the reader read the “signs of our time” and experience the enormity of our current shift to the long-emerging Age of Interspirituality. Building on advances from Brother Wayne’s life in global and interreligious dialogue—the awakening of the global heartmind—the authors focus our attention on the most profound evolutionary moment facing humanity today – our individual and collective crossing into the dilated global space of Interspirituality. In this respect the supreme activism of our time is to be in touch with this lead event in our human journey, to awaken our hearts to our primal unifying source, to our deep interconnectivity, to the challenges of entering a higher form of shared nonviolent culture through the literacy of global dialogue in which our entire human family may flourish together sharing our sacred earth. This book deserves to be widely read on a global scale as we discover, enter and cocreate our new shared story of our human evolutionary journey.

~ Ashok Gangadean, Ph.D., Co-Convenor of the World Commission on Global Consciousness and Spirituality, Margaret Gest Professor of Global Philosophy (Haverford College), Director of the Margaret Gest Center for Interreligious Dialogue, Founder-Director of the Global Dialogue Institute; author, *Awakening Global Enlightenment: The Maturation of our Species*

This book will simply astonish you. It is not only a beautiful and powerful tribute to the work and vision of Brother Wayne Teasdale, it is also an Interspiritual Akashic Record that will help prepare the way for the Interspiritual Age to be ushered in…one where we will see with the eyes of the heart.

~ Diane Williams, Founder, The Source of Synergy Foundation.
As a colleague of Dr. Jonas Salk, whose famous “bio-philosophy” held that our survival as a species depends on our capacity to imagine and anticipate the future and, choosing among clear alternatives, thus co-creating, with nature, our destiny-- I see this same wisdom in the message of *The Coming Interspiritual Age*. Like Johnson and Ord, Salk predicted that the most important adaptive mechanism for humankind would be a growing ability to collaborate and cooperate. If the religions of the world can apply this evolutionary point of view to their philosophical, cultural, social and psychological problems, and experientially draw wisdom from the primordial ground of being that underlies them all, indeed there may be hope that the Great Traditions can make a positive contribution to our human future.

~ Michael Jaliman, Founder, True North Advisers

A major contribution to the emerging interface of science, evolution, and spirituality – and its vast implications for the human race.

~ Stephan Rechtschaffen, MD, and Annette Knopp – Founders, Blue Spirit Costa Rica

Modernity has become obsessed with slicing, dicing, chopping, and dividing reality into tiny bits of data and, as a result, our world has become increasingly polarized, fragmented, and fractured. It hurts to be alive today. This magnificent book includes a sweeping diagnosis of our imbalanced condition and offers a powerful vision to heal the broken heart of humanity and unify the spirit of our species.

~ Rafael Nasser, author of *Under One Sky*

Stunning and, I might say, coming at us like a freight train…or a rising sun.

~ Bruce Schuman, Editor, *Shared Purpose*.

**Sacred Activism**

Profound heart and deep intellect inform every page of this rich and beautiful book. May it have the success it deserves and open the minds and hearts who come to it.

~ Andrew Harvey, author of *The Hope: a Guide to Sacred Activism and Radical Passion*

*The Coming Interspiritual Age* by Kurt Johnson and David Robert Ord is simply extraordinary. This much-needed book will change the discourse on religion and spirituality. Especially for the younger generation, who no longer recognize themselves in the traditional narratives that world religions are offering them, this book provides hope. It offers a new vision of spirituality and addresses the personal and societal implications of the possibilities that arise from this new way. The future will be interspiritual and this will be our textbook."

~ Adam Bucko, Founder, Reciprocity Foundation, co-author *New Monasticism Manifesto* and, with Matthew Fox *Occupy Spirituality: A Radical Vision for a New Generation*

*The Coming Interspiritual Age* is a timely gift for a world facing environmental, economic and geo-political crises -- all of which can be seen as a spiritual crisis. There is a spiritual awakening organically happening amidst this, transcending cultures and religions and giving birth to new possibilities for all of humanity. *The Coming Interspiritual Age* is a brilliant and comprehensive exploration of the complexity, dangers and promise of this chaotic and profound
Islam
Br. Wayne Teasdale’s momentous legacy of mystical ecumenism is powerfully amplified and elaborated in this sprawling work of historical, scientific and spiritual synthesis.

