

# A Spiritual Narrative for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

## *Becoming a Sacred Earth Community*

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June 21 & 22, 2013  
The Morgan Library, New York City

Organized by the Contemplative Alliance,  
a Program of the Global Peace Initiative of Women

A new spiritual narrative is emerging that is deeply unifying the human community. It crosses national and religious boundaries and centers on the principles that have inspired all the great religious traditions. This narrative does not in any way deny the importance and beauty of religious diversity or deny the unique visions of the different religious traditions, but it brings to the fore the underlying unity of human experience and aspiration. It involves a shift from a paradigm of separateness and opposition to a paradigm based on oneness and cooperation. Scientific advances and a deeper understanding of interdependence show that we are intimately bound not only to one another but to all of life, and to Earth Herself. We are coming to see again what the ancient wisdom has told, that Earth is a living being, and that we are an integral part of a vast community of life. The shift from seeing Earth as dead matter to seeing her as the living Gaia will dramatically alter the way we interact with the forces and resources that are part of her complex and intricately woven living systems. How will this new understanding help shift the collective awareness in such a way that we truly become a sacred earth community – caring for life in all its forms? How will this awareness help shape new economic and social formations so that we can become a more caring, peaceful and balanced human society.

Friday, June 21<sup>st</sup>

9:00am CONTEMPLATIVE OFFERING

9:10am

WELCOME BY:

**Dena Merriam**, Founder, Global Peace Initiative Women & Founding Member,  
Contemplative Alliance

**David Korten**, Founder, Living Economies Forum

9:15am – 9:30am

SPECIAL REMARKS: “LAYING THE GROUNDWORK OF THE SACRED EARTH COMMUNITY NARRATIVE”

**Mary Evelyn Tucker**, Co-Director, Forum on Religion and Ecology at Yale University

9:30am – 11:10am

MORNING CONVERSATION I:

## THE EMERGENCE OF A NEW SPIRITUAL NARRATIVE BASED ON UNITY

We stand at a crossroad, an evolutionary moment where we are being called to advance our understanding of our relationship to one another, to all living systems, and to the universe itself. An increasing number of people are coming to see the unity that underlies our diverse religious traditions. This is essential for the collective shift from a paradigm of separateness and opposition to one of unity and deep cooperation. What is the new spiritual narrative that is emerging from the coming together of religion?

### Setting the Context:

**Barbara Marx Hubbard**, Founder, Foundation for Consciousness Evolution

### Discussants:

**Pir Zia Inayat-Khan**, President, Sufi Order International & Seven Pillars House of Wisdom

**Sraddhalu Ranade**, Scientist & Teacher, Sri Aurobindo Ashram, India

**Sharon Salzberg**, Co-Founder, Insight Meditation

**Father Michael Holleran**, Priest, Archdiocese of NY & Founder, Dragon's Eye Zendo

### Facilitated by:

**Dena Merriam**, Founder & Convener, Global Peace Initiative of Women & Founding Member, Contemplative Alliance

### Closing remarks:

**Barbara Marx Hubbard & Mary Evelyn Tucker**

**11:10am – 11:15am CONTEMPLATIVE OFFERING**

**11:15am – 12:50pm MORNING CONVERSATION II:**

### **EMBRACING A SACRED EARTH COMMUNITY NARRATIVE**

Our global human society is captive to partial and outdated narratives that no longer serve. It is a premise of our gathering that the human transition to a just and sustainable future depends on the broad embrace of a Sacred Earth Community narrative. What are the essential elements of this narrative and the cultural and institutional implications?

### Setting the Context:

**David Korten**: Founder & President, Living Economies Forum

### Discussants:

**Robert Nadeau**, Professor, George Mason University & Author: "Rebirth of the Sacred: Science Religion, and the New Environmental Ethos"

**Rev. Ed Bacon**: Rector, All Saints Episcopal Church – California

**Bill Twist**: Co-Founder, Pachamama Alliance

**Tom Goldtooth**: Executive Director, Indigenous Environmental Network

### Facilitated by:

**Rev. Diane Berke**, Co-Founder, One Spirit Interfaith Seminary &

Founding Member, Contemplative Alliance

Closing remarks:

**David Korten**, Founder, Living Economies Forum

**1:00pm – 2:30pm**

**LUNCH**

**2:30pm – 2:50pm**

**SPECIAL REMARKS: “THE NEW SPIRITUAL NARRATIVE”**

**Charles Eisenstein**, Author & Speaker, Sacred Economics

**Angel Kyodo Williams**, Founder, Transformative Change

**2:50pm – 4:20pm**

**AFTERNOON CONVERSATION I:**

**CAN THIS NARRATIVE BECOME THE BASIS FOR A MOVEMENT THAT RE-SHAPES THE SOCIAL & ECONOMIC FIELD? WHAT IS EMERGING?**

Many disparate initiatives are responding to the need to form a new foundational narrative that meets the demands of our time. How can these efforts join together in a cohesive movement? Clear messages and strategies are required to build momentum. How do we envision this movement emerging?

