



If you're not sure what this all means—and even if you are—get this visionary book
and find out what all the excitement and enthusiasm is about.
It might very well change your world! — **KEN WILBER**, *The Integral Vision*

THE COMING
INTERSPIRITUAL
AGE

KURT JOHNSON
DAVID ROBERT ORD

THE COMING
INTERSPIRITUAL AGE



*THE COMING
INTERSPIRITUAL
AGE*

KURT JOHNSON
DAVID ROBERT ORD



Vancouver, Canada

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Advance Praise and Perspective on
The Coming Interspiritual Age
from Across the World's Religions

Integral

The Coming Interspiritual Age is in part about just that—the emergence, happening now and gaining momentum—of an interspiritually unified world. It has its basis in a background coming transformation—that of the Integral Age. Kurt Johnson and David Robert Ord give a clear, compelling, highly readable account of this coming transformation, which indeed could prove world changing. If you're not sure what all this means—and even if you are—get this visionary book and find out what all the excitement and enthusiasm is about. It might very well change your world!

— Ken Wilber, *The Integral Vision*

A new integral world has begun to come into view, and a new human being is beginning to be called forth. This new humanity is capable of living responsibly and cooperatively in this radically self-transforming world. The implications will be world-changing. Drawing from the inspiring legacy of Brother Wayne Teasdale, Kurt Johnson and David Robert Ord do us all a great service by bringing the sweep of this panoramic vision into focus in this wide-ranging volume.

— Terry Patten, author *Integral Life Practice*;
Founder, *Beyond Awakening*

The Coming Interspiritual Age is at once an insightful historical overview of the burgeoning interspiritual movement, an urgent call for transformation in the face of the many pressing social, ecological, and spiritual challenges of our time, and a passionate manifesto for the flowering of a new, integral culture that embodies the highest ideals of all the world's great wisdom traditions, ancient and modern. I am happy to recommend this book to readers from any religious background, or none, who are inspired by the possibility that a better, more just and enlightened world awaits us in and through the miracle of "We." This text promises to be a valuable resource for all interfaith and integral religious students and practitioners; it is one I will be using in my classes on these topics going forward.

— Bruce Alderman, John F. Kennedy University

Evolutionary Consciousness

The Coming Interspiritual Age presents a magnificent post-postmodern integral vision, heralding a new kind of spirituality already aborning. While it is written with passion, the authors Kurt Johnson and David Robert Ord are well-grounded in the knowledge of science and

of integral and evolutionary theories to make the book at once a systematic narrative of the past, both cosmic and human, a systemic interpretation of the present, and a splendid vision of the future. At the heart of all spiritual traditions is the “Mystic Heart” that connects us to the Heart of the Kosmos and enables us to unconditionally embrace all beings with Love and Compassion. The authors propose that in this New Axial Age it is time for the Mystic Heart to be luminously lit in the hearts of all humanity to transcend the differences and disagreements that have plagued the human family through spiritual alignment eternally existing in the Heart of our hearts. This is a timely book that transcends time.

— Yasuhiko Genku Kimura, Founder, Vision In Action

Kurt Johnson and David Robert Ord set a wide context of the evolutionary development of man and the earth, setting spirituality in a global and historical developmental context with hints as to its future potential. Backed up by abundant scientific evidence and global polls, they make the case for the marriage of science and religion. But the main message shining through is that of an experiential spirituality of the heart that beats through every living being and is the basis of the new emerging Interspirituality. If you want to keep abreast of the leading edge of spirituality, this book is a must read.

— Nancy Roof, Founder, Kosmos Journal

This book will simply astonish you. It is not only a beautiful and powerful tribute to the work and vision of Brother Wayne Teasdale, it is also an Interspiritual Akashic Record that will help prepare the way for the Interspiritual Age to be ushered in...one where we will see with the eyes of the heart.

— Diane Williams, Founder, The Source of Synergy Foundation

This remarkable pioneering book, *The Coming Interspiritual Age*, taps and brings to the fore this deeper evolutionary narrative that is the lead event facing humanity today. This evolutionary drama of our maturation as a species takes the reader through a holistic and comprehensive journey into the emergent frontier of Interspirituality. The authors, deeply inspired by the groundbreaking lifework of Brother Wayne Teasdale, brilliantly help the reader read the “signs of our time” and experience the enormity of our current shift to the long-emerging Age of Interspirituality. Building on advances from Brother Wayne’s life in global and interreligious dialogue—the awakening of the global heartmind—the authors focus our attention on the most profound evolutionary moment facing humanity today, our individual and collective crossing into the dilated global space of Interspirituality. In this respect the supreme activism of our time is to be in touch with this lead event in our human journey, to awaken our hearts to our primal unifying source, to our deep interconnectivity, to the challenges of entering a higher form of shared nonviolent culture through the literacy of global dialogue in which our entire human family may flourish together sharing our sacred earth. This book deserves to be widely read on a global scale as we discover, enter, and co-create our new shared story of our human evolutionary journey.

— Ashok Gangadean, PhD, Co-Convenor of the World Commission on Global Consciousness and Spirituality, Margaret Gest, Professor of Global Philosophy (Haverford College), Director of the Margaret Gest Center for Interreligious Dialogue, Founder-Director of the Global Dialogue Institute; author *Awakening Global Enlightenment: The Maturation of our Species*

As a colleague of Dr. Jonas Salk, whose famous “bio-philosophy” held that our survival as a species depends on our capacity to imagine and anticipate the future and, choosing among clear alternatives, thus co-creating, with nature, our destiny—I see this same wisdom in the message of *The Coming Interspiritual Age*. Like Johnson and Ord, Salk predicted that the most important adaptive mechanism for humankind would be a growing ability to collaborate and cooperate. If the religions of the world can apply this evolutionary point of view to their philosophical, cultural, social, and psychological problems, and experientially draw wisdom from the primordial ground of being that underlies them all, indeed there may be hope that the Great Traditions can make a positive contribution to our human future.

— Michael Jaliman, Founder, True North Advisers

A major contribution to the emerging interface of science, evolution, and spirituality—and its vast implications for the human race.

— Stephan Rechtschaffen MD, and Annette Knopp
Founders, Blue Spirit Costa Rica

Modernity has become obsessed with slicing, dicing, chopping, and dividing reality into tiny bits of data and, as a result, our world has become increasingly polarized, fragmented, and fractured. It hurts to be alive today. This magnificent book includes a sweeping diagnosis of our imbalanced condition and offers a powerful vision to heal the broken heart of humanity and unify the spirit of our species.

— Rafael Nasser, author *Under One Sky*

Sacred Activism

Profound heart and deep intellect inform every page of this rich and beautiful book. May it have the success it deserves and open the minds and hearts who come to it.

— Andrew Harvey, author
The Hope: a Guide to Sacred Activism and Radical Passion

The Coming Interspiritual Age by Kurt Johnson and David Robert Ord is simply extraordinary. This much-needed book will change the discourse on religion and spirituality. Especially for the younger generation, who no longer recognize themselves in the traditional narratives that world religions are offering them, this book provides hope. It offers a new vision of spirituality and addresses the personal and societal implications of the possibilities that arise from this new way. The future will be interspiritual and this will be our textbook.

— Adam Bucko, Founder, Reciprocity Foundation,
co-author *New Monasticism Manifesto* and, with Matthew Fox,
Occupy Spirituality: A Radical Vision for a New Generation

The Coming Interspiritual Age is a timely gift for a world facing environmental, economic, and geopolitical crises—all of which can be seen as a spiritual crisis. There is a spiritual awakening organically happening amidst this, transcending cultures and religions and giving birth to new possibilities for all of humanity. The Coming Interspiritual Age is a brilliant and comprehensive exploration of the complexity, dangers, and promise of this chaotic and profound time.

