

# *World Goodwill*

## THE PROBLEMS OF HUMANITY: BUILDING RIGHT HUMAN RELATIONS

### *Study Six*

## THE CHURCHES AND ORGANISED RELIGION

The Problems of Humanity Course, consists of seven study sets. Each set is based upon the book, *Problems of Humanity*, by Alice Bailey.

General principles underlying this course of study are laid out in the Introductory Set to the Course, Study One. It is suggested that this Introductory Set be reviewed prior to study of each subsequent set and that the relevant chapter in Problems of Humanity be consulted.

In addition it is suggested that each study be combined with wide and diverse reading on the problem.

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# KEYNOTE STATEMENTS

In the past, we have had the light which flickered;  
In the present, we have the light which flames;  
In the future, there will be a light which shines o'er all  
the land and sea.

*Winston Churchill*

Our age wishes to have actual experience in psychic life... To me, the crux of the spiritual problem of today is to be found in the fascination which psychic life exerts upon modern man.... The force within us... inspires in us the self-same scepticism and relentlessness with which a Buddha swept aside his two million gods that he might come to the pristine experience which alone is convincing.

*Dr. Carl Gustav Jung*

The history of mankind is, in reality, the history of man's demand for light and for contact with God, and then the giving of light and the approach of God to man. Always the Saviour, the Avatar or the World Teacher issued forth from the secret place of the Most High and brought to man fresh revelation, fresh hope and a fresh incentive towards fuller spiritual living.

*Alice Bailey*

The definition of religion which will in the future prove of greater accuracy than any yet formulated by the theologians might be expressed as follows:

*Religion is the name given to the invocative appeal of humanity and the evocative response of the greater Life to that cry.*

*Alice Bailey*

## SEED THOUGHT FOR MEDITATION

The problem of the freedom of the human soul and its *individual* relation to God Immanent and God Transcendent is the spiritual problem, facing all the world religions at this time.

# INTRODUCTION

The chapter on the problem of the churches in Alice Bailey's book *Problems of Humanity* begins with the remark that the problem is not with religion or with the religious spirit. Throughout the ages humanity has been overwhelmingly religious. Human beings have consistently affirmed the fact of a relationship with a divine presence, with God, with the Great Ones honoured in all religious traditions. The problem is with the institutions, the churches, that seek to guide, direct and inspire the religious spirit. In the face of a widespread spiritual awakening that has been a characteristic of the latter part of this century the churches of all religions have, in the main, been forces of conservatism, tradition and orthodoxy. With the exception of some enlightened movements, the established churches of all faiths have been largely irrelevant to this new religious spirit of our time and they have often tried to suppress it. Yet as the twentieth century draws to a close there are signs of new life. Through inter-faith dialogue and encounter with the latest thinking in science, progressive figures from different religious organisations are pioneering a new, globally aware, spiritually alive movement in

the churches. It is in this movement that we see a growing recognition and experience of the one ultimate reality which lies at the heart of all paths seeking to inculcate the spirit of wise and intelligent love.

This study touches upon some of the major themes in Chapter V of the book *Problems of Humanity*, and it is suggested that group study be concentrated around these themes. Excerpts have been included from a wide variety of thinkers. Study groups will hopefully build up their own files of additional materials as they explore these issues.

The study concludes with a series of questions which will, we hope, be useful for group discussion, and also a meditation outline, and a book list. The meditation can be used in conjunction with the study papers by individuals who are working on their own, or by groups. It is our hope that it will help you to deepen your own understanding of the problem and to examine your attitudes and values in the light of universal principles. At the same time it will enable you to draw on those inner sources of light and love as you seek understanding and illumination.

## THE PROBLEM

At the heart of all the conflicts and crises at present lies the fact that we are moving out of the Piscean Age and transiting into a new one. The norms, ideals and institutions which have served us in the past are no longer suitable to house the new ideas and spiritual energies which we sense. The Age we are moving out of has been characterised by idealism at best and fanaticism at worst; it was the age of the individual, of mystical longing, of devotion and above all, it was the Age of Authority. We are moving into the age of the Group server, of group endeavour where service will be seen as an expression of the soul manifesting in all departments of human living, including the religious. It is an age where the Kingdom of God is manifesting on the physical plane through a deeper understanding and application by humanity of the Buddha's message of Enlightenment and the Christ's message of Love. It is an age where both God Immanent and God Transcendent can be recognised, where the divinity within ourselves and the evolutionary nature of consciousness can be acknowledged together with the existence of a Divine Creator, or Spirit or Life force.

Many of the wars and conflicts which have erupted this century indicate that religious intolerance and conflict continue to be a major threat to world peace. Religious fanaticism, which is found in all reactionary groups, can be expected to fight against the appearance of the coming world religion. Fanaticism, entrenched theological positions and materialistic selfishness are to be found actively organised in the churches of all continents and denominations and in all institutionalised religions. The fight between the conservative factions and those sensitive to the new spiritual impulses in the churches has spread to thinking men and women who have rejected rigid theologies and the narrow perspective of institutionalised religions. Today we are witnessing this struggle within ordinary people who are not irreligious but who have, through pain and sorrow, learned for themselves that the spiritual values are the only values which can salvage humanity. Increasingly it is being brought to their attention that the Kingdom of God stands, and that

the Christ, as a symbol of peace and the leader of this Kingdom, is evoking response from the hearts of people everywhere, irrespective of religious inclination.

Many of the revelations of the past have come along the lines of the religious impulse and over the years the original simplicity, as it was conveyed by the Revealers, has been lost. The minds of men made the teaching complex through their mental dissertations until the great theological systems were built up. The fundamental and divine truths have been veiled by a mantle of illusion. People of all faiths and of no particular faith, as well as true Christians and churchmen, are seeking to find their way back to Christ and His simple message which has in it the power to save the world, if recognised and practised.

The following articles touch upon the problem of dogma, fundamentalism and the tendency of the mind to crystallise and shut off the springs of the inner life which keep a religion or faith alive. This crystallisation of the teachings sets in when theory is not translated into practice, when "spiritual livingness ceases to become an everyday affair".

A true sense of humility is the solution, for all right ideas are temporary in nature and must eventually be seen as partial truths which must give place to a greater truth. The fact of the day is seen later as part of a greater fact. We can grasp some lesser principles so clearly and be so convinced of their correctness that the larger whole is forgotten and a thought-form is built about a partial truth. This eventually proves to be a limitation, and builds a prison holding us back from further progress. People can become so sure of their possession of truth that the truth of no one else can be seen. They forget the brain's limitations and the fact that the truth has come via the soul and has been subsequently built into form by the personal separative mind. The thought-form of this little truth can be thrust on other people by those who have lost their mental balance and become obsessed fanatics.

Three simple suggestions have been put forward to guard ourselves against the danger of fanaticism and dogmatic thinking. Firstly, the *constant practice of Harmlessness*. This involves harmlessness in speech, thought and consequently in action. It is a positive harmlessness, involving constant activity and watchfulness. Secondly, by a daily guarding of the doors of thought and a supervision of the thought life, we can actively keep out certain lines of thought and offset thought patterns by the institution of constructive creative thinking. Preconceived ideas can be relegated to the background so that new horizons can be visioned and the new ideas enter in. Daily, hourly

watchfulness is needed to offset these habits and establish a new rhythm. In this way the mind becomes so focused on the new spiritual ideas that the old thinking will slowly be forgotten and die out. Thirdly, we can refuse to live in our own thought world and enter the world of ideas and the stream of human thought currents. The world of ideas is the world of the soul, of the higher mind. The stream of human thoughts and opinions is that of the public consciousness and of the lower mind. We must learn to function freely in both worlds. Through constant meditation we can do the first, and through wide reading and sympathetic interest and understanding we can accomplish the second.

## THE ILLUSION OF DOCTRINE AND DOGMA

From the writings of Alice A. Bailey

In every land down the ages men have sought to foist their personal, religious interpretations of truth, of the Scriptures and of God upon the mass of men. They have taken the Bibles of the world and have attempted to explain them, passing the ideas they find through the filter of their own minds and brains and in the process inevitably stepping down the meaning. Not content with this, their followers have forced these man-evolved interpretations upon the unthinking and the ignorant. Every religion – Buddhism, Hinduism in its many aspects, Mohammedanism and Christianity – has produced a flock of outstanding minds who have sought (usually quite sincerely) to understand what God is supposed to have said, who have formulated doctrines and dogmas on this basis of what they thought God meant and their words and ideas have, therefore, become religious law and the irrefutable truths of countless millions. In the last analysis, what have you? The ideas of some human mind – interpreted in terms of his period, tradition and background – about what God said in some Scripture which has been subjected during the centuries to the difficulties and the mistakes incident to constant translation – a

translation often based on oral teaching.

The doctrine of the verbal inspiration of the Scriptures of the world (deemed particularly applicable to the Christian Bible) is today completely exploded and with it the infallibility of interpretation; all the world Scriptures are now seen to be based on poor translations and no part of them – after thousands of years of translation – is as it originally was, if it ever existed as an original manuscript and was not in reality some man's recollection of what was said. At the same time, it must be remembered that the general trend and the basic teaching, as well as the significance of the symbols, is usually correct, though again, symbolism itself must be subjected to modern translation and not to the misinterpretation of ignorance. The point is that dogmas and doctrines, theology and dogmatic affirmations, do not necessarily indicate the truth as it exists in the mind of God, with Whose mind the majority of dogmatic interpreters claim familiarity. Theology is simply what men *think* is in the mind of God.

*Problems of Humanity, pp. 125-7*

## FUNDAMENTALISM

[In the latter part of the twentieth century there has been a] growing number of people who are seeking religious security and certainty in the literalism of fundamentalism. From its beginning in the middle of the nineteenth century, this movement has been an attempt to find a secure religious framework in the midst of the growing agnostic rational materialism of Western culture, which has no place for any significant religion. By strict and literal interpretation of a book that gives final knowledge of religious reality and life, people can hang on to their religious belief. The early Pentecostal movement emerged from this background, but stressed, in addition, the experience of the Holy Spirit. Most Pentecostal churches withdrew from secular society and demanded that their members withdraw from contacts with the movies, plays, and other expressions of materialistic culture. This attitude is similar to Islam's emphasis on the book and not unlike the fundamentalist movement throughout Islam.