~ Pir Zia Inayat-Khan, Spiritual Leader, the Sufi Order International

In this truly panoramic book, Kurt Johnson and David Robert Ord place Interspirituality within the whole vista of our global human history. They continue Wayne Teasdale’s heart-centered vision of our underlying mystical unity, showing how it naturally belongs to the evolution of human consciousness. The challenge facing us all is how to implement this vital vision in our present time of collective crisis. This valuable book helps us to understand why Interspirituality is so central to our shared destiny.

~ Llewellyn Vaughan-Lee PhD, Sufi teacher, author of *The Prayer of the Heart in Christian and Sufi Mysticism* and many other books

Good News for Postmodern Humanity! Dancing through millennia of human biological and spiritual evolution, *The Coming Interspiritual Age* offers a compelling and comprehensive peek towards a positive future: stories shared rather than dogmas dividing, consciousness expanding to include global compassion rather than globalized consumerism. This is a book for all who are looking beyond interfaith (bare) tolerance to a larger vision of what makes us all human.

~ Neil Douglas-Klotz, author of *Desert Wisdom: A Nomad's Guide to Life's Big Questions from the Heart of the Native Middle East* and *The Sufi Book of Life*

Christianity
A significant sign of our times is the quest to make a leap of consciousness from religious ideologies to a deeper spiritual consciousness and practice. As Jung warned, "only the mystics bring creativity to religion itself." This book contributes to that important leap by celebrating our mystical roots that the authors believe can heal the split of science and religion and of religions against religions. This ambitious book joins the multiple efforts at interspirituality in our time to celebrate a mystical awakening that can move us from the religions of consumerism and materialism that dominate our culture with the cynicism and despair and addiction they spawn to something more resembling a full-hearted life. It invites us to new and more ancient ways of living our sacred lives in and on behalf of this sacred earth. I welcome it!

~ Matthew Fox, author of the inter-religious classics *Coming of the Cosmic Christ* and *One River, Many Wells*, and recently *The Pope's War, The Hidden Spirituality of Men, Hildegard von Bingen—A Saint for Our Times*, and other books

I'm very glad this wonderful book continues to draw praise and interest. I support and recommend it.

~ Fr. Thomas Keating, Founder of the Centering Prayer movement, the Snowmass Inter-religious Initiative and author of many books
In the face of life on the precipice of unimaginable calamity, here is a book of authentic hope – a work of expansive, integrative scholarship woven through and through with heart and spirit; a visionary book with its feet on the ground. *The Coming Interspiritual Age* is a compelling read, an engaging experience; a book to be lived with; a book with the potential to change your life, to change our lives, and with them the future of humanity. If I were you, I’d start reading it today.

~ Rev. Canon Charles P. Gibbs, Executive Director, United Religions Initiative

I really cannot exaggerate the value and importance of this book. This is where we are going, and we might as well go informed and enlightened! My heart leaps and my mind expands as I read this book.

~ Fr. Richard Rohr, O.F.M., author, *The Naked Now* and *Everything Belongs*; Center for Action and Contemplation and Rohr Institute

If some scholars insist that “God is Not One,” Johnson and Ord respond “Oh yes He/She/It is!” Religious differences are real, but they do not obstruct, indeed they nurture, religious dialogue. Drawing on contemporary science (biology, physics, and brain studies), philosophy, the teachings of mystics and of religious activists, this book makes a strong case that an “interspiritual age” is both coming and needs to come soon. For both seekers and academics, this is a rewarding, challenging, and inspiring read.

~ Paul F. Knitter, Paul Tillich Professor of Theology, World Religions, and Culture, Union Theological Seminary

*The Coming Interspiritual Age* provides an essential understanding of the roots of the current spiritual-religious context and the evolution of consciousness affecting every sector society and culture. It inspires deeper contemplative awareness of the inherent interrelatedness of all being and a vision for the future of the global human family. A book to be shared and discussed!