— Phillip M. Hellmich, author *God and Conflict: a Search for Peace in a Time of Crisis*; Director of Peace, The Shift Network

Islam

Br Wayne Teasdale's momentous legacy of mystical ecumenism is powerfully amplified and elaborated in this sprawling work of historical, scientific and spiritual synthesis.

— Pir Zia Inayat-Khan, Spiritual Leader, the Sufi Order International

In this truly panoramic book, Kurt Johnson and David Robert Ord place Interspirituality within the whole vista of our global human history. They continue Wayne Teasdale's heart-centered vision of our underlying mystical unity, showing how it naturally belongs to the evolution of human consciousness. The challenge facing us all is how to implement this vital vision in our present time of collective crisis. This valuable book helps us to understand why Interspirituality is so central to our shared destiny.

— Llewellyn Vaughan-Lee PhD, Sufi teacher, author *The Prayer of the Heart in Christian and Sufi Mysticism* and many other books

Good News for Postmodern Humanity! Dancing through millennia of human biological and spiritual evolution, *The Coming Interspiritual Age* offers a compelling and comprehensive peek towards a positive future: stories shared rather than dogmas dividing, consciousness expanding to include global compassion rather than globalized consumerism. This is a book for all who are looking beyond interfaith (bare) tolerance to a larger vision of what makes us all human.

— Neil Douglas-Klotz, author *Desert Wisdom: A Nomad's Guide to Life's Big Questions from the Heart of the Native Middle East and The Sufi Book of Life*

Christianity

A significant sign of our times is the quest to make a leap of consciousness from religious ideologies to a deeper spiritual consciousness and practice. As Jung warned, “only the mystics bring creativity to religion itself.” This book contributes to that important leap by celebrating our mystical roots that the authors believe can heal the split of science and religion and of religions against religions. This ambitious book joins the multiple efforts at interspirituality in our time to celebrate a mystical awakening that can move us from the religions of consumerism and materialism that dominate our culture with the cynicism and despair and addiction they spawn to something more resembling a full-hearted life. It invites us to new and more ancient ways of living our sacred lives in and on behalf of this sacred earth. I welcome it!

— Matthew Fox, author of the inter-religious classics
Coming of the Cosmic Christ and One River, Many Wells,
and recently The Pope's War, The Hidden Spirituality of Men,
Hildegard of Bingen: A Saint for Our Times, and other books

In the face of life on the precipice of unimaginable calamity, here is a book of authentic hope—a work of expansive, integrative scholarship woven through and through with heart and spirit; a visionary book with its feet on the ground. *The Coming Interspiritual Age* is a compelling read, an engaging experience; a book to be lived with; a book with the potential to change your life, to change our lives, and with them the future of humanity. If I were you, I'd start reading it today.

— Rev Canon Charles P. Gibbs,
Executive Director, United Religions Initiative

I really cannot exaggerate the value and importance of this book. This is where we are going, and we might as well go informed and enlightened! My heart leaps, and my mind expands as I read this book.

— Fr Richard Rohr, OFM, author *The Naked Now* and *Everything Belongs*; Center for Action and Contemplation and
Rohr Institute

If some scholars insist that “God is Not One,” Johnson and Ord respond “Oh yes He/She/It is!” Religious differences are real, but they do not obstruct, indeed they nurture, religious dialogue. Drawing on contemporary science (biology, physics, and brain studies), philosophy, the teachings of mystics and of religious activists, this book makes a strong case that an “interspiritual age” is both coming and needs to come soon. For both seekers and academics, this is a rewarding, challenging, and inspiring read.

— Paul F. Knitter, Paul Tillich Professor of Theology,
World Religions, and Culture, Union Theological Seminary

The Coming Interspiritual Age provides an essential understanding of the roots of the current spiritual-religious context and the evolution of consciousness affecting every sector of society and culture. It inspires deeper contemplative awareness of the inherent interrelatedness of all being and a vision for the future of the global human family. A book to be shared and discussed!

— Robert G. Toth, Past Executive Director,
Merton Institute for Contemplative Living

Judaism

The Coming Interspiritual Age is a masterful blend of science and heart. It serves as both a wake-up call to the urgency of our global predicament and a potent dose of hope in our ability to come together to repair the world. Kurt Johnson and David Robert Ord eloquently build a case not only for the evolutionary imperative of interspirituality but the great joy that comes when we remember that we already are interconnected, and ever shall be.

— Mirabai Starr, author *God of Love, A Guide
to the Heart of Judaism, Christianity and Islam*

A new world needs a new worldview and Kurt Johnson and David Robert Ord's *The Coming Interspiritual Age* is just that. If you are looking for a map of the unfolding spiritual landscape of tomorrow, this is it. Read this book. Then read it again.

— Rabbi Rami Shapiro, author
The Sacred Art of Lovingkindness and Rabbi Rami's Guide to God

Hinduism

“Man is a transitional being. He is not final. The step from man to superman is the next approaching achievement in the earth's evolution.” Sri Aurobindo wrote these words a century ago. The FUTURE presses and will not let us lag behind. Its Presence is palpable. The authors of this book sense the urgency of our destiny...and bring together the myriad strands that could hasten the process.

— Aster Patel, Governing Board,
the Auroville (India) Foundation and author *The Presence of Time*

Panoramic in scope and profound in its incisive probing, *The Coming Interspiritual Age* offers us a vision of hope and unity to shape this millennium. The authors identify Wayne Teasdale as a visionary who helped crystalize the interspiritual movement that seeks to develop a progressive spiritual template for our human advancement. Read it and act on it, for, through understanding the role of “consciousness” in the evolutionary process, you will not only shape history but perhaps life itself. This is a pivotal moment in history, and this book is meant to help us understand the awesome power we hold in our minds, hearts, and hands. Reading it will turn on the bulb of spiritual enlightenment for you!

— Russill Paul, author, *Jesus in the Lotus* and *The Yoga of Sound*

Buddhism

This compelling and accessible new work is a tremendous contribution to the emerging field of global spirituality and the evolution of enlightened wisdom for us today. I am moved and impressed by the breadth and depth of the authors' offering here, and recommend it heartily to anyone interested in spirituality and consciousness. In the context of inevitable globalization and multiculturalism, this brilliant and inspiring book comprehensively documents the trend toward a global unity consciousness, makes crystal clear the gifts the Wisdom Traditions can bring to this global discussion, and challenges all domains—religion, science, economics, governance—to develop a profound sense of responsibility to the collective heart and soul, body and mind of humanity.

I highly commend the authors, dedicated spiritual practitioners themselves, for directly challenging the established religions and their adherents to go deeply into the experiential heart and mystical consciousness of their traditions and refine their understanding of their place in our diverse yet interdependent world. In making available a comprehensive view of developmental

history and how the characteristics of this current time reflect the past, it reveals how we can profoundly learn from those integral dynamics, laying out how a modern interspiritual outlook and journey can be accomplished both within traditions as well as in new and innovative structures. Read this book and you'll be better for it.

— Lama Surya Das, author *Awakening the Buddha Within*,
Buddha Standard Time, and other books;
Founder, Dzogchen Center and Dzogchen Osel Ling

This is a beautifully written panorama of the spiritual zeitgeist of our times and an eloquent description of the emerging interspiritual aesthetic and ethic that is bubbling up throughout the world. As the authors put it: "...interspirituality is a call for radical and universal exploration into the subtle realms of consciousness and the deepest regions of the heart. This involves plumbing exactly what unifying principles—what Archimedean points of unity—lie beneath the societal history of our species." This book echoes the intention of the Spiritual Paths Foundation and the Snowmass Interspiritual Dialog work that bring together contemplative teachers from many traditions. In our meditations we experience the marvelous diversity of contemplative method and experience. Our merging consciousness feels like circular ripples of water intersecting and overlapping from multiple pebbles dropped in the same pond.