*Morton Kelsey<sup>1</sup>*

I part with the fundamentalists on the issue of evil when they negate people and movements (such as the New Age movement) on the basis of one-sided literalist biblical interpretation rather than by applying the biblical ethic of love... There is a passion for God in fundamentalism that is admirable, but only when it isn't exclusionary....

Spangler notes that psychic phenomena are a common occurrence in the New Age movement, but that they are not central to the coming of the New Age. When psychic events are seen as the primary proof of the validity of a guru or group, we are in dangerous territory. Likewise, when psychic phenomena are cited as proof positive of the

presence of the demonic, as is often done in fundamentalism, an equally dangerous closed-mindedness ensues.

Psychic events happen in people's lives. They are reported in the New Testament in various places. For example, when the angel Gabriel appears to Mary, when Joseph is told in a dream to flee to Egypt, and when Saul is knocked to the ground on the road to Damascus and hears Jesus crying out to him, Christians believe that God is acting in a powerful way and to significant ends. One would expect modern Christians not to deny God the same power to break into our own lives. Tragically, this is what many of us do. We ignore our dreams. We ignore the strange opportunities that life presents us to show compassion to our fellow beings.

*Andrew Canale<sup>2</sup>*

I also regard as bewildering, profoundly unfaithful and wholly unacceptable the "fundamentalism" that condemns as outside the scope of transcendent grace what it cannot conform to its own point of view. This is not obedience but paranoia. How ironic that many Christian fundamentalists undermine the very notion of a loving God that lies at the heart of Christian faith, as such Muslim fundamentalists also do of the One who is the compassionate, the merciful; and so on – all religions have their zealots, who are more interested in causes (usually imperfectly understood) than people. Yet I would maintain that religions should be about people in relation to each other, and about people in awe before transcendent and universal goodness and graciousness that breaks through this imperfect world and lights it up.

*Martin Forward<sup>3</sup>*

## AUTHORITY, REASON & WESTERN MATERIALISM

by Morton Kelsey

Conventional Christianity that relies on authority and reason, rather than on human experience, has become unpalatable to many modern Western religious seekers. In its most vital days the Christian

community laid great emphasis on the human experience of the risen Christ and on the gifts of the Spirit, observable evidences of the spiritual dimensions' influences on our ordinary human lives.

If the traditional churches are to reach modern men and women who are no longer impressed by authority and reason alone, they need to consider more seriously the many ways in which human beings experience the divine, and then provide both a theology and a practice that facilitate religious experience....

If we travel to a safe distance from Western Europe and those countries that inherit its culture, we shall find little understanding of the idea that matter alone is real. The people in China, Central Asia, rural Africa, or South America perceive the spiritual world to be as real as (or more real than) the physical world. The purpose of religion from this point of view is to help us deal with this nonphysical or spiritual reality, which can have a tremendous influence on our lives in this world, and which determines the nature of our continued existence after the body has died. We find very few places or times in history where the view is held that the tangible, earthly side of existence alone is real.

In China a small number of pure materialists emerged over the centuries, but were never taken seriously by the general public. In the Greco-Roman world, the rational materialism of Aristotle and other thinkers never took hold. However, in the seventh century Aristotle's thought became the philosophical framework for much of Islamic thought and then was passed on to Europe by Thomas Aquinas as the new and permanent view of the natural world. In order to fit this view into Christianity, he added another dimension to the ordinary, natural world: the supernatural. However, human beings had no *natural* contact with this dimension.

As Western thinkers became more secular, they began to doubt the existence of the supernatural dimension proclaimed by the church and turned their entire attention to the physical world. Thomas Hobbes was one of the first thinkers to provide an entirely materialistic view of reality. Then came the development of nineteenth-century science and its tremendous discoveries. The majority of these scientists believed that matter consisted of ninety-some elements: little hard, round balls that bounced against each other in a random way, according to Isaac Newton, to produce all the multiplicity of things we find within the world. At one point life developed spontaneously and by chance, and then

through the survival of the fittest emerged into the higher animals and finally evolved into rational human beings. What we are and what we do were viewed as simply the result of blind forces, and understanding them was merely a mechanical problem "depending entirely on the magnitude and direction of producing causes" (Hippolyte Taine). Both behaviourist and biomedical treatment of psychological problems operate on these assumptions. Skinner called the human personality the ghost in the box, and biomedical practice often tries to handle all emotional problems by drugs that alter the chemical imbalance or physical structure of the brain....

Prayer and meditation have been an essential part of nearly all the great religious traditions. However, in recent years these practices have not been an integral part of Christian teaching, except in the monastic tradition. Even after seminary training, I had no knowledge of these practices. I learned the practice of using Christian images in meditation only as I came to study the theory and methods of C. G. Jung. I realized later that imageless meditation has been a strand of Christian tradition and is now well presented in the writing of Basil Pennington and others. I am married to one for whom this imageless (apophatic) method is very meaningful. Similar practices of prayer are found in Buddhism and Hinduism. Even though several sociological surveys have revealed that Christians desire instruction in prayer more than any other teachings, few mainline churches provide ongoing classes in prayer or prayer groups in which people can talk about their prayer life and pray together. These methods of prayer were used in the early Christian churches, kept alive in monasticism, and renewed during the Reformation. The dream as the natural altered state of consciousness has been valued in all religious traditions that value images. I have shown in my book *God, Dreams and Revelation* that throughout the history of the churches, dreams have been considered one way by which God communicates with human beings and that we would do well to take them very seriously. A recent book by Joel Covitz, *Visions of the Night*, reveals the continuing development of the same tradition within Judaism.

Morton Kelsey<sup>4</sup>

## THE NOTION OF PUNISHMENT

by bell hooks

Growing up was a time of intense contemplation for me. It was during that time of my life that I learned to build an inner life that could sustain me. I felt even then that I was on a spiritual journey. In my church, we often sang the words: "Is it well with your soul? Are you free and made whole?" As a seeker on the Path, I was searching for a way to be well in my soul.

Although I considered myself living a life in the spirit, I went away to college knowing that I would no longer participate fully in the organized church, which over the years had come to seem full of folks who really did not believe what they taught or live those beliefs. During my undergraduate years, I began to look at other religious traditions in search of new and different spiritual paths. I was seeking to flee a fundamentalist religious tradition that was firmly rooted in the notion of punishment. I could no longer accept Western metaphysical dualism: the assumption that the world was divided into good and bad, white and black, superior and inferior. In *Original Blessing* (1983), Matthew Fox best expresses the dilemma I felt as a young woman raised in the southern black Baptist tradition when he writes of the pitfalls of a model of spirituality exclusively structured around the drama of fall and redemption:

*It is a dualistic model and a patriarchal one; it begins its theology with sin and original sin, and it generally ends with redemption. Fall/redemption spirituality does not teach believers about the New Creation or creativity, about justice-making and social transformation, or about Eros, play, pleasure and the God of delight. It fails to teach love of the Earth or care for the cosmos, and it is so frightened of passion that it fails to listen to the impassioned pleas of the **anawim**, the little ones of human history.... (p.11)*

As a young adult woman able to be critical of Christianity, I searched for a spiritual path that would offer an alternative to the fall/redemption model. That search led me to teachings and to spiritual leaders and guides who taught me about other paths. I learned about the mystical dimensions of Islam, studied about Buddhism, Hinduism, and other religious traditions. My current spiritual practice grows out of a combination of various traditions. Drawn to the teachings of Buddha, I practice yoga and meditation. That aspect of Christian faith I most cling to is the emphasis on prayer. And from the teachings of Sufi mystics, I learned how to understand Love as divine energy in the universe.

bell hooks<sup>5</sup>

# ESSENTIAL RELIGIOUS TRUTHS

The truly religious spirit is more fundamentally alive today than at any other previous time. Everywhere people are searching for a deeper meaning to life. This religious spirit is not the exclusive property of one particular "Church" or religious denomination, on the contrary the true meaning of life, whatever that may be, must surely include the essential concept of Oneness. Oneness is now at the forefront of our minds for humanity has the power to upset the delicate balance of our inheritance – the planet Earth. The true religious spirit will enable the individual to see that there is an interdependence of all life on the planet, in humanity and in all of the kingdoms of nature. As science unveils the awe-inspiring size of the Universe with its billions of galaxies and with each galaxy containing billions of stars, we can perhaps begin to recognise that God works in many ways here on earth, through many faiths and religious agencies. Spiritual belief, in the light of this evidence of the immensity of the Universe, must therefore be based on the unity and fellowship of the spirit, rather than the exclusivity of the past.

Alice Bailey describes six universally accepted truths which can form the basis for religion as we enter the 21st century. These are:

1. The fact of God, both transcendent and immanent.
2. Humanity's relationship to God; we are all the "sons of the one father".
3. The fact of immortality and of eternal persistence, arising from humanity's essential divinity.

4. The continuity of Revelation and the Divine Approaches; God has never left Himself without witnesses.

5. The fact of our relationship with each other, or of human brotherhood.

6. The fact of the Path to God, trodden down the ages by mystics, occultists and saints of every religious faith.

Alice Bailey also suggests that a new revelation is now possible. Humanity awaits the reappearance of the world teacher, head of the spiritual Hierarchy, (for discussion of the nature of the Hierarchy, see *The Plan and the Hierarchy*, later in this section) known as Christ in the West and the Lord Maitreya in the East, and recognised by many names – Messiah, Imam Mahdi, Zarathustra – in the different World Religions.

The concept of a world religion, a fusion of the faiths is now a field of discussion. In the future world we can expect people of spiritual inclination and intention to keep the same holy days, pooling their spiritual resources in a united and simultaneous spiritual invocation.