~ Robert G. Toth, Past Executive Director, Merton Institute for Contemplative Living

**Judaism**

*The Coming Interspiritual Age* is a masterful blend of science and heart. It serves as both a wake-up call to the urgency of our global predicament and a potent dose of hope in our ability to come together to repair the world. Kurt Johnson and David Robert Ord eloquently build a case not only for the evolutionary imperative of interspirituality but the great joy that comes when we remember that we already are interconnected, and ever shall be.

~ Mirabai Starr, author *God of Love, A Guide to the Heart of Judaism, Christianity and Islam*

A new world needs a new worldview and Kurt Johnson and David Robert Ord's *The Coming Interspiritual Age* is just that. If you are looking for a map of the unfolding spiritual landscape of tomorrow, this is it. Read this book. Then read it again.

~ Rabbi Rami Shapiro, author, *The Sacred Art of Lovingkindness* and *Rabbi Rami's Guide to God*
**Hinduism**

“Man is a transitional being. He is not final. The step from man to superman is the next approaching achievement in the earth’s evolution”. Sri Aurobindo wrote these words a century ago. The FUTURE presses and will not let us lag behind. Its Presence is palpable. The authors of this book sense the urgency of our destiny… and bring together the myriad strands that could hasten the process.

~ Aster Patel, Governing Board, the Auroville (India) Foundation and author of *The Presence of Time*

Panoramic in scope and profound in its incisive probing, *The Coming Interspiritual Age* offers us a vision of hope and unity to shape this millennium. The authors identify Wayne Teasdale as a visionary who helped crystalize the interspiritual movement that seeks to develop a progressive spiritual template for our human advancement. Read it and act on it, for, through understanding the role of “consciousness” in the evolutionary process, you will not only shape history but perhaps life itself. This is a pivotal moment in history and this book is meant to help us understand the awesome power we hold in our minds, hearts and hands. Reading it will turn on the bulb of spiritual enlightenment for you!

~ Russill Paul, author, *Jesus in the Lotus* and *The Yoga of Sound*

A comprehensive handbook to move from tribal-based, sectarian religion to the actual perennial wisdom based in mystical experiences that give rise to love for all creatures. It is a welcome perspective, coming as it is at a time when life and death for our species, as well as many others, are on the line.

~ Catherine Ingram, author of *In the Footsteps of Gandhi, Passionate Presence*, and *A Crack in Everything*

**Buddhism**

This compelling and accessible new work is a tremendous contribution to the emerging field of global spirituality and the evolution of enlightened wisdom for us today. I am moved and impressed by the breadth and depth of the author’s offering here, and recommend it heartily to anyone interested in spirituality and consciousness. In the context of inevitable globalization and multiculturalism, this brilliant and inspiring book comprehensively documents the trend toward a global unity consciousness, makes crystal clear the gifts the Wisdom Traditions can bring to this global discussion, and challenges all domains—religion, science, economics, governance—to develop a profound sense of responsibility to the collective heart and soul, body and mind of humanity. I highly commend the authors, dedicated spiritual practitioners themselves, for directly challenging the established religions and their adherents to go deeply into the experiential heart and mystical consciousness of their traditions and refine their understanding of their place in our diverse yet interdependent world. In making available a comprehensive view of developmental history and how the characteristics of this current time reflect the past, it reveals how we can profoundly learn from those integral dynamics, laying out how a modern interspiritual outlook and journey can be accomplished both within traditions as well as in new and innovative structures. Read this book and you’ll be better for it.

~ Lama Surya Das, author of *Awakening the Buddha Within, Buddha Standard Time* and other books; founder, Dzogchen Center and Dzogchen Osel Ling
This is a beautifully written panorama of the spiritual zeitgeist of our times and an eloquent
description of the emerging interspiritual aesthetic and ethic that is bubbling up throughout the
world. As the authors put it: "... interspirituality is a call for radical and universal exploration
into the subtle realms of consciousness and the deepest regions of the heart. This involves
plumbing exactly what unifying principles—what Archimedean points of unity—lie beneath the
societal history of our species." This book echoes the intention of the Spiritual Paths
Foundation the Snowmass Interspiritual Dialog work that bring together contemplative teachers
from many traditions. In our meditations we experience the marvelous diversity of
contemplative method and experience. Our merging consciousness feels like circular ripples of
water intersecting and overlapping from multiple pebbles dropped in the same pond.