— Ed Bastian, PhD, Spiritual Paths Foundation,
author *InterSpiritual Meditation and Living Fully Dying Well*; publisher *Meditations for InterSpiritual Practice*

Indigenous

The Coming Interspiritual Age is sublime in vision, prophetic in wisdom, an inherently contemplative exploration into the most salient evolutionary choices we face as humankind. A masterful refined interdisciplinary book, I consider Kurt Johnson and David Robert Ord's scholarship a decisive word on the a-priori role of self-reflexive consciousness in the process of human spiritualization. I foresee the widespread reading of *The Coming Interspiritual Age* catalyzing beneficent societal transformation on a global scale of service beyond our seven generations. This book is a heartfelt contribution to re-Membering ourselves as a compassionate and peacefully cooperative planetary species. I enthusiastically recommend it to all earnest seekers and servers of the Great Work!

— Don Oscar Miro-Quesada, Founder,
The Heart of the Healer (THOTH) Foundation

Humanism

Humanists will read this book with interest and appreciate its wide coverage of many writers who work to distinguish spirituality from religions. They will also appreciate the very readable treatment of the development of the sciences and the treatment of the evolution of our planet currently most complex in the *Homo sapiens* species. Humanists will have more difficulty, however, when the authors speak of scientific as well as spiritual "knowing." They will also have difficulty reading of consciousness as a oneness state and also as an interconnected state in the same sentence. Some humanists, after this extensive exposure to "developmental" and "integral"

thinking may be even less likely to favor “spirituality.” Another way of putting this would be to say that humanists are much more likely to spend time with Julian Huxley than with Aldous Huxley. Felix Adler was indeed a key figure in moving beyond traditional religion to an ethical movement, and his Kantian idealism may have some mystical elements. Those who have built upon him in different humanist movements, however, retain much more of his stress on ethics. Their nontheism is a starting point, certainly not central or a goal. Universal human rights are a goal rather than an inference from mystical or spiritual experiences.

— Robert Tapp, Dean & Faculty
Chair Emeritus, The Humanist Institute

The Coming Interspiritual Age sensitively teases from ethical culture’s message of infinite interdependence its special contribution to the 21st century discourse in the coming Age. Emphasizing the visionary aspect of ethical culture founder Felix Adler, the book cogently articulates a possible roadmap for humanists along the path of humanity’s quickening higher consciousness.

— Martha Gallahue, Ethical Culture Leader, National Ethical Service at The United Nations; Faculty, National Peace Academy USA

Interfaith

The Coming Interspiritual Age is a hugely ambitious project—an extended apologia for interspirituality. Extremely readable, it draws widely from history and literature, ancient and modern, and builds on the work of Teilhard de Chardin, Brother Wayne Teasdale, and Ken Wilber, among others. Johnson, a distinguished scientist who has spent much of his life as a monk, is a student of evolutionary biology with a vast background in anthropology, philosophy, and comparative religion. The book comes with its own strong point of view and will be cut to pieces by predictable critics decrying more new age religion. Whether or not you agree with it, though, the writing is immaculate, the arguments compelling, the vision hopeful. Anyone interested in the future of religion (and why so much religion isn’t working today) will enjoy reading this book.

— Paul Chaffee, Editor The Interfaith Observer

If one can use The Coming Interspirituality Age as a map and guidepost, then there exists the possibility that it will light the way towards a global interfaith and intercultural peaceful future for humankind.

— Alison van Dyk, Chair and
Executive Director, Temple of Understanding

The arc of religious history bends toward what the authors of this book call ‘interspirituality.’ In breathtaking detail, the book chronicles that long and continuing narrative and documents the transformation of consciousness—individual and collective—that it entails. We desperately need that transformation, and we need this book to fully comprehend it.

— Philip Goldberg, author *American Veda: From Emerson and the Beatles to Yoga and Meditation, How Indian Spirituality Changed the West*

The *Coming Interspiritual Age* is a very valuable contribution, articulating contexts for understanding the emergence of interspiritualities, acknowledging some of the key contributors, and providing many reference points for further study and exploration.

— Neill Walker, Co-Founder and Co-Director, Edinburgh International Centre for Spirituality and Peace

Wondering what is happening in the interfaith/integral/interspirituality world? Then this is the book for you. It offers a grand perspective, a way of seeing our human journey, a heart-felt vision of what is happening now, and hope for the future. You'll learn a lot and gain direction!

— M. Darrol Bryant PhD, Huston Smith Award winner 2011, Director, Centre for Dialogue and Spirituality in the World Religions, Renison University College/University of Waterloo, Canada; author *Religion in a New Key*

As founder of a seminary that trains Interspiritual ministers, I am deeply grateful to Kurt Johnson and David Robert Ord, who offer a comprehensive and panoramic view of the landscape that gave rise to the emergence of interspirituality and insightful glimpses of where we may be going. Anyone who cares about the evolution of consciousness and spirituality should read this book.

— Rev. Diane Berke, Founder,
One Spirit Learning Alliance/One Spirit Seminary

Birthing in this unprecedented time of breakdown/revolution/awakening/ and transformation—sometimes referred to as the divine chaos of creation—this remarkable work both individually and collectively reminds us of where we came from and expressively defines where we are going. The *Coming Interspiritual Age* focuses on the shift of human consciousness, the shift in the heart and anticipates what the Heavens are asking Humanity to become in the here and now. Trailblazing the way forward, the authors—grounded in science and guided by intuition—present with clarity, thoroughness, and grace a framework for us to co-create our new spiritual narrative from a place of one heart, one mind. This book is a must read!

— Marsha Glazebrook,
Temple of Understanding and Founder, MetanoiaNow

Divine Feminine

The *Coming Interspiritual Age* identifies one of the most important evolutionary shifts in human religious life—the move away from doctrine and blind belief to the embrace of experiential knowledge, a turning inward to the source of knowledge. The book describes the shift from a paradigm of separation, exclusiveness, and religious competition to one of unity, inclusiveness, and cooperation, one that allows an integration of the practices of multiple religious traditions, without threatening any. This burgeoning spirituality brings great hope and promise for the future.

— Dena Merriam, Founder, The Global Peace Initiative of Women; Founding Member and Convener, The Contemplative Alliance

Science and Religion

A comprehensive overview of the central themes, history, cosmology, and key leaders in the nascent field of interspirituality. Full of vital information that remains as yet too little known, *The Coming Interspiritual Age* is an apt title for the evolutionary transformation that is rapidly emerging across spirituality, religion, and science today.

— William Keepin PhD, co-editor, *The Song of the Earth: A Synthesis of the Scientific and Spiritual Worldviews*; author, *Divine Duality*

Teachers of Awakened Awareness

The Coming Interspiritual Age is an important new book and enjoyable to read. Often religious beliefs that all proclaim love, forgiveness, and unity have ended up dividing us and even turning us to war. Here in this book we can read about the past history and the new inner and outer movements of hope emerging today. This book highlights the importance of unity consciousness that can be developed by all people to be able to recognize and embrace our particular cultural and religious beliefs and yet recognize our underlying unity and our common community.

— Loch Kelly, Founder, Awake Awareness Institute

A comprehensive handbook to move from tribal-based, sectarian religion to the actual perennial wisdom based in mystical experiences that give rise to love for all creatures. It is a welcome perspective, coming as it is at a time when life and death for our species, as well as many others, are on the line.

— Catherine Ingram, author *In the Footsteps of Gandhi*, *Passionate Presence*, and *A Crack in Everything*

The Coming Interspiritual Age explores the impact of awakening to our true nature of unlimited, ever-present Awareness in great detail, exploring its social, political, environmental, and economic implications with depth, clarity and honesty. This book brings the perennial understanding of the reality that all beings and things share to the core issues that face our world culture today, holding up a mirror to society and asking questions that we cannot afford to ignore. It is a beautiful and courageous work which will, I'm sure, have far reaching implications.