God works in many ways, through many faiths and religious agencies. The universal platform of the new world religion will be built by emphasising essential doctrines and the unity and fellowship of the spirit.

## THE NATURE OF RELIGION

Religion is the science of right relations between God and humanity: "*Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart*"; and between one individual and another: "*Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself*".

The Latin root of the word "religion" is connected with the idea of "binding" or "attachment". First, a very broad definition: religion is the link by which humanity is effectively attached to what is greater than itself. By "humanity" I mean mankind as a whole, past, present and future, with all its

achievements aspirations and potentialities both individual and collective. By the word "greater" I mean "eminently" or "incommensurably" greater. If no such attachment is possible, the word "religion" is superfluous. If it is possible, we ignore that possibility at our peril.

*Lord Northbourne*

Religion is the method whereby the union of the differentiated selves with the one undifferentiated Spirit is brought about.

Much of the restlessness and uncertainty so characteristic of our time, is probably due to the chronic sense of unappeased desires from which men naturally religious, but condemned by circumstances to have no religion, are bound to suffer.

*Aldous Huxley*

Religions are not merely a matter of explaining reality – how the world was created or how we came to exist – nor are they only a set of commandments or moral prescriptions. In these respects religions are no more than competitors with other explanatory systems like empirical science, or with secular ethics. What is unique to religions is that they always assert the possibility, of getting in touch, directly, with whatever is ultimately 'real'. The metaphors are endless, but I have chosen one familiar in a number of religious traditions, 'inwardness'.

*David Hay*

Religion tunes human actions to a view of the cosmic order and projects images of a cosmic order onto the plane of human existence.

*Clifford Geertz*

There has been a Western and an Eastern presentation of the one divine Truth; they constitute the two halves of the one great whole:

Eastern –

The Buddha... Light... Wisdom... Illumination

Western –

The Christ... Love... Understanding... Service

The function of a religion is to bring us to a right relationship with the ultimate divine reality, to awareness of our true nature and our place in the Whole, into the presence of God. In the eternal life there is no longer any place for religions; the pilgrim has no need of a way after he has finally arrived. In St. John's vision of the heavenly city at the end of our christian scriptures it is said that there is no temple – no christian church or chapel, no jewish synagogue, no hindu or buddhist temple, no muslim mosque, no sikh gurdwara.... For all these exist in time, as ways through time to eternity.

*John Hick*

Perhaps the most precious value that the world religions have in common is their accumulated experience of the spiritual journey. Centuries of seekers have discovered and lived its conditions, temptations, development, and final integration. This wealth of personal experience bears witness to the historical grounding of our contemporary search. It is not just a passing fad. It invites the spiritual teachers of the various disciplines of the world religions to pool their common experience, resources, and insights for the benefit of seekers in every religious tradition.

*Father Thomas Keating*

## THE PLAN AND THE HIERARCHY

In every race and nation and throughout the endless reaches of time itself, earnest seekers have found the Path to God; they have trodden it and accepted its conditions, endured its disciplines, rested back in confidence upon its realities, received its rewards and found their goal. Arrived there, they have "entered into the joy of the Lord", participated in the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, dwelt in the glory of the divine presence, and then returned to serve their fellow men and women. The

testimony to the existence of this Path is the priceless treasure of all the great religions and its witnesses are those who have transcended all forms and all theologies, and have penetrated into the world of meaning which all symbols veil.

These truths are part of all that the past gives to humanity. They are our eternal heritage, and connected with them there is no new revelation but only participation and understanding. These are the

facts which the World Teachers have brought to us, suited to our need and capacity at any given time. They are the inner structure of the One Truth upon which all the world theologies have been built.

With this sure foundation in mind, we can begin to recognise how humanity's capacity to receive and understand spiritual truths, and therefore to co-operate with Divine Purpose, has gradually expanded over the centuries. Matter, evolving into forms of ever-increasing complexity under the stimulus of Spirit, is steadily conforming to the Plan which exists eternally in the Mind of God. The one thing which humanity needs today is "the realisation that there *IS* a Plan which is definitely working out through all world happenings, and that all that has occurred in the historical past, and all that has happened lately, is assuredly in line with that Plan." Each of us can co-operate with it as our understanding and capacities allow. The great spiritual pioneers of the human family referred to above, Who have already achieved a deep communion with the Mind of God, naturally hold positions of wider responsibility in the wise administration of the Plan.

They are called by different names in different religious traditions: in Christian terms, They are called the Communion of Saints or Christ and His Church; in some Eastern traditions They are known as the Society of Illumined Minds; and to others They are known as the spiritual Hierarchy. To the spiritual Hierarchy, the Plan involves those arrangements or circumstances which will raise and expand the consciousness of humanity and enable men and women, therefore, to discover the spiritual values *for themselves* and to make the needed changes *of their own free will*, and thus produce the demanded betterment of the environment, consistent with the unfolding spiritual recognition.

This great body of dedicated, liberated Units of Life works in group formation with all forms and lives in all kingdoms and with all souls particularly. Its emphasis is thus solely on the consciousness aspect of all forms, and Its present agency of salvage and of service is the mind, as it expresses Itself through the minds of all who seek to serve humanity; the Hierarchy can also express Itself through the medium of thought currents and ideas and through them introduce a broader and more spiritual grasp of life into the thinking of the average public; and

Its beneficent radiation also influences the educational work of all nations, so that the uneducated masses can become – in due turn – the intelligent general public.

The power of the focused, spiritual unity of the Hierarchy can be felt today in many ways; it is largely responsible for the patient effort of all humanitarian workers and of all who vision unity in the face of great odds, and in spite of the fatigued lethargy and the pessimism which conditions, too hard for human endurance, have imposed upon people's minds. The Hierarchy stands and works, according to the Plan which today can and will bridge the gulf which now exists between the unsatisfactory, selfish and material past and that new future which will demonstrate a large measure of world unity, and which will steadily and with skill in action substitute the spiritual values for those which have hitherto held sway.

In this way, the rapidly awakening intelligence and activity of all people (in every land) can be trained to recognise the essential unity of all human beings, and so be led to take the action needed which will endorse that unity, which will work for the entire group of human beings in all lands everywhere, and which will also and at the same time preserve the individual and the national cultures, alongside a universal civilisation and a world-wide system of divine recognition. It is toward this general freedom and the intelligent activity of the free individual that the Hierarchy is steadily and successfully working; the concept of unity and of united activity for the good of all is far more widely grasped and understood than at any time in the past. There is nothing totalitarian or forced about this growing urge to unity. The totalitarian approach works toward an imposed unity and one which will include all peoples and bind them down to a uniformity of belief – politically, economically and socially – and which will and does basically ignore the spiritual values, putting the State in the place of that divine spiritual centre where spiritual reality is to be found.

The method of the Hierarchy is to work through individuals and through groups for the production of such a widespread spiritual recognition that men everywhere will accept as factual the inner government of the planet, and will work together for the founding of the Kingdom of God in

objective manifestation on Earth – and not in some distant time and some vague heaven. This is no mystical or impossible dream, but is simply the recognition and the externalisation of that which has been for ever present, which definitely took objective form when Christ was with us two thousand years ago, and which will proceed to universal recognition when He is with us again in the immediate future.\*

The guarantee of this is the developing intelligence of men and women everywhere, fighting blindly for freedom and for understanding and receiving ever the inner assurance, knowledge and aid of Those Who are working out (as always) those situations and conditions wherein humanity can best arrive at divine expression.

Adapted from *The Externalization of the Hierarchy*  
by Alice Bailey

**\*For further reflections upon the imminent return of the Christ, please see the last section of this set.**

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## SIGNS OF NEW LIFE

Whenever there is an upsurge of new life, there is inevitably the difficult and painful process of giving birth to the new forms which can hold and nurture that life. At the same time, there is the need to conserve what is of lasting value in older forms, while dispensing with those which may obstruct recognition of the new. It seems that the many faiths must find new ways of engaging with everyday life if they are to keep pace with humanity's deepening grasp of essential spiritual truth. It is encouraging to note that there is a growing readiness to acknowledge that we are indeed faced with a *new* situation, which requires a new approach.

Donald Rothberg, for example, has referred to the idea of "a 'socially engaged' spirituality" in an article in *ReVision* Vol. 15. No.3. This refers to the development of spiritual qualities or virtues "in the context of full involvement in social, political, and communal life." He suggests that, "To embody such a spirituality is to approach and express 'spirit', the 'sacred', or 'God', not through separation from the 'world', from the spheres of family, work, society, polity, and ecological systems and disconnection from its problems, but in the midst of embeddedness and activity in these spheres. For contemporary exponents of socially engaged spirituality... it represents a deep response to the needs of our time."

In *World Faith Encounter* No. 13, Paul Knitter has presented one way of embodying this socially engaged spirituality. He proposes a community-based approach to inter-faith dialogue, which requires that participants first come together to "determine what are, in their particular social or national context, the examples of human or ecological suffering that they as human and religious persons feel called upon to address. And together they attempt to do something about these pressing realities of poverty or hunger or exploitation or environmental devastation." He goes on to suggest that, "From this effort, even though it will be complex and perhaps unsuccessful, even though the effort will admit of different analyses and remedies, there will result a context, or an atmosphere, or a new sensitivity, on

the basis of which the participants in the dialogue will be able to understand themselves and each other in new ways. As Samuel Rayan S.J., from his own experience of such multi-religious efforts at human betterment in India, described it: 'In the process of a liberating, whole-making collaboration with God and neighbour, the different spiritualities will progressively discover one another, discover themselves with their weaknesses and strengths, and encounter more intimately the Mystery they bear, symbolize and convey.'" Support for the practical validity of this approach is given by a passage from Anson Laytner later on in this section.