~ Ed Bastian, Ph.D., Spiritual Paths Foundation, author of InterSpiritual Meditation and
Living Fully Dying Well; publisher, Meditations for InterSpiritual Practice

Indigenous

The Coming Interspiritual Age is sublime in vision, prophetic in wisdom, an inherently
contemplative exploration into the most salient evolutionary choices we face as humankind. A
masterful refined interdisciplinary book, I consider Kurt Johnson and David Robert Ord’s
scholarship a decisive word on the a-priori role of self-reflexive consciousness in the process of
human spiritualization. I foresee the widespread reading of The Coming Interspiritual
Age catalyzing beneficent societal transformation on a global scale of service beyond our seven
generations. This book is a heartfelt contribution to re-Membering ourselves as a compassionate
and peacefully cooperative planetary species. I enthusiastically recommend it to all earnest
seekers and servers of the Great Work!

~ Don Oscar Miro-Quesada; Founder, The Heart of the Healer (THOTH) Foundation

Humanism

Humanists will read this book with interest and appreciate its wide coverage of many writers
who work to distinguish spirituality from religions. They will also appreciate the very readable
treatment of the development of the sciences and the treatment of the evolution of our planet
currently most complex in the Homo sapiens species. Humanists will have more difficulty,
however, when the authors speak of scientific as well as spiritual “knowing.” They will also
have difficulty reading of consciousness as a oneness state and also as an interconnected state in
the same sentence. Some humanists, after this extensive exposure to “developmental” and
“integral” thinking may be even less likely to favor “spirituality.” Another way of putting this
would be to say that humanists are much more likely to spend time with Julian Huxley than
with Aldous Huxley. Felix Adler was indeed a key figure in moving beyond traditional religion
to an ethical movement, and his Kantian idealism may have some mystical elements. Those
who have built upon him in different humanist movements, however, retain much more of his
stress on ethics. Their nontheism is a starting point, certainly not central or a goal. Universal
human rights are a goal rather than an inference from mystical or spiritual experiences.

~ Robert Tapp, Dean & Faculty Chair Emeritus, The Humanist Institute

The Coming Interspiritual Age sensitively teases from ethical culture's message of infinite
interdependence its special contribution to the 21st century discourse in the coming Age.
Emphasizing the visionary aspect of ethical culture founder Felix Adler, the book cogently
articulates a possible roadmap for humanists along the path of humanity's quickening higher consciousness.

~ Martha Gallahue, Ethical Culture Leader, National Ethical Service at The United Nations; Faculty, National Peace Academy USA.

**Interfaith**

*The Coming Interspiritual Age* is a hugely ambitious project – an extended apologia for interspirituality. Extremely readable, it draws widely from history and literature, ancient and modern, and builds on the work of Teilhard de Chardin, Brother Wayne Teasdale, and Ken Wilber, among others. Johnson, a distinguished scientist who has spent much of his life as a monk, is a student of evolutionary biology with a vast background in anthropology, philosophy, and comparative religion. The book comes with its own strong point of view and will be cut to pieces by predictable critics decrying more new age religion. Whether or not you agree with it, though, the writing is immaculate, the arguments compelling, the vision hopeful. Anyone interested in the future of religion (and why so much religion isn’t working today) will enjoy reading this book.

~ Paul Chaffee, Editor, The Interfaith Observer

If one can use *The Coming Interspirituality Age* as a map and guidepost, then there exists the possibility that it will light the way towards a global interfaith and intercultural peaceful future for humankind.

~ Alison van Dyk, Chair and Executive Director, Temple of Understanding

The arc of religious history bends toward what the authors of this book call ‘interspirituality.’ In breathtaking detail, the book chronicles that long and continuing narrative and document the transformation of consciousness—individual and collective—that it entails. We desperately need that transformation, and we need this book to fully comprehend it.