— Rupert Spira, author *Presence*, *The Transparency of Things*, *Conversations on Nonduality*, and other books

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Kurt Johnson
David Robert Ord

The Horizon

“A house divided against itself cannot stand”

Abraham Lincoln, quoting Mark 3:25

THE DAWN OF THE THIRD MILLENNIUM PRESENTED HUMANKIND WITH a dilemma. Will the skill that has characterized our species and propelled its development continue to sustain us, or will competition for power and resources lead to escalating conflict and our eventual extinction?

The seriousness of the situation facing us is symbolized by the attack on the World Trade Center in 2001, carried out by a well-organized group trumpeting an extreme religious ideology. The event triggered a wave of conflict in which millions of adherents of one religious and cultural identity have been pitted against another. The calamitous events of 9/11 deepened a long history of intercultural and interreligious distrust, misunderstanding, and even outright hatred.

By the start of the second decade of the millennium, the global financial industry—absent any sense of accountability to the collective—capped an unsustainable cycle of greed and corruption, leaving the world’s economies close to financial collapse. Only the governments these commercial establishments appear to control prevented a disaster. The earnings of ordinary citizens were subsequently hijacked to bail out the perpetrators, none of whom were held accountable, thus buying time instead of enacting substantial change, not to mention increasing the disparity of the world’s haves and have-nots.

With the arrival of this Third Millennium, something else also began to crest. Throughout the Middle East, millions took to the streets—their only venue of enfranchisement in their cultures—demanding fundamental rights. By 2012 the demand for equitable sharing of resources had spread planet-wide. Forming a counterclaim on the world financial process, it sought to reverse consolidation of wealth in the hands of a few—a phenomenon that had been proceeding apace for at least a half century. The message was for everyone: what has been transpiring is simply unsustainable.

These eruptions parallel a wave that crested in the 18th century. After hundreds of years of unbridled monarchy and totalitarianism, there dawned a universal recognition of the self-evident rights of individuals. Sweeping through the 19th and 20th centuries, this tide of realization either removed monarchies or rendered them principally ceremonial.

Today we are witnessing a fresh eruption of self-evident truths, this time centered on what sharing implies within a community, with implications for access to resources.

As disconcerting as the current wave of social eruptions may be, such eruptions are to be expected in the context of our longer history. By at least the 18th century, with the rise of an evolutionary view of the world, humans had come to realize that our level of consciousness, self-awareness, and intelligence distinguished us from other species—most notably our ability to

problem-solve by identifying the relationship of cause and effect. This ability separated us from Earth's other creatures, allowing us to out-compete all our competitors and extend our civilization to nearly every corner of the planet.

As we face an array of new challenges, the same conscious potential that enabled us to fashion spears and arrowheads, master fire, and transform grunts and gestures into language stands ready to serve us as it did in primordial times.

An Uptick in Consciousness

Until recently the insights that can enable us to remake ourselves in the face of our present challenges remained the domain of academics and think tanks. The other 7 billion of us on this planet continued to just “keep on living,” in extremes ranging from subsistence in poverty on the one hand to engaging in rampant consumerism and a culture of waste on the other. Overall, the masses had no reason to concern themselves with the planet's larger problems. This is what has begun to change.

Some 13.75 billion years of development have followed the birth of the cosmos in the Big Bang. On our little way station in the Milky Way, planet Earth began its own journey some 4.45 billion years ago, with life arising around 3.8 billion years ago to challenge the eternal ticking down inherent in the universe's physical properties.

At just the right distance from our star the Sun, with the ideal size and mass, and protected from most space debris by the gravity of the gas giant Jupiter, we have enjoyed 60 million unimpeded years of evolution since the last major asteroid collision that wiped out the dinosaurs and permitted the emergence of our species. However, only in the last 10,000 years have we witnessed the arising of what we call “civilization”—the crucible in which all of our present challenges are unfolding.

The uptick in consciousness on our planet at this moment is happening irrespective of station or calling. The masses are feeling things they can barely articulate. Two years ago, in the streets of first Tunisia, then Egypt, people were willing to die for a dream they had only begun to glimpse. In Cairo's Tahrir Square, Christians and Moslems prayed together, using expressions such as “oneness” and “interconnectedness.”

While these uprisings didn't miraculously remove the realities of the political and economic regimes under which people lived, the resonance was identical to that generated by expressions such as “freedom” and “human dignity” during the Renaissance of the 14th and 15th centuries—and again when much of the world turned from centuries of monarchy to experiments in democracy a few centuries later.

By 2011, beginning in New York and spreading globally, a new banner had been planted in the streets proclaiming “Occupy.” Other street signs were emblazoned with terms such as “we,” “us,” “ours,” and “collective.” Again, this didn't immediately lessen the grip of institutions over the common person, but it points toward the arising of a new consciousness at the street level. That the Occupy movement racked up over half a billion entries on Google within a month of its inception is a reflection of this powerful current.

Let's not forget that we mammals, which today dominate the world, once were small, barely noticeable creatures scurrying around at the feet of the ruling dinosaurs. When realizations

permeate the street, change is afoot, even if it may still be long coming. A new unity consciousness, a sense of the collective, of “we,” is arising on the planet. What its structures and cultures will be is as yet anyone’s guess.

The Arising Globalization and Multiculturalism

In tandem with the move toward the democratization of the world, we are witnessing a trend toward globalization and multiculturalism. Of the world’s 7 billion people, at least 70% believe globalization is inevitable. Worldwide, more than 60% believe that mutual understanding and multiculturalism will be important to making this transition a smooth one for our planet.

The big question is whether the global era that’s dawning will be kind to the world’s masses or take the form of an economic tyranny, extending the unsustainable runaway consumerism that propels the wealth of just a few. Will it foster a climate of caring for the world’s resources, or of profiteering under the rubric of “grow, grow, grow”? Unless there is a sense that we are a single people, we will undoubtedly end with a catastrophe in which not even the elite will be safe.

The issue is how to create a sense of identity larger than “my interests,” “my nation,” “my religion,” “my ethnic group.” A holistic world-centric view would be a tall order for much of the world. Yet terms such as “transnational,” “transcultural,” and “trans-traditional” are becoming the clarion calls of our generation.

Movements of oneness—of unity consciousness—are afoot in nearly every arena, from the protests in the streets to the emergence of a new science and technology. The quantum world, string theory, and now M-theory in physics are introducing us to a “vibratory” view of reality. A cosmology of potential multiverses and additional dimensions is also being proposed. With the heralded discovery of the universal Higgs-Boson energy field announced by physicists in 2012, science may be closer to understanding how “things” manifest “out of nothing.” New frontiers open before us that are immensely creative and promising, offering a vision of a world in which humanity’s capacity for self-consciousness is explored for the benefit of all, including the planet itself.

Religion and Spirituality

Although many of us tend to think of religion and spirituality in terms of what we know of churches, synagogues, temples, mosques, and ashrams, anthropologically the panorama of religion and spirituality represents the accumulated narratives of our species’ long epochs of development.

That one or another of these narratives is regarded by many as uniquely true is to be expected and perfectly natural, given that such narratives are subjective to the populations in which they have been handed down through millennia. This accounts for the self-satisfying feeling of possessing absolute truth as in the case, for instance, of the 9/11 suicide pilots as they plunged their hundreds of hapless victims into their targets.

Such narratives are anchored in a lens through which we all to some degree look, which we will refer to as magic-mythic. Having been part of who we are from the time of our hunter-gathering era, this lens originates in a world forgotten but still very much alive in our subconscious. The

mindset of primeval peoples who communed with nature spirits and ancestors still compels us, which is part of the attraction of stories such as Harry Potter, Star Wars, Star Trek, Lord of the Rings, and Narnia.

Today this lens abuts and impinges upon a different lens, one that emerged some six centuries ago: the scientific lens of the rational, testable, and verifiable. This more recent lens, which is the world of science and technology, has served us well, in many cases affording us improved health and wellbeing, not to mention greater comfort.

Simultaneously, the scientific lens has sometimes robbed us of the deeper world of wonder, including a sense of the magical, instead of skillfully integrating the two worlds so that both might enrich us, since each is fundamental to our makeup and hence to our potential.