Through these community encounters with the spiritual energies which underlie all faiths, and through the rich and complex inter-weaving of spiritual traditions within new age spirituality, which David Spangler describes in his article in this section, we may begin to see fresh perspectives emerging on humanity's relationship to the Divine, which will allow a more unified approach by people of all faiths. By emphasising essential doctrines and the unity and fellowship of the spirit, while respecting the distinctive cultural expressions of humanity's approach to God which have arisen through time, a universal platform of what may be described as a new world religion can emerge. We may therefore envisage that all people of spiritual inclination and intention will in future keep the same holy days, pooling their spiritual resources in a united and simultaneous spiritual invocation.

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We are talking about a religious crisis and a religious opportunity, a spiritual awakening that is far more demanding than the Reformation times of the sixteenth century. For reformation is one thing – it implies the reshuffling of the forms we have – but renewal is another. And renewal implies a new beginning, a new spirit, a new energy unleashed, a new paradigm, a new way to see the world. Enter the phrase "New Age".

Matthew Fox<sup>6</sup>

Our world is in travail. It takes no special sensitivity to realize how pervasive is the stress to which the fabric of our contemporary lives is subjected. Over and over again, violence tears apart what, often, it has taken centuries to fashion.

And yet violence is not the substance, it is the symptom. Something new is waiting to be born. We are experiencing the birth pangs of a new age, of a new hope. We are present at that sacred moment when new life is about to emerge from the womb of the past. What struggles to arise out of the past might become our shared future of mutual hearing and understanding, of mutual openness, of unprecedented willingness to acknowledge and accept others in all their differentness. The questions which address themselves to each of us are: Will we recognize the mystery of this possibility? Will we be open to its opportunities: Are we willing to help it be pulled into the light of tomorrow? Will we turn away preoccupied or cynical, or will we step forward to assist? These are not merely questions. They are the agenda of tomorrow, they are the exciting, irresistible invitation to each of us to abandon prejudgment and stubborn refusals to deeply hear one another. They are the program and the means to make that leap of faith with each other which will move

humanity and our earth into the new era of reconciliation and hope.

*Rabbi Herman Schaalman*<sup>7</sup>

What is clear is that the Earth is mandating that the human community assume a responsibility never assigned to any previous generation. We are being asked to accept responsibility commensurate with our greater knowledge. We are being asked to learn a new mode of conduct and discipline. This is preeminently a religious and spiritual task, for only religious forces can move human consciousness at the depth needed. Only religious forces can sustain the needed effort. Only religion can measure the magnitude of what we are about... Our task at this critical moment is to awaken the energies needed to create the new world, to evoke a universal communion of all parts of life. We must now respond creatively to the urgencies imposed on us by an interior energy that holds the stars within the galactic clusters, that shaped the planet under our feet, that has guided life through its bewildering variety of expression. There is reason to believe that those mysterious forces that have guided earthly events thus far have not suddenly collapsed under the great volume of affairs in the late twentieth century.

*Thomas Berry*<sup>8</sup>

## **RELIGIOUS STUDIES IN GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE**

**by Ninian Smart**

We are, of course, entering on a new global civilisation. This presents us with a great opportunity for enhancing the ideals enshrined in the modern study of religion and religions. Those ideals I would define as follows: the treatment of religions in a crosscultural or plural context, as distinguished from the more limited (though in its own context valid) theological or buddhological study of religion from within a tradition, aimed at articulating its doctrines or philosophy; the attempt to gain a sensitive understanding of religions and of religious history; the treatment of religions as traditionally understood in the context of other symbol systems and ideologies (that is, other worldviews); and the process of reflection about religious values in a plural or as some might say dialogical context.

The modern study of religion, because it is warmly dispassionate, and has both scientific and humanistic aspects, already contains within its logic the seeds of an ethos which is important for today's world. Its recognition of differing religious and other traditions implies that the comparative study of religions can never go back to a phase where sometimes it was suspected of masking a sense of western and Christian cultural and spiritual superiority. On the other hand, it is most important for us not to abandon the liberal framework within which the modern study of religion now occurs, namely a framework in which various points of view are encouraged and in which scholars are free to carry on with scientific and impartial delineation of the subject-matter. There is a danger that the ethos of the modern university

will be identified as merely western (as sometimes wrongly science is thought of as western), and in a post-colonial backlash Religious Studies will be reduced to various theologies (Islamic, Hindu and so forth)....

There are, of course, reasons why intellectually and for social reasons the crosscultural study of worldviews is important. First, in today's world there are so many migrations and so many places where cultures live together that it is vital that some understanding of diverse values should be generated. If the typical inhabitant of Birmingham, England, wears a shamrock in his turban, so too do the citizens of many other places (or at least some differing combination of headgear), such as Singapore, Melbourne, Karachi, Tashkent, Munich, Los Angeles, Lagos, Fiji and so on. There is a decreasing number of societies which are at all ethnically monolithic. Second, we are now heirs not just of British or American history, but of world history. The study of religions is a vital ingredient in understanding the character of the various civilisations. Most of them are built upon religious foundations. Third, we have an increased awareness of the vital role of the symbolic aspect

of human existence, alongside economic and other factors.

As well as these three there is a fourth factor. Many people are searchers, realising that the truth is not monolithically laid down, as Sunday School might lead us to think. We emerge into the adult world realising that there are varieties of living worldviews: and these increasingly have become living options. This has been especially obvious since the 60s. In fact this is the chief contribution of the 60s to modern awareness. In searching we may also be looking for a global outlook to go with the emerging global civilization. Is there some overarching worldview which we all share and within whose framework the varying religious and ideological traditions can operate? I do not advocate here Religious Studies mysteriously turning into a new religion. But I do say that the deeper are the ways in which we come to understand human religious diversity, the more urgently we are liable to reflect upon the mode in which that diversity can express itself within the overall context of a global civilisation.

*Ninian Smart*<sup>9</sup>

## NEW AGE SPIRITUALITY

by David Spangler

So, where should we look to find a path toward God within the New Age milieu? We look, I feel, toward the idea that in a time of transformation, a time when all the cultures of the world are converging and we are beginning to develop a true sense of ourselves as a planetary species, we may also be experiencing a revisioning of our image of the nature of divinity. It is not just discovering another way of moving toward the divine (most of the older, traditional ways are pretty effective when properly undertaken) but reimagining the divine toward which we are moving....

Looked at this way, the spirituality of the New Age lies not in discerning a particular path to the divine but in asking the question, What is the nature of an ecological God contrasted to a cathedral God? That is, what kind of god, goddess, or sacredness

can encompass and embrace a Christian, a Buddhist, a scientist, a psychologist, a Jew, a Muslim, a neopagan, a mystic, a human being, a tree, a river, a mountain, a planet? What kind of God lives in the connections between things and in the wholeness of life rather than at the end of a particular religious path?

At its best, the New Age offers a vision of sacredness that does not separate the individual from the world or from everyday life. It explores a sense of holiness and wholeness that is life-affirming and world-affirming, intimate with nature and seeking out the spirit of God in the incarnate cosmos. It is this incarnational and ecological aspect that may make New Age spirituality seem "new" to many folk, but in fact this aspect is also present in the best of our historical spiritual paths, particularly in the

mystical traditions of our great religions. In fact, the whole idea of a "new" spirituality emerging – a specifically "New Age" spirituality – can be overdrawn and overemphasised, creating a division with past traditions where none really exists.

Where a primary difference may lie between "old age" and New Age spirituality is not in the destination but in the manner of the journey. One of the characteristics of the New Age... is that it embodies a global spirit. The journey is not confined within a specific body of teachings but is conducted with openness to all the great faith traditions, including those that have special affinity with the spirituality of the land, such as the shamanistic traditions of many indigenous cultures. This eclectic openness can lead to diffusion and confusion and obviously carries risks: bits and pieces of traditions can be cobbled together in a way that seems pleasing to the celebrant but which destroys the awakening and disciplining power of those traditions. A false synthesis or homogenization can lead us nowhere.

On the other hand, by exploring the boundaries where faith traditions touch and begin to commune with one another, one can begin to discern the primal voice of the Mystery from which all these traditions ultimately emerge, the God of the ecology as well as the God of the cathedral.

Approached with respect and discipline, the convergence of religions and paths in a global and ecological sensibility can also begin to reveal a truly universal spirit, the global aspects of a spiritual journey that previously has mainly been walked within ethnic and cultural hedgerows.

Therefore, the spirituality of the New Age is ecological in its outlook, both literally in its growing concern for the spirit and well-being of the earth as a whole and metaphorically in its emphasis on context, pattern, interconnections, and interdependencies. It recognises how everything depends on, defines, and cocreates everything else, an image familiar to mystics but now being profoundly reinforced by the findings and perspectives of modern physics and cosmology.

The implication is that the divine is not a point toward which everything converges, but a field within which everything is embraced, sustained, and given special meaning and value. Accordingly, we encounter the divine not just in a special place or at a special time or through a special revelation, but potentially in any and all places and at any and all times. Anything in our lives can be a source of revelation.

*David Spangler<sup>10</sup>*

## **INTERFAITH WITHIN**

**by Gene Reeves**

In recent decades, within my own lifetime and experience, among those interested in such matters the predominant image of relations between faith traditions has changed from an image of several completely different, completely fixed and completely incompatible positions to an image of dialogue, where positions are more friendly toward each other, where one person may even learn a little and change a little as a result of meeting the other, or perhaps even be deepened in his or her 'own faith' as a consequence of learning from another religious tradition.

There is, I think, some validity to this newer

image; it reflects much of the reality of inter-faith relations today....

At the same time, however, this newer image of dialogue between two relatively fixed positions is, I believe, both incomplete and based on very Western, un-Buddhist presuppositions.

It is incomplete in that it simply does not take account, or at least does not take adequate account, of today's reality, at least as I experience it in Japan. I teach at a secular university, but most of my life and religious practice, some teaching and virtually all of my research is related to Buddhism,

and more specifically to a branch of Buddhism which derives its inspiration in large part from the Lotus Sutra, which has become the primary focus of almost all of my research. Perhaps it is not surprising that in this context of daily life, reflection and religious practice, I find myself becoming more and more Buddhist in important ways.