Setting the Context:

**Adam Bucko**, Co-Founder, The Reciprocity Foundation & Founder of HAB

Discussants:

**Ven. Bhikkhu Bodhi**, Chairperson, Buddhist Global Relief

**Majora Carter**: Founder, Sustainable South Bronx & President, Majora Carter Group

**Clay Williams**, Founder, Living Christ Sangha, St. Bartholomew's Church

**Swami Omkarananda**, Teacher, Sivananda Center, Los Angeles & Permaculture Specialist

**Rabbi Arthur Waskow**, Founder, The Shalom Center

Facilitated by:

**Mirabai Bush**, Co-Founder, Center for Contemplative Mind & Society

**4:20pm – 4:25pm**

**CONTEMPLATIVE OFFERING**

**4:25pm – 5:25pm**

**AFTERNOON CONVERSATION II: OPEN DIALOGUE**

This session will be an open dialogue between participants from the audience and founding members of the Contemplative Alliance, addressing ideas introduced during the day.

**Acharya Judy Lief**, Scholar & Teacher, Shambhala Buddhist Tradition

**Bob Toth**, Former Executive Director, Merton Institute for Contemplative Living

**Dr. Chung Hyun Kyung**, Professor of Ecumenical Studies, Union Theological Seminary

Facilitation by:

**Eddie Stern**, Director, Ashtanga Yoga New York & Founding Member, Contemplative Alliance

**5:25pm – 5:30pm** **Next Steps:** Janelle Surpris and Dena Merriam, Global Peace Initiative of Women & the Contemplative Alliance



**Saturday, June 22<sup>nd</sup>**

*The goal for the working groups is to distill the essential points and messages of a new spiritual narrative founded on the vision of a Sacred Earth Community, and strategies for moving this vision out into the public mind. One idea that has been presented is to formulate a series of questions that can help shape dialogues around the country.*

**9:00 – 9:30am** **CONTEMPLATIVE OFFERING** (optional)  
Inter-Spiritual Meditation led by Ed Bastian – **North Parlor 1**  
Silent Individual Meditation – **South Parlor 2**

**9:30am-12:30pm** **MORNING WORKING GROUPS**  
Please note the correct address for concurrent sessions:

- **GROUP 1 – Morgan Library** (225 Madison Ave / near 37<sup>th</sup> street)
- **GROUP 2 – Shinnyo-en Center** (19 W 36th St / btwn 5th & 6th Aves)

**GROUP 1**  
**Morgan Library**

**UNIFYING SPIRITUAL NARRATIVE**

The interpretations of religious narratives of past centuries and millennia have created divisions and in many respects have been polarizing. There has been a movement in the last few decades to focus on the underlying unity among the religions, rather than focusing on doctrinal differences. This is an essential component of the consciousness shift now underway. This new spiritual narrative acknowledges the interconnection between all of life and recognizes the Earth and its life systems as living organisms. Interconnection, interdependence and unity will replace the disconnected, fragmented and separateness that has defined our way of seeing the world. How is this new narrative unfolding in the collective consciousness and what is its evolution? How will the deepening spiritual unity be reflected in society and help shift the understanding of our place in the universe?

Beginning the conversation:

**Tiokasin Ghosthorse**, Host, First Voices Indigenous Radio on WBAI NY - Pacifica Radio

**Barbara Marx-Hubbard**, Founder, Foundation for Consciousness Evolution

Open discussion facilitated by:

**Rev. Diane Berke**, Co-Founder, One Spirit Interfaith Seminary & Founding Member, Contemplative Alliance

**GROUP 2**  
**Shinnyo-en Center**

**CREATING A LIFE SERVING ECONOMY**

Group 2 will examine the challenge of raising consciousness of the nature and consequences of humanity's now dominant economic institutions and engaging a broad public conversation in search of alternatives that support Earth balance, shared prosperity, and deep democracy. Participants will share and examine insights into a range of questions, including: How do current economic institutions shape our relationships with one another and nature in ways that inhibit our ability to relate as members of a vibrant, living Earth Community? What would be the defining structures of an economic system that values life more than money, is deeply democratic, and distributes power equitably in the hands of those most likely to use it in service to the common good? What are the most important openings and opportunities to advance a public conversation toward a new consensus on the purpose of the economy and actions needed to create a life serving economy that supports our function as "one human family and one Earth community with a common destiny?" [Earth Charter]

Beginning the conversation:

**Peter Brown**, Professor - School of Environment, McGill University

**Tom Goldtooth**, Executive Director, Indigenous Environmental Network

**Leah Hunt-Hendriks**, Ph.D. student in Religion, Ethics & Politics, Princeton University

**Bob Massie**, President, New Economics Institute

Open discussion facilitated by:

**David Korten**, Author & Founder, Living Economies Forum

**12:30pm – 2:00pm**

**LUNCH at the Shinnyo-en Center** (19 W 36th St / btwn 5th & 6th Aves)

**2:00pm – 2:15pm**

**CONTEMPLATIVE OFFERING** (optional)

**2:15pm – 3:45pm**

**AFTERNOON WORKING GROUPS**

*These are concurrent sessions. Please choose one group to join.*

**North Parlor,**  
**Morgan Library**

**THE TEMPLE OF UNDERSTANDING: Faith Traditions, Action for our Earth, and Paradigm Change**

Religious traditions bring moral authority and organizing capacity to the environmental crisis. There are interfaith, religious, and spiritual solutions, yet grave concerns remain. How can faith-based efforts be amplified? What are the obstacles and limitations? Are religions themselves in need of change towards earth-based consciousness? Without such consciousness, their efforts are inherently limited. In discussion we will pool our knowledge and collaboratively assess religious engagement and the potential for transformation as we move forward.

Beginning the conversation & Open discussion facilitation by:

**Sr. Joan Kirby**, Temple of Understanding

**Grove Harris**, Temple of Understanding

**South Parlor,  
Morgan Library**

### **SPIRITUALITY & SCIENCE: The Science of Unity**

One of the most important developments in recent years is the affirmation by science of many long held spiritual beliefs. This collaboration between the two disciplines of science and spirituality will aid in the development of a new foundational narrative for human society.

Beginning the conversation:

**J.J. Hurtak**, Ph.D., Ph.D., M.Th., President and Founder of The Academy For Future Science

**Desiree Hurtak**, Ph.D., MS. Sc., Co-founder of The Academy For Future Science

**Loch Kelly**, Founder, Awake Awareness Institute

Open discussion facilitated by:

**Kurt Johnson**, Evolutionary biologist, Co-author: The Coming Interspiritual Age & Co-Founder, Coalition for One Voice

**Shinnyo-en Center**

### **FINDING COMMON LANGUAGE – SHIFTING THE COLLECTIVE MIND**

How does the Contemplative Alliance distill the message of these two days to penetrate the public consciousness? The meaning behind Sacred Earth Community is apparent to many of us present, as it encompasses the principles that ancient traditions throughout the world, for millennia, have understood and live by and that many of us align with today. We cannot, however, assume that this understanding is true for everyone. This session will explore how to effectively share the foundational message that the Sacred Earth Community is built on. What are the critical words and phrases that will resonate within a popular culture, and help to communicate, in simple terms, that this movement is about supporting the sacredness of life in its many forms? What messaging do we use to inform and inspire in such a way that will bring many diverse voices into co-creating the Sacred Earth Community?

Beginning the conversation:

**Ibrahim Abdul-Matin**, Author: Green Deen & Lead Sustainability Advisor, The Frontier Project

**Abigail Allen**, Founder, Neon Butterfly

Open discussion facilitated by:

A member of the Contemplative Alliance

**4:30pm – 6:00pm**

### **CONCLUDING SESSION - Shinnyo-en Center**

*The entire group convenes at the Shinnyo-en Center (19 W 36th St / btwn 5th & 6th Aves)*

### **BUILDING A MOVEMENT & NEXT STEPS**

How does the Contemplative Alliance keep this process alive, beyond the Morgan, and how do we engage with purpose? This conversation will address how the movement building process has engendered seminal shifts in American society. We invite you to share your experience in this area, as well as to identify core components of this systematic process. As these thoughts circulate, our aim is to harvest from each of you key stakeholders, organizations, techniques and methods that will move our conversation to a wider audience. Our next step is to bring this dialogue, in the framework of 10 reflective questions, to 10 cities throughout the nation.

Beginning the conversation:

**Myra Jackson**, UN Representative, Commons Action for the United Nations

**Michael Nagler**, Professor Emeritus Classics & Comparative Literature, UC Berkeley

Open discussion facilitated by:

**Dena Merriam**, Founder, Global Peace Initiative of Women

**Angel Kyodo Williams**, Founder, Transformative Change

**6:15pm – 7:30pm**

**Closing Reception**

### **Special Announcement**

This conversation continues at Trinity Wall Street Sunday, June 23<sup>rd</sup> from 2:00pm to 4:00pm --  
An Interfaith Panel Exploring Economic & Environmental Sustainability.

For details please visit: [www.trinitywallstreet.org/calendar/](http://www.trinitywallstreet.org/calendar/)



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**Fenwick Foundation**

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We also wish to acknowledge the many ongoing volunteers that support the Global Peace Initiative of Women and the Contemplative Alliance in this work.