It's also important to recognize that spirituality and religion, often confused, aren't the same. Spirituality differs from religion in its sense of unconditional value that's unaffected by circumstances. In spirituality, seen through the heart's unconditional lens, God is one.

Although historically the offspring of spirituality, religion is more focused on whose view of reality is correct. In religion, God isn't one. This is the antithesis of a prescription for a world that is both good and concerned for the interests and wellbeing of every creature.

However, as the millennium turned, a vision of interspirituality was emerging from within the world's religions. The result of the inner exploration of contemplatives, meditators, and mystics, along with those who seek to foster the advancement of their fellow humans, the vision draws on the commonality embedded in nearly all the world's Great Wisdom Traditions, both religious and spiritual.

As those who seeded the vision began talking to each other across continents and oceans, and between traditions and cultures, they discerned that their experience, though hugely diverse, was ultimately much the same. All shared a sense of profound interconnectedness, oneness, and a unity that transcended the boundaries of their theological traditions, cultural backgrounds, and historical narratives.

The commonality came as a surprise—and yet not a surprise, given that science and technology were also heading in the same direction. A new unity was emerging among the scientific disciplines, epitomized by the new physics and reflected in new modalities in the philosophy of science and the emerging integral theories of the interrelationship of everything.

As if serving as a harbinger of what was to come, the first book to clearly identify this trend and name it “interspirituality” appeared in 1999, at the cusp of the new millennium. As doors were opening worldwide and millions were stepping into the streets to imagine a new world, the stage had been set for a global dialogue.

The Journey

The word “interspirituality” was nonexistent until it was coined in 1999 by a Roman Catholic lay monk and pioneer interfaith leader, Brother Wayne Teasdale, in a book aptly entitled *The Mystic Heart: Discovering a Universal Spirituality in the World's Religions*. By 2004, when Brother Teasdale and colleagues introduced the perspective at the Parliament of the World's Religions in Barcelona, Spain, the term was still hardly known. Yet today an internet search for “interspirituality” or “interspiritual” calls up over 100,000 hits.

It's obvious to many that interspirituality—a more universal experience of the world's religions, emphasizing shared experiences of heart and unity consciousness—represents part of the world's ongoing movement toward globalization and multiculturalism. It can be seen as an inevitable response to globalization—be it welcomed, as in the case of advocates of an unfolding world culture and planetary economic system, or pushed back against by religious fundamentalists and parochialists of all kinds, including terrorists.¹

Brother Teasdale predicted that interspirituality would become the global spiritual view of our era:

The real religion of humankind can be said to be spirituality itself, because mystical spirituality is the origin of all the world religions. If this is so, and we believe it is, we might also say that interspirituality—the sharing of ultimate experiences across traditions—is the religion of the third millennium. Interspirituality is the foundation that can prepare the way for a planet-wide enlightened culture, and a continuing community among the religions that is substantial, vital, and creative.²

Today there are parallel discussions concerning globalization in all fields of human discourse, whether governance, economics, science, or sociology. Since all are interrelated, it's important we share some basic understanding of the many threads that are part of this unfolding. All stem from the fundamental basis of consciousness itself: the ability to recognize the relationship of cause and effect. There is a rather universal perception that many things are not well with the planet right now, leading to the question of what actions—indeed, what major shifts—might set matters right.

One of the goals of this book is to examine the roles of religion and spirituality in the globalization process in light of this wider international discussion. Such a mandate requires attention to many fields simultaneously, encompassing our current knowledge of cosmology, the breadth of scientific knowledge and consciousness studies, the fields of sociology, politics, history, and economics, and even pertinent statistics about what the world's citizenry (the pivotal “person on the street”) actually believes about the world in terms of why we are here and where we may be going.

Our hope is to place the vision of an emerging interspirituality in a wider international and cosmopolitan context for the first time. While such an understanding is important to the overall characterization of globalization and multiculturalism itself, it's also important to discerning whether the trend toward interspirituality is real and what it may imply for the future of religion and spirituality. Plus, it provides the first opportunity since 1999 to examine interspirituality, as identified by Brother Teasdale, as a phenomenon in itself.

We particularly wish to explore the experiential aspects of interspirituality. Not only may it change your life in a personal way; it may do so as part of the unfolding planetary trend toward globalization.

What is Interspirituality?

When one looks with what the early French aviator and author Antoine de Saint-Exupery referred to as “the eyes of the heart,” one's vision is tempered with understanding, love, and

compassion for one's fellow creatures. One sees the absolute value, which we might refer to as divinity, of everything.

In other words, one looks beyond categories—deeper than labels such as Christian, Jew, Muslim, Buddhist, black, white, gay, straight. Saints, sages, and heroes across the centuries have always understood that seeing with the eyes of the heart allows the greatest potential for understanding, thereby fostering unity consciousness.

Interspirituality is the natural discussion among human beings about what we are experiencing. In academic terms, it's the intersubjective discussion among us all about who we are, why we are here, and where we are going. In the context of religion, interspirituality is the common heritage of humankind's spiritual wisdom and the sharing of wisdom resources across traditions. In terms of our developing human consciousness, interspirituality is the movement of all these discussions toward the experience of profound interconnectedness, unity consciousness, and oneness.

A more heartfelt and experiential definition focuses on the deepest implications of these phrases, rolling them into a statement such as “a spirituality so based on the heart and unconditional love that it would be impossible to feel separate from anything.” This definition has profound ethical implications.

The recognition of interspirituality as recorded in *The Mystic Heart* was the result of the world's religious and spiritual leaders talking to each other, a discussion long overdue. In a very real way, interspirituality represents the culmination of years of international interfaith and ecumenical exchanges centered on the recognition of a common experience within all spiritual traditions—a sense of profound interconnectedness, and what this implies for how humans should behave both individually and collectively. This recognition is in no way divorced from the universal sense of unity that underpins the world's advance toward globalization and multiculturalism. There is a growing appreciation of the value of the world's religions talking to each other. In fact, a recent poll indicated that 80% of Americans felt it was important.³

The central challenge of the interspiritual experience is whether doctrinal and theological differences, which have traditionally pitted religious traditions against one another, can be considered secondary—or even left behind—in favor of an emphasis on the common understanding of love, service, and ethics that underpins all religions. This is a tall order, on a par with whether nationalistic allegiances, with their tendency toward competition and conflict (“fighting for your flag”), might fade, to be gradually replaced by an authentic world-centric holism.

Hope may be drawn from the fact that spiritual leaders in all the world's religious traditions point to interspirituality as the deepest of all spiritual exploration, testifying experientially to a sense of profound interconnectedness and oneness. They also claim this experience ultimately renders secondary the importance of beliefs, creeds, and theologies. It is enough, they say, to truly discover and live in loving recognition of one another.

Thus the leaders at the heart of interspirituality challenge adherents to traditions worldwide to step up to this new understanding of religion and spirituality—a frontier not unlike the ideals of true economic egalitarianism, the abandonment of militant nationalism, nuclear disarmament, and other ethical gold standards advanced by the secular voices of globalization and multiculturalism. They are the ideals that propel the defining edge of human development.

Although they could be considered utopian, the question is: how high are we willing to raise our bar?

Differences

Central to globalization is the fact that our two primary ways of knowing—the external explorations of science and the internal explorations of religion and spirituality—don't as yet agree much about reality. There are important crossovers between these distinctive ways of knowing, most of which are relatively new and part of the arising globalization process itself. There has also been a long-term trend toward holism. Again, such trends are only now coming to fruition in this time of globalization.

The diversity of social structures and belief systems on planet Earth is astounding. Central to the current planetary dynamic is the reality that the world's major cultures, whether defined by political systems or religious foundations, often don't agree about basic aspects of day-to-day reality. This is mostly because each is also struggling to balance the historical elements of its religious or political heritages with the scientific and technological advances of its particular region.