Here at least I will not claim that this development is a good one. Though I think it is, that is not the point. What is indisputable, I think, is that my interior life, my own sense of who and what I am, has changed – not exactly dramatically or suddenly, but significantly nevertheless. My life – my ways of thinking and doing – is ever increasingly informed by Buddhist traditions and by Buddhist faith.

I want to insist, however, that this change cannot reasonably be called a conversion, which I understand would involve the replacement of one faith or one kind of faith by another. That is not at all my experience. I grew up in America, in a largely Christian culture, in a Christian church, and among Christian teachers, friends and relatives. My sensibilities, my values, my feelings, my thought patterns and much else have been shaped by the Christian faith. The Christian story and Christian experience, at least as I think the Apostle Paul understood it, has been and remains enormously powerful for me. I have been and continue to be significantly nourished by the Christian tradition in more ways than I could possibly count. I cannot even imagine that that fact could change. I am not hesitant to claim that, at my better moments, Christ lives in me and I in Christ.

And yet, with my growing Buddhist faith, this Christian faith has not diminished in the slightest. On the inside at least, I have not become less Christian at all....

Though we have normally imagined inter-faith relations and dialogue to be external, that is, as something which happens between different parties, part of what is involved for many of us I think is a kind of dialogue or conversation which is importantly internal – that is inside of us....

If we are, at least in large part, products of what has influence on us, then it also follows that anyone who has been significantly exposed to Buddhist faith and reacted to it in a positive way is to that

extent Buddhist. In this sense one can be a Buddhist without knowing it... Thus it is not at all uncommon for Buddhists to think that non-Buddhists may be on the way to buddhahood or even that some Christians are actually bodhisattvas. It is true of course that in Medieval Europe the Buddha was converted into a Christian saint in the sense that the story of the Buddha's life is included among the lives of the saints. But it is revealing that this was a conversion. By becoming a Christian saint, the Buddha could no longer be Buddhist. In contrast, any number of Chinese Taoist saints and divinities, Shinto kami, Christian people and others have been regarded as bodhisattvas without being converted to Buddhist faith.

### *A Conclusion*

I know that it is no longer possible for me, and I suspect for many others, to be simply or exclusively Christian or Buddhist. We may at times want, for any number of reasons, to identify ourselves to others in one way or another, and with one community or another. Sometimes we are more or less forced to do so in response to limited option questionnaires etc. But the reality, for anyone who has been significantly exposed to Buddhist faith, is that he or she is then partly, unavoidably Buddhist. Similarly anyone significantly exposed to any religious tradition who does not just respond negatively to it or completely reject it inevitably is to some degree shaped by that 'other' tradition. To the extent that anyone is his or her experience, if they are shaped by something, it is part of them, part of who they are, part of their identity.

If this is true, it follows that an image of inter-faith relations as external relationships between relatively fixed positions is inadequate. I do not know what kind of image or images should replace it. What we need I think is a new and very dynamic image, one which reflects the reality of the very dynamic world which we find today on the edges of our religious faiths.

*Gene Reeves*<sup>11</sup>

What we have found, through trial and error, is something that everyone in inter faith work also reports: dialogue is not enough. Here in Seattle, we have had Jewish-Christian dialogue, Christian-Muslim dialogue, and Jewish-Muslim dialogue.

But true relationships were built only as a result of people working together on a Bosnia relief effort or a prayer service for Mideast peace. But political issues are usually more divisive than constructive. Our Council's members run the gamut from liberal to conservative to stridently non-political. Consequently we usually come together to celebrate a 'secular' holiday like Thanksgiving, or to offer a series of lectures or classes on world religions. Recently, as a result of my assuming the directorship of the Multifaith AIDS Project of

Seattle (MAPS), the Interfaith Council has agreed to adopt MAPS as its own 'Faith in Action' project. It is a symbiotic relationship. MAPS becomes truly multifaith by virtue of the participation of the Interfaith Council's constituencies and the Interfaith Council gains a local, humanitarian project on which its members can work. One begins by working on something concrete; then dialogue and the meeting of heart and mind come as a result of that hands-on experience.

*Anson Laytner<sup>12</sup>*

# TOWARD A NEW WORLD RELIGION

Much of the true revelation since the time of Christ has come to the world along the line of science. Science has proved that material substance is a form of energy. The revelations of science, though focussed often through one man or woman, are more specifically the result of group endeavour and trained group activity than are the revelations of religion. Revelation, therefore, comes in two ways:

1. Through the effort, aspiration and achievement of one man who is so close to the spiritual Hierarchy and so imbued with conscious divinity that he can receive the message from the central divine Source. He comes forth as a Messenger of the Most High, leads a dramatic and arresting life of service and symbolises in His life-events certain basic truths which have already been revealed but which He pictorially re-enacts. He epitomises in Himself the revelations of the past, and to them adds His Own contribution of the new revelation which it is His specific function to present to the world.

2. Through the effort of a group of seekers, such as scientific investigators in every country who *together* are searching for light on some problem or for some means to alleviate human suffering. Who is to say the scientific discoveries that alleviate suffering, are not a kind of spiritual revelation or inspiration from the world of divine Ideas. The religions may state that God is Love, but is this in reality, of greater value than the statement that All is Energy?

Today, as humanity awaits the revelation which will embody the ideals of the New Age, many

groups of people across the globe have an intuitive understanding that this revelation will have something to do with Oneness or Wholeness. Therefore, whatever revelation may emerge in the immediate future will be better "protected by the spirit of understanding" than any previous one. This may be the significance of the words of the *New Testament*, "every eye shall see Him"; humanity as a whole will recognise the revealing One. In past ages the Messenger from on High was only recognised by and known to a mere handful of people, and it took decades and sometimes centuries for His message to penetrate into the hearts of humanity.

In an article entitled *One World Faith?* in the book *Ultimate Visions: Reflections on the Religions We Choose*, Marcus Braybrooke has said that the life of the world's religious communities are growing together, although there is much resistance, sometimes violent, by extremists. It is reflected in the beginnings of global theology, global ethics and global spirituality.

He has also suggested that the idea of a "world creed" may be better described as a common quest, in which differences should be valued, so helping to overcome competition and rivalry which is still so evident between members of different faiths. This idea of a "common quest" – of unity in diversity – may have informed the 1995 Chicago Parliament of the World Religions, thus enabling those gathered there to address some of the critical issues facing humanity in a more united fashion. A major expression of this was the Declaration toward a Global Ethic, in the formulation of which Hans Kung played a major part.

## THE NEW WORLD RELIGION

From the writings of Alice A. Bailey

### *The Fact of God.*

First and foremost, there must be recognition of the fact of God. That central Reality can be called by any name that man may choose according to his

mental or emotional bent, racial tradition and heritage, for it cannot be defined or conditioned by names. Human beings perforce always use names in order to express that which they sense, feel and know, both of the phenomenal and also of the

intangible. Consciously or unconsciously, all men recognise God Transcendent and God Immanent. They sense God to be the Creator and the Inspiration of all that is.

The Eastern faiths have ever emphasised *God Immanent*, deep within the human heart, "nearer than hands and feet," the Self, the One, the Atma, smaller than the small, yet all-comprehensive. The Western faiths have presented *God Transcendent*, outside His universe, an Onlooker. God transcendent, first of all, conditioned men's concept of Deity, for the action of this transcendent God appeared in the processes of nature; later, in the Jewish dispensation, God appeared as the tribal Jehovah, as the soul... of a nation. Next, God was seen as a perfected man, and the divine God-man walked the Earth in the Person of Christ. Today we have a rapidly growing emphasis upon God immanent in every human being and in every created form. Today, we should have the churches presenting a synthesis of these two ideas which have been summed up for us in the statement of Shri Krishna in *The Bhagavad Gita*: "Having pervaded this whole Universe with a fragment of Myself, I remain." God, greater than the created whole, yet God present also in the part; God Transcendent guarantees the plan for our world and is the Purpose, conditioning all lives from the minutest atom, up through all the kingdoms of nature, to man.

*The Reappearance of the Christ, pp. 144-145.*

What is the solution of this intricate and difficult relationship [of the churches] throughout the world? A new presentation of truth, because God is not a fundamentalist; a new approach to divinity, because God is ever accessible and requires no outer intermediaries today; a new mode of interpreting the ancient spiritual teaching, because man has evolved and what was suitable for infant humanity is today unsuitable for adult mankind. These are imperative changes.

Nothing can prevent the new world religion from eventually emerging. It always has down the ages and it always will. There is no finality in the presentation of truth; it develops and grows to meet man's growing demand for light. It will be implemented and developed by the spiritually minded in all churches, whose minds are open to

the new inspirations of God's Mind, who are liberal and kind and whose individual lives are pure and aspiring....

The problem of the freedom of the human soul and its *individual* relation to God Immanent and God Transcendent is the spiritual problem, facing all the world religions at this time.

*Problems of Humanity, pp. 138-139.*

The new world religion is nearer than many think, and this is due to two things: first, the theological quarrels are mainly over non-essentials, and secondly, the younger generation is basically spiritual but quite uninterested in theology.

The intelligent youth of all countries are rapidly repudiating orthodox theology, state ecclesiasticism and the control of the church. They are neither interested in man-made interpretations of truth nor in past quarrels between the major world religions. At the same time, they *are* profoundly interested in the spiritual values and are earnestly seeking verification of their deep-seated unvoiced recognitions. They look to no bible or system of so-called inspired spiritual knowledge and revelation, but their eyes are on the undefined larger wholes in which they seek to merge and lose themselves, such as the state, an ideology, or humanity itself. In this expression of the spirit of self-abnegation may be seen the appearance of the deepest truth of all religion and the justification of the Christian message. Christ, in His high place, cares not whether men accept the theological interpretations of scholars and churchmen, but He does care whether the keynote of His life of sacrifice and service is reproduced among men; it is immaterial to Him whether the emphasis laid upon the detail and the veracity of the Gospel story is recognised and accepted, for He is more interested that the search for truth and for subjective spiritual experience should persist; He knows that within each human heart is found that which responds instinctively to God, and that the hope of ultimate glory lies hid in the Christ-consciousness.