~ Philip Goldberg, author of *American Veda: From Emerson and the Beatles to Yoga and Meditation, How Indian Spirituality Changed the West*

*The Coming Interspiritual Age* is a very valuable contribution, articulating contexts for understanding the emergence of interspiritualities, acknowledging some of the key contributors, and providing many reference points for further study and exploration.

~ Neill Walker, Co-Founder and Co-Director, Edinburgh International Centre for Spirituality and Peace.

Wondering what is happening in the interfaith /integral/ interspirituality world? Then this is the book for you. It offers a grand perspective, a way of seeing our human journey, a heart-felt vision of what is happening now, and hope for the future. You'll learn a lot and gain direction!

~ M. Darrol Bryant PhD, Huston Smith Award winner 2011, Director, Centre for Dialogue and Spirituality in the World Religions, Renison University College/University of Waterloo, Canada; author, *Religion in a New Key*

As founder of a seminary that trains Interspiritual ministers, I am deeply grateful to Kurt Johnson and David Robert Ord, who offer a comprehensive and panoramic view of the
landscape that gave rise to the emergence of interspirituality and insightful glimpses of where we may be going. Anyone who cares about the evolution of consciousness and spirituality should read this book.

~ Rev. Diane Berke, Founder, One Spirit Learning Alliance/One Spirit Seminary

Birathed in this unprecedented time of breakdown/ revolution/ awakening/ and transformation—sometimes referred to as the divine chaos of creation—this remarkable work both individually and collectively reminds us of where we came from and expressively defines where we are going. The Coming Interspiritual Age focuses on the shift of human consciousness, the shift in the heart and anticipates what the Heavens are asking Humanity to become in the here and now. Trailblazing the way forward, the authors--grounded in science and guided by intuition—present with clarity, thoroughness and grace a framework for us to co-create our new spiritual narrative from a place of one heart, one mind. This book is a must read!

~ Marshia Glazebrook, Temple of Understanding and Founder, MetanoiaNow

These are noble and important goals… We are impressed with the heavy emphasis on unity consciousness, integral practice, collaboration projects among the world's religions, global compassion, and creative educational ventures in interspirituality. We also agree with the idea that interspirituality is "spiritual maturity." This concept opens many new doors for those of us on this path. That's what good books do and The Coming Interspiritual Age does it with a rare blend of high-powered energy, enthusiasm, and zeal.

~ Frederic and Mary Ann Brussat, Spirituality and Practice.

Divine Feminine

The Coming Interspiritual Age identifies one of the most important evolutionary shifts in human religious life – the move away from doctrine and blind belief to the embrace of experiential knowledge, a turning inward to the source of knowledge. The book describes the shift from a paradigm of separation, exclusiveness and religious competition to one of unity, inclusiveness and cooperation, one that allows an integration of the practices of multiple religious traditions, without threatening any. This burgeoning spirituality brings great hope and promise for the future.

~ Dena Merriam, Founder, The Global Peace Initiative of Women; Founding Member and Convener, The Contemplative Alliance

Science and Religion

A comprehensive overview of the central themes, history, cosmology, and key leaders in the nascent field of interspirituality. Full of vital information that remains as yet too little known, The Coming Interspiritual Age is an apt title for the evolutionary transformation that is rapidly emerging across spirituality, religion and science today.


Teachers of Awakened Awareness

The Coming Interspiritual Age is an important new book and enjoyable to read. Often religious beliefs that all proclaim love, forgiveness and unity have ended up dividing us and even turning
us to war. Here in this book we can read about the past history and the new inner and outer movements of hope emerging today. This book highlights the importance of unity consciousness that can be developed by all people to be able to recognize and embrace our particular cultural and religious beliefs and yet recognize our underlying unity and our common community.

~ Loch Kelly, founder, Awake Awareness Institute

*The Coming Interspiritual Age* explores the impact of awakening to our true nature of unlimited, ever-present Awareness in great detail, exploring its social, political, environmental and economic implications with depth, clarity and honesty. This book brings the perennial understanding of the reality that all beings and things share to the core issues that face our world culture today, holding up a mirror to society and asking questions that we cannot afford to ignore. It is a beautiful and courageous work which will, I'm sure, have far reaching implications.