On the surface, at the level of creeds and apocalyptic predictions, the various traditions appear to have little in common, so that even their everyday religious practices fundamentally differ. But with the advent of international communication systems, we have become acutely aware not only of the startling diversity in the views of the citizenries of individual nations, but also of striking similarities among citizens across all kinds of national and ethnic boundaries. This reflects a world in transition from ethnocentric identities to a world-centric identity.

Those religions steeped in creeds and theologies tend to offer a primarily magic-mythic narrative of reality. This is only natural given the ancient underpinnings of human consciousness and the social structures that arose to reflect these. Many of the historic religious narratives provide a cast of celestial characters, governances, and systems of reward and punishment that lay claim to entire populations' belief in absolute truth. This is one kind of religion. There are also religions that explore consciousness and its relationship to the pursuit of love and high ethical ideals, but that provide no narratives of celestial characters or end-time scenarios. There are of course mixings of these two general modalities.

It's important to remember that religion and spirituality are far from identical, as is apparent from the statistic that more than a third of the world's population define themselves as “spiritual but not religious.”⁴ In general, the tendency of religion is to value creed over deed, whereas the tendency of spirituality is to emphasize deed over creed. This is a conundrum.

Part of the dynamic of today's globalization is the fact that the person on the street often subscribes to ideas that are entirely different from either their region's science or their local religiously based culture. One of the biggest surprises in preparing this book has been to learn from opinion polls that what would seem to have been proven by science or claimed by various religions holds little sway among the world's citizens. This has been a startling revelation. The implications can be seen in the eruptions of fresh thought that have characterized the beginning of this millennium—from the Arab Spring to the Occupy Wall Street movement. In such

movements we are receiving a glimpse with new gravitas of what might be possible for our species.

Why Humans Disagree

While myriads worldwide can agree on common patterns we all observe, we tend to differ greatly about what accounts for these patterns. Most of the differences in our views of reality, including those that have led to wars, boil down to how successfully we are able to link an effect with a cause. Discerning the process that has accounted for a pattern should be the goal not only of science but also of common sense. The crises we face on the planet today differ only in complexity and degree from the challenges that faced our cave-dwelling ancestors. If spear or arrow tips were designed to kill game, and a certain tip didn't penetrate a creature sufficiently, an appropriate change was made to the fashioning of the tip—a change on which the survival of the tribe depended.

The right diagnosis is key to arriving at solutions. In seeking the cause, our point of entry is crucial, for the lens through which we view the problem will influence what we see, especially in cultural and religious terms. As an example, the 14th century person viewed the great plague of that century—the Black Death—either as God's wrath (the magic-mythic lens) or as caused by a germ (the rational scientific lens). Today we are still navigating between these two lenses as we move into the current millennium.

The capacity we most need, which is the ability to investigate issues from multiple perspectives, is the capacity we often most lack. Yet the ability to diagnose from a variety of perspectives would prove one of the greatest boons for the successful advancement of globalization and multiculturalism.

The international debate centered on biological evolution versus theistic creation is a classic example. While all can agree that *Homo sapiens* is a mammal, we differ on the process that accounts for this—biological evolution, creationism, or a blend of the two.

Another example is experiences in consciousness. Historically, many have reported seeing visions of Jesus, Mary, Buddha, and a variety of religious figures. Others report seeing pink elephants after long bouts of drinking or while taking drugs. Depending on who you consult, you'll either be told these are all visual hallucinations, or hallucinations in the case of pink elephants but not the religious figures.

In reviewing the relatively new field of consciousness studies, it turns out that most findings are still based on asking individuals what they experience, then extrapolating from there. The diversity in this is astounding. The question is how we will move toward a global holism, given the confusion and disagreement.

The dilemma is no different in global problem solving. Although the rational scientific paradigm proclaims itself capable of solving the world's immense challenges, problems continue to spiral out of control. Nevertheless, the rationalist establishment is hard-pressed to agree with the spiritual traditions that what's needed is a post-rational conversation combining the fruits of the scientific (external) and spiritual (internal) ways of "knowing." The rational establishment often identifies the claims of spirituality in terms of "inner knowing" as superstition belonging to the pre-rational, and there is no further progress.

We can agree with the rationalist position that for most of human history, humankind has viewed reality through a magic-mythic lens that in so many ways has stymied progress and led to conflict instead of moving our species forward on the path of consciousness. This lens still commands most of the world's artistic and entertainment modalities, as witnessed by our bestselling superheroes and sagas, from Superman to Star Wars and Harry Potter.

When the strictly rational lens developed, it became just as deeply entrenched as the magic-mythic, so that over time the two ways of knowing separated into two conflicting cultures that are at total loggerheads in their understanding of reality and their resulting public policies.

What is trying to arise now in the world globalization process is an integrative or holistic lens that combines the best aspects of both of its precursors. Yet the need for a new holistic discussion is still widely unacknowledged.

Healthy Change, Unhealthy Change

Every historical change contains the seeds of a positive or negative result, and history seems to have meandered between these extremes. This is especially the case for the person on the street, who has so often been the casualty of war. A revolution based on high ideals one day is hijacked the next day, sending the energy in a totally different direction—a phenomenon seen in the French and Russian revolutions, which were enveloped in tragedy. Even America's 9/11 moment of unity, when there was so much international goodwill toward the United States, was hijacked for political ends, resulting in greater division instead of a coming together.

Worldwide, humans individually and collectively long for change. We seek something truly new, even at the cost of great consequence, not excluding death. This desire for change is what's driving the phenomenon of the street protestor, chosen as Time magazine's 2011 Person of the Year. What this new reality would be is far from clear, its precise structures undefined, requiring well thought-out solutions. Currently this global movement exists on the edge of a precipice, sustained only by a sense that something new is trying to arise from some deep gravitas erupting in our species collectively.

The interspiritual trend emerging as part of globalization and multiculturalism is born of incremental steps from interfaith and ecumenical exchange, raising the potential of a trans-traditional experience of spirituality. However, this trend could still have variously fruitful results. Just as economic globalization could result not in a growing egalitarianism but in a shift of most of the wealth to relatively few (which currently seems to be the case), religious globalization could take a pathological turn and result in a dangerous faceoff between conflicting views of reality and the societies that foster them.

However, if interspirituality could take root in a heart-based experiential discovery of the "universal spirituality within the world's religions"—the claim of Brother Teasdale—this could be a momentous positive. It could make religion an asset for humanity's future and not the liability it has so often proven to be.

Three doomsday scenarios currently confront our species: being wiped out by wars based on religious allegiance, wiped out by wars based on national allegiance, or wiped out by the polluting and warming of our planet to the point that it becomes unlivable. How religious experience plays out in the world is linked to all of these.

[1](#) Surveys show that it's difficult to measure how many people worldwide hold uncompromising fundamentalist viewpoints. This is because about 50% of those polled believe in only one religion and think they are right, while the other 50% view dedication to one religion as a potential social danger (Gallup, Pew 2005/2007).

[2](#) *The Mystic Heart* [hereafter, "MH"] p 26; quotations from the book *The Mystic Heart* (copyright 1999 by Wayne Teasdale) reprinted with permission of New World Library, Novato, CA. www.newworldlibrary.com; see Teasdale, W. 1999 in Bibliography.

[3](#) PRRI/RNS Religion News, 2011.

[4](#) PRRI/RNS Religion News, 2011.

The Modern Discussion

“A universal theology is impossible.
But a universal experience is not
only possible, but necessary!”

A Course in Miracles

IF THERE IS AN EMERGING INTERSPIRITUAL AGE, AS BROTHER TEASDALE suggested, it will be in the context of a religious and spiritual discussion that can't be separated from the secular, non-religious discussion. It also can't be separated from the worldwide academic developmental discussion about whether there are identifiable historical trends that suggest where our future may be headed.