Therefore, in the new world order, spirituality will supersede theology; living experience will take the place of theological acceptances. The spiritual realities will emerge with increasing clarity and the form aspect will recede into the background;

dynamic, expressive truth will be the keynote of the new world religion. The living Christ will assume His rightful place in human consciousness and see the fruition of His plans, sacrifice and service, but the hold of the ecclesiastical orders will weaken and disappear. Only those will remain as guides and leaders of the human spirit who speak from living experience, and who know no creedal barriers; they will recognise the onward march of revelation and

the new emerging truths. These truths will be founded on the ancient realities but will be adapted to modern need and will manifest progressively the revelation of the divine nature and quality. God is now known as Intelligence and Love. That the past has given us. He must be known as Will and Purpose, and that the future will reveal.

*The Externalisation of the Hierarchy, pp.201-202.*

## FOUR NEW REVELATIONS

by Dr. Gerald O. Barney, Jane Blewett & Kristen R. Barney

The God I know is still speaking, and there have been at least four new revelations.

First, has been revealed that among the most destructive forces on Earth today is hatred between the followers of different faith traditions. Of the almost 50 armed conflicts in progress currently [1993], the vast majority are motivated in significant part by hatred of the followers of one faith for the followers of another faith. The arms industry – the largest industry in the world, larger even than illegal drugs and oil – is supported in significant part by the hatred of the followers of one faith for the followers of another faith.

Examples of the destructiveness of interreligious hatred are found almost daily in all major newspapers.... What faith is now *not* involved in acts of hatred and violence in one or more of the ethnic and religious wars currently in progress?

The second new revelation comes from a 1,500-year meditation on Earth, a meditation we usually call "science". From this meditation we know that Earth is the product of a 15-billion year journey from the first burst of creative energy. We know that we humans and all other life on Earth are intimately connected through a single, integral and continuing creation journey and that we humans are related genetically to everything that contains the DNA molecule: to eagles, apes, snakes, frogs, trees, grasses, molds, bacteria.... We are all cousins, and we all depend on each other through the complex bio-geo-chemical cycles of Earth. Earth is not just our home; we are Earth. Our entire physical being is made up of bits and pieces of Earth – water, air,

rice, potatoes, etc. – and we, collectively, are an important part of the consciousness of Earth.

The third revelation is that five billion of us individual humans, both poor and affluent, are acting today in ways that are destroying the life sustaining capabilities of Earth and thereby destroying our own prospects. Nothing survives now – no person, no species, no lake, no river, no ocean, no forest, no soil, no mountain, not even the atmosphere – unless we humans will it so.

The fourth revelation is that we humans – not as individuals, but as a species – will exercise an enormous influence on the future of Earth. There is little question that we can destroy our species and many others with us. We can create an Earth future without humans. We might also create an Earth future in which there is a rich and mutually enhancing Earth-human relationship. In effect, we humans have become co-creators with the Divine of the future of the Earth.

This fourth revelation is of some considerable import, but to my knowledge, no faith tradition has prepared us for it. No faith anticipated the development of human power over Earth's future, this enormous responsibility. To my knowledge, no faith tradition has prepared us to know ourselves not as individuals but as a species. To my knowledge, no faith tradition has provided moral precepts to guide inter-species behaviour, to decide which species should cease to exist, which new species shall be created through genetic engineering (and then patented), and to judge the alternative

futures humans are considering for Earth.

Where can we turn with questions that deal with matters of ultimate meaning and direction, with cherished beliefs, with fears and insecurities about the future? Where can we turn to learn to act responsibly as a species? Where can we turn for insights into what possibilities there might be for a mutually enhancing human-Earth relationship in the future? Where can we turn for insights into what the original creative energy might desire our species – humans collectively – to make of Earth?

These are fundamentally spiritual questions, and they are being raised openly today in many communities, by scientists and economists, by philosophers and theologians, by historians and anthropologists, by religious and secular leaders alike. Such questions are in the hearts of ordinary

men and women who wonder about the future for all life and wonder how to answer their children's questions.

The questions being raised are unique to the experience and consciousness of peoples of our time, peoples who have looked into the farthest reaches of space, seen back in time to the very origins of the cosmos, have come to know Earth to be a relatively small planet in a galaxy of billions of stars and planets in a cosmos of billions of galaxies; people who have probed the core of the atom, lived with the prospect of nuclear annihilation, and now face the possibility of ecological annihilation. The questions are welling up from the human spirit struggling to be faithful to the moment.

*Dr. Gerald O. Barney, Jane Blewett  
& Kristen R. Barney<sup>13</sup>*

## **DIFFERENT PATHS BUT ONE GOAL**

**by HH the Dalai Lama**

There are many differences between one religion or faith and another, yet if we look at the real purpose behind the different philosophies, teachings and methods, we find it is actually the same. All teachings offer advice on becoming a good human being, on the need to live one's daily life in the right way, and the need to practise love.

Far from being a difficulty, the fact there are different philosophies and religions is particularly useful since people themselves have different mental dispositions....

If we look at the different philosophies, we find big differences. There are many, many points about which one could argue endlessly, for centuries, without result and with no good coming out of it. On the other hand, we would do well to understand the real meaning behind these philosophies, the real purpose of these different teachings....

Religion teaches discipline, and to control our anger and hatred, not to create or increase it. So if we are sincere religious practitioners, first of all we must point our finger at ourselves, inside not outside, to see whether we are practising well or not. Buddhist,

Hindu, Christian or Moslem, first you should check yourself....

Our main responsibility is not to criticize other people, not to argue with others, but to argue with and criticize ourselves. First we ourselves must change our bad thoughts into good thoughts, from being a bad person into being a good person, thereby making ourselves an example for other people. If you become a good human being through the help of a certain teaching, then others will feel respect for it. They will think: 'There must be something good in that. He believes in it and as a result his behaviour is good, so it is something that is worthy of respect. I shall follow it too; it seems worthwhile.' We religious practitioners must be sincere and honest with ourselves. If you accept a faith, you must follow it sincerely....

With science and technology, in the future we may be able to reach other galaxies, as we see in science fiction stories where people travel into outer space, visit other planets and meet the beings who live on them. One day this may actually be possible. Yet if we look around us, the whole world is full of

problems. If we solve these problems, then it is worth our while going to another planet, but if we have not solved such problems, then instead of helping other planets we may simply end up bringing them extra problems to add to their own. First, it is up to us to become good human beings.... At this particular time, all the different faiths must remain together and show respect for one another. For this, we must have closer contact, and through

that we will have better understanding of each other. The more knowledge I gain, the more my respect will grow, the more I will realize 'Ah yes! Such and such a teaching has a particular speciality which is really marvellous.' That sort of feeling will grow naturally. Let us remain as Christians, or as Buddhists, but at the same time, learn more about other faiths' techniques and specialities. This will make our own faith richer.

## SCIENCE POINTS TO WHOLENESS

by Rupert Sheldrake

It would appear that science is now pointing us back towards a sense of wholeness – the interconnectedness of life, the relationship of humankind to the larger life of the planet. There is a pointing to a holistic or a mystical perspective, as science transcends the mechanistic world view. Individually and collectively we now need to recognize our connection with the larger life of nature through sacred places, sacred times, and through the sense that our life is part of the larger life – the life of the ecosystem, the life of the planet, the life of the cosmos.

Change is not going to happen just through human intervention. The materialists would say that the greater forces in change are just impersonal natural laws, together with chance and necessity: there's nothing you can do about it. Yet if we see that the world is alive, that there is a psychic or animate aspect to it and also a spiritual or conscious aspect, then one thing we can do to enhance this is through forming connections and opening ourselves to inspiration. All people and all societies throughout human history have seen that the way of forming a relationship with the larger powers that dominate our life is through prayer and sacrifice, through

coming together for worship and praise.

The idea of dissolving traditional religion until there are just free individuals making all the decisions was, I think, a liberation for many after a rather restricted religious upbringing. But the result of it is that we have a society with no particular common goal, no spiritual dimension, no basis for social coherence; a world in which first the community fragments into nuclear families and then the nuclear families into broken homes and separated individuals. Finally we end up with a completely fragmented society where the only identity people have is with being consumers, and the only freedom they have is to choose which kind of video recorder or soap powder to buy.

I believe the only way to move back to a greater sense of cohesion and community – a greater sense of the relation of our life to our location, our locality, to our countries, to the planet – is through the rediscovery of the sense of community and of common spiritual goals. This has to come about through a religious revival, through a rediscovery of the sacred.

*Rupert Sheldrake<sup>14</sup>*

## LESSONS FOR THE CHURCHES

by Matthew Fox

Many of the contributions I have named from New Age are important to assisting the churches and to educating them to make deeper rapport with their better selves. It might even be appropriate to speak

of the establishment churches and seminaries' confessing their sins, or at least admitting their faults, in order to let go of ways that kill the Spirit if they desire to become places where the Spirit can

be encountered by young and old alike. I would include the following lessons among those which churches can learn from the New Age movement:

*Rediscover eschatology.* The sense of a future and of the hope that a vision for the future brings with it is something that many feel blessed by in the New Age movement. Often our religious institutions are so busy looking to the past – whether at the "original sin" or at the historical Jesus who was killed 1,950 years ago or at what our dead theologians taught – that the message is very clearly conveyed that religion is exclusively about the past. As Carl Jung put it, "We are still looking back to the pentecostal events in a dazed way instead of looking forward to the goal the Spirit is leading us to." And again, Jung warns us: "Life has also a tomorrow, and today is understood only when we can add to our knowledge of what was yesterday the beginnings of tomorrow." Western Christianity often appears more committed to the past than to the future; often more keen on wallowing in its old age than in being an instrument of promise for a new age. Such a commitment to the past can well constitute a sin called "nostalgia", a living in a *projection* of the past that probably never really existed in the first place and that is in no way livable today anyway. The past – or better, our memories of it – can be idolatrous. A faith that lacks an eschatology and something hopeful to offer about the future is a dead faith useful for nothing but offering a tired legitimation to the status quo.