Neither can the religious and spiritual discussion be separated from cosmology and what it tells us about our origin, the arising of the human brain, and the nature of consciousness. Given that all of these are inextricably interrelated, a comprehensive understanding spanning the time from our cosmic origin to the current complex difficulties that face our species is essential.

To have such a discussion, we are required to embrace all of the emergent threads that are relevant today: the evolutionary consciousness movement, the outgrowths of the developmentalist⁵ movement (Integral theory and Spiral Dynamics), the scientific debates on the new physics and the search for a workable modern metaphysic, and the implications of the grassroots revolution in social movements,⁶ and see where an emerging interspirituality might play a pivotal role.

The Essence of Interspirituality Isn't New

Interspirituality itself isn't new—just as evolution wasn't new when its great synthesizer, Charles Darwin, changed history by popularizing the phrase “evolution by means of natural selection.” Darwin's synthesis had many precursors, combining at least a half dozen earlier hypotheses and drawing on the ideas of many, from the great Swiss scientist Augustin de Candolle (who cast it all as “Nature's War”) to Alfred Russell Wallace (with whom Darwin shared the announcement at the Linnaean Society in 1858). In any event, what followed was a global gamechanger.

Brother Teasdale's naming of interspirituality was preceded by a host of earlier visionaries and leaders in all the world's religious and spiritual traditions. Interestingly, the names on this roster aren't the same as the names of the founders of the great religions, which all arose in what has become known as the Axial Age, the period from 800-200 BCE.

The forerunners of interspirituality were visionaries who realized that a common experiential thread underpins all spiritual experience and is the harbinger of an eventual “great coming together.” As Brother Wayne Teasdale wrote in 1999:

We are at the dawn of a new consciousness, a radically fresh approach to our life as the human family in a fragile world. This journey is what spirituality is really about. We are not meant to remain just where we are. We cannot depend on our culture either to guide and support us in our quest. We must do the hard work of clarification together ourselves.

This revolution will be the task of the Interspiritual Age. The necessary shifts in consciousness require a new approach to spirituality that transcends past religious cultures of fragmentation and isolation. We need to understand, to really grasp at an elemental level that the definitive revolution is the spiritual awakening of humankind.”⁷

Teasdale recognized that this emerging paradigm would need to embrace all of humanity’s experience, knowledge, and capacities, including the intellect and deep subjective experience. It would need to make available to the world, at last, all of the fruits of the millennia of inquiry and discovery. It was a sweeping vision, and Teasdale’s book, with a Foreword by His Holiness the Dalai Lama, was an instant success.

How do we account for such a burgeoning phenomenon? Dr José Argüelles, author of *The Transformative Vision: Reflections on the Nature and History of Human Expression*, writes that subjective visionaries are people ahead of their time who cognize reality. Later the truth of their vision is recognized (“re-cognized”) by the wider world.

Convinced that the primary vector of our species’ ultimate spiritual and ethical development wasn’t any one of the world’s countless spiritual paths, but the shared direction of all of them, Teasdale coined the words “interspirituality” and “intermysticism” and put forward the view that their historical development has been a single experience on behalf of all humankind—an unfolding existential convergence continuing to this day and defining an aspect of the maturation of our species. After the publication of his books, he worked tirelessly to initiate institutions and structures that could support this historic anthropological recognition concerning human development.

As with all humans, Brother Teasdale was influenced by the social circumstances and assumptions of his day. The world’s interreligious and ecumenical discussions were then in relative infancy, peopled by pioneers from the ecclesiastical ranks of the world’s religions. Ultimately living as a solitary lay monk under the auspices of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Chicago, Brother Teasdale explored the contemplative environments of monastic settings across a number of traditions both in the United States and India. Mentored closely by interfaith pioneers Father Bede Griffiths⁸ in India and Father Thomas Keating of the American Cistercian order, he also became a close friend of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. Although the call of his writing is clear, its style and settings reflect an atmosphere unfamiliar to most outside certain Christian, Hindu, and Buddhist monastic circles. Brother Teasdale’s sannyasa lifestyle as a religious renunciant—replete with the wearing of monastic robes and use of other ecclesiastical formalities typical of the period—brought him into the circles of great religious contemplatives and mystics of his day. Paradoxically, this seemed to many to suggest that he was seeking out the very world his writings aimed to make obsolete. However, in *A Monk in the World* he

envisioned a role for monastics in which they are completely engaged in the world, leading an interspiritual movement. Still, they were monastics nonetheless, and in that sense set apart.

To those who knew him, Brother Teasdale's complete dedication to the trans-traditional contemplative life and its relationship to sacred service was obvious. In his everyday demeanor, he was extremely humble, never overawed or impressed by what he himself was experiencing or the vision he was putting forward, and often asked friends what these might mean. He had a keen sense of humor and was a jokester to the amusement of many of his friends. Even with the subsequent explosion of interspirituality, it's likely he would have continued his own monastic lifestyle had he lived. It's equally likely that had he entered the interfaith-interspiritual scene as it appears across the world today, he might have pioneered the many forms of experimental interspirituality that now eclipse the monastic setting. A "holy" man by whatever standard people have historically understood this term, he had the ability to see the big picture—or what futurists call the "meta level."

Brother Teasdale wished to address head-on whether, through cooperation and co-creation, the diverse inner experiences and wisdom of our species would become a transformational asset for our future or a further source of competition and discord, contributing to our biological extinction. An outspoken and challenging voice, he insisted it would take great courage for members of any world religion or spiritual tradition to follow a more universal path. Nevertheless, he was convinced that this path is the destiny of all the world's religions.

This commitment undoubtedly explains his devotion to monasticism, because it appeared to him that only by living a sacrificial life, with full devotion to this interspiritual vision, could he advance his cause. He wanted to bring spirituality back to its experiential essence, most particularly those aspects that result in exemplary ethical and world-serving behavior. He believed that in the third millennium interspirituality and intermysticism would become the norm for humankind.

The Core of Deepest Spiritual Experience Is Always the Same

At the core of Brother Teasdale's vision was his conviction that a universal unity consciousness lies at the heart of all inner exploration. Since it arises naturally from all spiritual paths, he believed it would prove to be the great globalizer, bringing to a culmination the world's millennia of spiritual journeying.

Awareness of unity consciousness gained new impetus in the 20th century when it was at last possible for the first time in human history for mystics and contemplatives from the world's traditions to cross continents and oceans in a matter of hours to meet and discuss their experiences. Central to this discussion was the discovery that the core of the deepest spiritual experiences is always the same—unity consciousness. This profound experience of oneness turned out not to be a complicated phantasmagoric mystical occurrence involving bells, whistles, lights, and cosmic beings (although these can occur), but a life-changing experience of unity that seemed to arise from authentic inner inquiry. In the wake of the experience of profound interconnectedness, the sensation of separateness simply drops away.

Though the experience wasn't new, Brother Teasdale's ability to recognize that this experience is universal and could therefore be the basis for a new kind of dialogue among the world's religions was new. What he called the "interspiritual dialogue" might be capable of underpinning a new era of interreligious dialogue and religious harmony.

Historically, it was precisely the lack of this discussion that caused the world's religions, with all their competition, conflict, and bad behavior, not to be acknowledged as the Great Wisdom Traditions they claimed to be. But if the world's millennia of spiritual inquiry had essentially been a single existential journey aiming toward a convergence of what humans could be as elevated ethical beings, there was still a chance for religion to play this role. This was the message that rang like a clarion call from The Mystic Heart.

If this vision for religion is possible at all, it will be because the unitive type of consciousness becomes the norm in human experience. If this occurs, it may well be because, at least from the scientific view, the human brain is continuing to develop and, consistent with its long history, acquiring new skills.

Needed Shifts in Global Awareness

Brother Teasdale was also aware that changes going on in humans at the individual level needed to be reflected in the collective. In an imperiled world, where time might well be of the essence, some of these changes likely need to come to the collective quite directly. This is why Brother Teasdale emphasized the importance of simultaneous individual and collective interspiritual education. Not every individual might be able to access unity consciousness at this moment, but the challenge to the religions is to educate about their shared values and lofty ethical goals, not to emphasize their differences in terms of theologies, creeds, or apocalyptic scenarios.