*Cease lack of mysticism.* Go to your mystical heritage and start mining it. Return to the spirit of your founder – not only to Jesus, but also the prophetic voices of a Luther or Hildegard or Francis or Aquinas or Wesley or Calvin – and put questions to them about mysticism and spirituality. (A Presbyterian minister who was a student at the Institute of Culture and Creation Spirituality a few years ago did a study on Calvin's mysticism and found things he had never been shown in the seminary. So much education depends on the questions we ask and the issues we are seeking after.) Start redeeming the right hemisphere of the brain and cease committing idolatry toward the left hemisphere just because a now-discredited Cartesian worldview taught us and our seminaries to do so.

We will never recover mysticism without letting go of theism (the idea that God is "out there" – an idea that gave birth to atheism) and rediscovering pantheism (the experience of God in us and all things in God).

*Cease anthropocentrism.* A good example of anthropocentrism is an ideology of original sin, which is corrosive to the spiritual process to the extent that it has us thinking that life begins with human sin instead of with creation and its amazing eighteen-billion-year drama which was, for our species, certainly a drama filled with blessing. An original blessing. Even our bodies boast an eighteen-billion-year history, all their elements having been birthed in a supernova explosion five and a half billion years ago! Anthropocentrism bores people. Teach celebration and body awareness through teaching the new creation story from science and the amazing truths of our holy bodies. Hire scientists to teach on seminary faculties. Teach massage as a spiritual practice and with it the rediscovery of the blessing that all creation is, including ourselves. All art involves our interaction with matter and is therefore nonanthropocentric when undergone in art-as-meditation.

*Move beyond the quest for the historical Jesus to the quest for the cosmic Christ.* In this tradition of cosmic wisdom will be found the basis for a sacred cosmology and a renewed worship and education, a renewed deep ecumenism and respect for the artist and native spiritualities as well as a revitalized Christology and a living mysticism. To rediscover the cosmic Christ is not to ignore the historical Jesus but only to cease Jesusolatry. (Fundamentalists commit this heresy in the heart and many liberal theologians do it in their heads.) A healthy Christology balances the historical Jesus with the cosmic Christ. The first task of cosmic wisdom is not to redeem people from sin but to reveal the mysteries of God, says Thomas Aquinas. The second task is to produce creation as an artist makes art, and the third task is to restore creation, and the fourth task is to bring creation to its full completion. A theology of the incarnation that ignores this sense of cosmic wisdom and concentrates only on redemption ideologies is not only boring but bereft of spiritual depth.

After studying the cosmic Christ texts of the New

Testament, one finds it apparent that the theological traditions of rationalism and pietism ignored the cosmic Christ. Yet this vision lies deep in the church's heart and memory....

*Rediscover our doctrines in light of a creation spirituality tradition.* In many ways, what the churches are being asked to do is to take more seriously their claim to believe in the three articles of faith, identified by Martin Luther as (1) creation, (2) redemption, and (3) sanctification (or what Eastern Christianity calls divinization). So much of Western Christianity has been so exclusively occupied with the second article of faith – that of redemption – for so long that we have ignored both the mystical aspect of creation, its revelatory power, and its ethical, prophetic demands. The third article of faith, how we are divinized by the experience of the Divine, has also been roundly neglected. At the heart of this good news is the truth of our being artists like God. The churches, then, must pay more attention to the first and third articles of faith. In doing so, we will also be renewing the doctrine of a *trinitarian* Divinity – one that is Creator and Spirit as well as Redeemer/Teacher. God as Creator requires a rediscovery of the sacredness of creation; and God as Spirit requires a rediscovery of the work of the Spirit in our lives.

*Renew forms of worship.* Currently our forms of worship in the West are far too intellectual and wordy; rare is the church or synagogue where circle dances that can assist us to name our cosmic belief system (we live in a curved universe, we are told)

can be played out. Liturgical dancers cannot do this for us. All persons should participate in the circle dances (the center of the circle is a sacred place for the physically disabled), thereby recovering the mutual grace of delight and childlikeness that comes with rediscovering one has a place in the universe.

*Lead the way in renewal of education.* To renew education is a spiritual issue, both because our minds are God's awesome gifts to us and to neglect them is to insult the Creator; and also because it is through their minds and creativity that the poor can liberate themselves and we can reinvent work for all and justice for the oppressed. And because bad education or education that is not available to all, including the poor (indeed, especially the poor!), is a sin against the Creator of the human mind, the God of justice. The churches can and ought to consciously and deliberately reject the Cartesian biases of academia in their seminary systems and to substitute for them a mystical/prophetic model of education. Such a model would educate both head *and* heart, mind *and* body, left hemisphere *and* right hemisphere of the brain, mind *as well as* feelings. Such a model has been tested and tried for over fifteen years in the Institute of Culture and Creation Spirituality and is available for imitation or adaptation. It works, and the key to it is the body – our hearts, after all, are located in our bodies. Since artwork is heart-work, art as meditation becomes the basic prayer form of this spiritual tradition.

Matthew Fox<sup>15</sup>

## RELIGION NEEDS EMANCIPATION

by Dr. Paulos Mar Gregorios

The religions of the world have now to work together to redeem humanity from its present precarious predicament. We need to liberate humanity from the secular trap in which it has been unconsciously caught. Modern science and the technology based on it, as well as the political economy that undergirds it, have developed in a secular framework where humanity as dominating subject and the world as passive object have been the only two factors that mattered. God or the transcendent has

become an unnecessary hypothesis in our science and technology, in our universities and schools, in our political institutions.

This is the secular trap from which humanity needs emancipation. It is not simply a question of bringing God in through the window. Philosophical theisms are all too philosophically weak to stand. It is not simply at the intellectual or conceptual level that the Transcendent has to be reaffirmed.

The various religions of the world have honored and cherished the experience of the transcendent throughout human history, despite the scathing secular attack. We have done so through our doctrines and practices, through our prayers and rituals, through our mystic quests and experiences, through our compassion for humanity and our devotion to the Source and Ground of all being.

Of course, in religion, too, we have made a mess of things. We have made religion an instrument of our greed for political power and for economic advantage. We have allowed the most ungodly and inhuman practices in the name of religion. We have fought wars and destroyed each other in the name of God and religion. We have used our crusades and our *jihads* to plunder and pilfer the wealth of other peoples.

Religion, too, needs emancipation. We as humanity now stand alienated by our own evil practices from both poles of our existence, from the transcendent Source and Ground of our being and from the earth and society in which we have been placed.

The two redemptions, the overcoming of the two alienations, i.e., in the two realms of transcendent religion and humanitarian dealing with our earth – the double salvation for which humanity yearns – must become the top concern of the Global Concourse of Religions. The two emancipations can come only as a single package. It is only as our religions cease being negative and exclusive that our science/technology and our political economy can also become more human.

To me, this is the vision that beckons. We shall not abandon critical reason, but we shall go beyond it to find a kind of reason that is more compassionate, more humane, more acknowledging of transcendence. We do not abandon our national loyalties, but we shall go beyond them to keep global human interests above our national interests. We do not abandon our own particular religious loyalties; but we shall deepen them in dialogue and concourse with other religions in order to find those deeper roots in each religion which affirm the unity of global humanity and which affirm the transcendent Love in which we all live and move and have our being.

As I humbly inaugurate this opening of the Centenary celebrations [of the Parliament of World Religions], let us also move to common prayer, that all humanity may be brought into a single concourse and all of us acknowledge together in various idioms the Transcendent Love, Wisdom and Power that really unites us.

*Paulos Mar Gregorios*<sup>16</sup>

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...if we could articulate the points of agreement among the world religions, a transcultural revelation of the basic values of human life which the world religions hold in common would emerge. We would identify the spiritual heritage of the entire human family, however diversely each religion and culture celebrates it. If this consensus could then be injected, with one voice, into the socio-political arena, the world religions would be contributing an all-important spiritual dimension to the decision-making process.

In the next generation the question may not be which religion one belongs to, but whether religion itself is of value. Those who have had some experience of transcendence must find some way to communicate the fact that the experience of the Ultimate Mystery is open to every human person who chooses to pursue the search for truth and embark on the spiritual journey – a journey which is literally without end.

*Thomas Keating*<sup>17</sup>

The old is always dying and the new is emerging, and that which is new socially and culturally transforms the old. This is really an apocalyptic age. Within this context we can take the forms of Christian symbolism, but we can also take forms like the coming of the Buddha Maitreya or the last *avatara* of Kali. Every religion looks forward to a time when the end will come and the new birth will take place. So in a very wonderful way we are at the birth of a new age and a new consciousness.

*Dom Bede Griffiths*<sup>18</sup>

# THE REAPPEARANCE OF THE CHRIST

This study of the Problem of the Churches and the new developments concerning an emerging world religion would not be complete without a section on the reappearance of the Christ. Everywhere there is a spirit of expectancy and demand for the coming of the World Teacher, usually referred to as the advent of the Christ. The Christ in His role as World Teacher is known by different names according to the religion – variously he is known as Maitreya to Buddhists, the Imam Mahdi to Moslems and as the Christ by Christians. For humanity today, there is scepticism as to whether the event will take place for many reasons, one of which is the image of the historical Christ as a sweet, gentle, harmless individual who wouldn't fit well with current times. In other cases there is denial of the concept altogether. Since the publication of the Alice Bailey books such as *The Reappearance of the Christ*, there have been several claimants to the title of Messiah or Avatar and the misinformation created by these claims has posed another problem in that it has raised the hopes and the scepticism of people. Though the Christ Himself told us to expect false Messiahs around the time of His reappearance, it is a difficult task for humanity to discriminate between truth and falsity.

As He promised, the Christ has *never* left us, but has worked for two thousand years through the medium of His disciples, the inspired men and women of all faiths. What is occurring today is an intense preparation by His disciples, and by men and women of goodwill everywhere in the world, to create those conditions in the world in which He can move freely among us again, in person. These servers are primarily occupied with serving their fellowmen, sponsoring human welfare movements, establishing right human relations and constantly off-setting the separateness of the human mind through the inclusiveness of the divine love nature. This group is known by some as the New Group of World Servers, and although servers may not consciously recognise this affiliation of common spiritual intent, their work guarantees the return of Christ into public recognition and implements a great alignment between the Godhead, the Christ, the kingdoms of nature and men and women of

goodwill in the world. A very definite "structure of approach" is being forged by all who invoke the aid of the Christ and the energies of Light and Love. Nothing, we are assured, can stop His return today.

In *The Reappearance of the Christ*, it is mentioned that the reappearance will not come as a result of some proclamation or some stupendous planetary event which will force human beings everywhere to say He is there! for that would evoke antagonism and laughter, resistance and fanatical credulity. We will know Him through potency in leadership, through dynamic but logical changes in world affairs, and through action taken by the masses of the people from the depths of their own consciousness.

The reappearance is predicted to come about in three distinctive phases:

1. By the stimulation of the spiritual consciousness in man, the evocation of humanity's spiritual demands on a large scale and the nurturing on a world-wide scale of the Christ consciousness in the human heart. This has already been done and with most effective results. The vociferous demands of people of goodwill, of welfare workers and of those pledged to international co-operation, to the relief of world distress and to the establishment of right human relations are the undeniable expression. This uprising of the Christ consciousness has been successful and what may appear as reverse activity is of no importance in the long run and is only of a temporary nature.

2. The second indicated move of the Hierarchy would be the impressing of the minds of enlightened men everywhere by spiritual ideals embodying the new truths, by the "descent" of the new concepts which will govern human living and by the overshadowing of all world disciples and the New Group of World Servers by the Christ Himself. The new truths are being enunciated which should guide human living in the future and new organisations, movements and groups are springing up, prompted by their loving response to human distress. They may not formulate their actions in this way but

nevertheless they are helping to manifest the Kingdom of God on Earth.

3. Thirdly, we are told that Christ may come in Person and walk among men as He did before. Although this has not yet taken place, plans are being laid which will enable Him to do so. Belief in His coming is basic in the human consciousness.

How He will come and in what manner is not yet stated. The exact moment has not yet arrived nor has the method of His appearance been determined. The factual nature of the two earlier preparatory moves, already made by the Hierarchy under His direction, are the guarantee that He will come and that when He does, humanity will be ready.



# MEDITATION

## **PRACTICAL POINTS**

1. Sit in a comfortable position, erect but not tense or strained. Relax. See that the breathing is even and quiet.
2. To meditate always in the same place is helpful.
3. 15 to 30 minutes daily is suggested. 5 minutes every day done regularly is of far more value than 30 minutes done irregularly.
4. If you have not had previous experience of meditation, difficulty in concentration is to be expected. Perseverance is needed. If necessary bring the mind back to the required work every time it wanders. Patient practice brings ever increasing skill.

## **ATTITUDE TO BE ASSUMED**

1. Remember we are sharing our effort with a dedicated company of men and women of goodwill.
2. Realise that essentially you are a soul and as such have rapport with all souls.
3. Be conscious that meditation is not a passive, reflective form of devotion but a positive creative use of mind, actively linking the inner and the outer worlds.
4. Use the creative imagination to see yourself at one with all humanity and with all that is new, progressive and spiritual.
5. Adopt a confident attitude which evokes spiritual illumination. This 'as if' attitude can have magical results.

# MEDITATION OUTLINE

## STAGE I

1. Reflect upon the fact of relationship. You are related to:
  - (a) your family
  - (b) your community
  - (c) your nation
  - (d) the world of nations
  - (e) the One Humanity made up of all races and nations

2. Use this mantram of unification:

**The sons of men are one and I am one with them.  
I seek to love, not hate;  
I seek to serve and not exact due service;  
I seek to heal, not hurt.**

## STAGE II

1. Dwell upon the theme of service, your links with service groups and how, with your fellow servers, you can help the divine Plan.
2. Reflect upon the Problem which you are studying and know that goodwill can bring solution. Include the Seed Thought:

**The problem of the freedom of the human soul and its *individual* relation to God Immanent and God Transcendent is the spiritual problem, facing all the world religions at this time.**

3. Invoke the spiritual inspiration in finding solution to the problem by using the final stanza of the mantram of unification:

**Let vision come and insight.  
Let the future stand revealed.  
Let inner union demonstrate and outer cleavages be gone.  
Let love prevail.  
Let all men love.**

## STAGE III

1. Realise that you are contributing to the building of a bridge between the Kingdom of Heaven and earth. Think about this bridge of communication.

## STAGE IV

1. Having built the bridge, visualise light, love and blessing descending over the bridge to humanity.

2. Use the Great Invocation. Say it with deliberation and full commitment to its meaning:

**From the point of Light within the Mind of God  
Let light stream forth into the minds of men.  
Let Light descend on Earth.**

**From the point of Love within the Heart of God  
Let love stream forth into the hearts of men.  
May Christ return to Earth.**

**From the centre where the Will of God is known  
Let purpose guide the little wills of men –  
The purpose which the Masters know and serve.**

**From the centre which we call the race of men  
Let the Plan of Love and Light work out  
And may it seal the door where evil dwells.**

**Let Light and Love and Power restore the Plan on Earth.**

**OM**

**OM**

**OM**

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## **WORK PROPOSALS**

Continue with the daily meditation work.

Read widely from any other contemporary materials on the subject.

## **QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION**

1. What evidence have you personally come across which leads you to believe that "the light which flames" is descriptive of the present?
2. What do you believe to be the major religious values the past has given to us? Which of the various theological beliefs emphasised by your faith (if you have one) seem to you worth preserving?
3. What part should organised religion play in everyday human life?
4. What are the basic principles of spiritual value to the evolution of the human race? How can a needed form of *unity* (without uniformity) be developed as a platform for the new world religion?

The World Goodwill course on the Problems of Humanity is not intended to be didactic. Some statements may be new or unfamiliar. We suggest that these be neither accepted on authority nor lightly cast aside, but instead that they be deeply explored. The questions above are to help stimulate this deeper exploration. This can be done by individual thinking on the questions. They could also form the subject for discussion in a group. We suggest that you try to interest others in the issues raised in this course and form a discussion group.

## READING LIST

*Please note that this brief list is only intended as a stimulus to further investigation and is in no way comprehensive. World Goodwill would very much appreciate it if students of this set who discover other good sources of material could let us know for possible future inclusion in this list.*

*Problems of Humanity; The Reappearance of the Christ; The Externalisation of the Hierarchy*, all by Alice Bailey, pub. Lucis Press

*A Treasury of Traditional Wisdom* by Whitall N. Perry, pub. Quinta Essentia. (Note: this book is currently out of print, but is such a valuable compendium of insights from all the world's faith traditions we have included it, as it may be available through second-hand book stores or the Internet)

*The Perennial Philosophy* by Aldous Huxley, pub. HarperCollins.

*A SourceBook for Earth's Community of Religions* ed. by Joel D. Beversluis, pub. The SourceBook Project. (An updated version of *A SourceBook for the Community of Religions*.)

*New Age Spirituality: An Assessment* ed. by Duncan S. Ferguson, pub. Westminster Press.

*Ultimate Visions: Reflections on the Religions We Choose* ed. by Martin Forward, pub. Oneworld Publications Ltd.

*The Marriage of Sense and Soul* by Ken Wilber, pub. Random House.

*Toward a World Religion for the New Age* by Lola Davis, pub. Mind and Miracle.

*The World's Religions* by Huston Smith, pub. Harper.

*The World's Religions* by Ninian Smart, pub. Cambridge University Press.

Magazine: *World Faiths Encounter*, pub. World Congress of Faiths. (Subscriptions, write to: World Congress of Faiths, 2 Market Street, Oxford, OX1 3EF)

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3. Martin Forward (ed.), introduction to *Ultimate Visions: Reflections on the Religions We Choose*, p.10.
4. Morton Kelsey, *New Age Spirituality*, pp. 35-37, 54.
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7. Rabbi Herman Schaalman, in Joel Beversluis (ed.), *A SourceBook for the Community of Religions*, p.161.
8. Thomas Berry, *The Dream of the Earth*, pp.47-48.
9. Ninian Smart, "Concluding Reflections: Religious Studies in Global Perspective", in Ursula King (ed.), *Turning Points in Religious Studies*, pp. 299-301.
10. David Spangler, "The New Age: The Movement Toward the Divine", *New Age Spirituality*, pp. 99, 101-103.
11. Gene Reeves, "Interfaith Within", *World Faiths Encounter*, No. 11, July 1995, pp. 19-20, 27.
12. Anson Laytner, "Challenge of Inter Faith Encounters", *World Faiths Encounter*, No. 9, November 1994, p. 17.
13. Dr. Gerald O. Barney, Jane Blewett & Kristen R. Barney, "The Role of the Faith Traditions", *A SourceBook*, pp. 29-30.
14. Rupert Sheldrake, "Discovering the Sacred", in Eddie & Debbie Shapiro (eds.), *The Way Ahead*, pp.194-5.
15. Matthew Fox, "Spirituality for a New Era", *New Age Spirituality*, pp. 211-216.
16. Paulos Mar Gregorios, "The Vision Beckons", *A SourceBook*, p. 18.
17. Thomas Keating, "One Voice", in Susan Walker (ed.), *Speaking of Silence*, p.127.
18. Dom Bede Griffiths, "The New Consciousness", *A SourceBook*, p.194.

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