Brother Teasdale pointed to needed fundamental shifts in global awareness, some of which were already arising:

- Appreciation of the interdependence of all realms of human life and the surrounding cosmos
- Growing ecological awareness, with recognition of the interdependence of humankind and the biosphere, including the rights of all biological species
- Dedication to nonviolence, with a commitment to transcend militancy and violence tied to national or religious identities
- Embracing of the shared wisdom in all the world's religious and spiritual traditions, past and present
- Growing friendship and actual community among the individual followers of the world's religious and spiritual paths
- Commitment to the depths of the contemplative pursuit and the mutual sharing of the fruits of this ongoing journey
- Creative cultivation of transnational, transcultural, trans-traditional, and world-centric understanding

□ Receptivity to a cosmic vision, realizing humanity is only one life form and part of a larger community, the universe.

For Brother Teasdale these elements marked the threshold required for a healthy globalization and the participation of the world's religions through an unfolding Interspiritual Age.

A Final Marker

Brother Teasdale was a proponent of the experience commonly referred to as “nondualism,” and for him unity consciousness refers to a nondual experience. The massively popular books by Eckhart Tolle, *The Power of Now* and *A New Earth*—the latter taught worldwide through the auspices of Oprah Winfrey—are similarly popular testaments to the nondual message.

In popular literature, nondual consciousness—Brother Teasdale's “unitive awareness”—is referred to by numerous terms and phrases such as awakened awareness, oneness awareness, enlightenment, and God- or Christ-consciousness. In the organized religions, it's equated with capitalized words referring to the divine nature, such as Spirit (Hinduism viz Sri Aurobindo), Brahman (Hinduism viz Shankara), God (the Abrahamic religions), Ein Sof (Judaism's Infinite Nothingness), Shunyata (Buddhism's Emptiness), The One (Greek viz Plotinus), The Self (Hindu Advaita Vedanta viz Ramana Maharshi), The Dao (Taoism viz Lao Tzu), The Absolute (German Idealism viz Schelling), The Nondual (British Idealism viz Bradley), and most recently The Totality (Integral and Systems philosophers).

We only include the above list to illustrate the rich ancient and modern heritage of this term. One could offer the following definition to satisfy all of the above contexts: Nondualism points to unity rather than duality or separateness, in the special sense that things can appear distinct while not being ultimately separate.

Because of the relationship between the search for unity consciousness and the earth's rapid globalization, today there are several arenas of human pursuit in which the nondual view of reality is central. Three of the most well known are quantum mechanics and string theory in the new physics, various areas of cognitive psychology, and the core unitive mystic experience described in all the world's Great Wisdom Traditions. This is important for our discussion of the dynamic kind of thinking that may best serve a global integrative age.

Historically, nondual experience has been more common in Eastern cultures than in the West. Abrahamic religions tend to be focused on a creator God who brought forth the creation, suggesting a dualism between the godhead (the Creator) and everything else (the creation). Much of 20th century Protestant theology, influenced by Karl Barth, focused on God as totally “other,” one of several issues we'll be examining to understand dualism. In Western religions, nondual spiritual writing can be found but tends to represent a minority voice, coming from mystically inclined theologians like Meister Eckhart and poets like Rumi. Today the interest in nondual resources has dramatically increased in the West. Rumi, the Sufi poet of unity consciousness who lived a thousand years ago, is often cited as the most widely read poet in the West. The Centering Prayer Movement, based on the writings of Cistercian Fr Thomas Keating, is another example, along with popular books like Jay Michaelson's *Everything is God: The Radical Path of Nondual Judaism* and *The Naked Now and Everything Belongs* by Franciscan Fr Richard Rohr.

Equally important, nondualism isn't readily comprehended by the intellect, since intellect, speech, narrative, and so on, tend to be tools of separation, identifying things as this or that. Comprehending nondualism is essentially experiential. Intellectual approaches to it have, historically, been complicated and particularly thorny in relation to what philosophy refers to as monism on the one hand and existentialism on the other, or to monism and dualism as radically different explanations of reality.

When associated with nondualism, language is paradoxical—as in quantum mechanics or a Zen koan. In quantum mechanics, one can speak of apparently opposite phenomena not only happening simultaneously, but together providing a clearer metaphor for a deeper understanding of the holistic phenomenon taking place. The Zen koan (such as “what is the sound of one hand clapping?”) also attempts to let the mind see wider phenomena in a holistic way.

Perhaps the easiest example to understand is our common use of the term “brain-mind,” referring to how our brain and human intelligence work. We sense that brain and mind aren't the same. We also sense that whatever brain and mind are, their interrelatedness provides us with a feel for how our intelligence functions. The structure we know as the brain simply isn't, in and of itself, able to account for intelligence. There is also mind, which is a function of the brain's electrical fields. The two ideas together, woven in paradoxical language, give us a sense of what's actually going on. Brain-mind is one of the best examples of the paradoxical language that accompanies our understanding of the subtler realm of the nondual.

Nondualism isn't abstract. A practical example of nondual thinking on the street, pertinent to the age of globalization, appears in the side comments of an unidentified rock singer at the 2007 Live Earth concert: “I need to be simultaneously aware that, yes, I am an American or an Arab, and, yes, in that context there are appropriate things for me to do to keep that particular culture honored and whole. Yet I must also simultaneously know that I am absolutely no different at all from anyone else in the world.”

Christians often recognize that Jesus' words are full of nondual allusions, of which there are many examples such as, “And now I am no more in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to thee. Holy Father, keep them in thy name, which thou hast given me, that they may be one, even as we are one.”⁹

The enigmatic Parable of the Vineyard is often cited as reflecting Jesus' nondual consciousness. In this parable, why is the wage paid to the workers the same whether they have worked the whole day or just the final hour of the day? The nondual response would be because there's ultimately only a single consciousness.

It's probably no accident that some academic treatises on nondualism refer to Brother Teasdale's own mentor Father Bede Griffiths who, aside from his religious credentials, was widely respected as a western scholar and person of wide-ranging knowledge. One of these treatises by Bruno Barnhart, a scholar of the Camaldolese monastic order, contains the prediction that nonduality might engender a modern Christian renaissance. This was Brother Teasdale's vision.

Taking Wing

To launch our journey across the interspiritual landscape, we can summarize the heart of Brother Wayne Teasdale's vision thus:

- Human consciousness and heart have been evolving toward a maximum potential regarding the kind of being that humans can be and what kind of an earth we can create
- This has been going on since the known origin of the cosmos as material evolution and as evolution of consciousness
- This is recognized in a fundamental tenant of the interspiritual vision, that the evolution of world religions has been one unfolding experience reflecting the gradual growth of human maturity
- This trend is anchored in the universally unfolding experience of "unity consciousness" or "awakening," the experience of profound interconnectedness, no separation, and the world of the heart
- This unity consciousness has been emerging through all the world's spiritual traditions
- Historically we have witnessed this unfolding in myriad identifiable threads in the world's philosophies and religions
- This unfolding has implications for how we develop our collective skills so that this consciousness can manifest in the world in tangible skill-sets working toward global transformation
- This has implications for the innumerable realms and arenas of endeavor, represented by all humanity.

If these interest you, in addition to continuing with us through the interspiritual journey of this book, take the time to read Brother Wayne Teasdale's three most influential books: *The Mystic Heart: Discovering a Universal Spirituality in the World's Religions*, *A Monk in the World*, and *Bede Griffiths: An Introduction to His Interspiritual Thought*.

Brother Teasdale spoke regularly about his developing vision with those who created the Interspiritual Dialogue association¹⁰ along with him in 2001 (founded in New York City because of his interest in the United Nations). These discussions were particularly important during the last years of his life when, struggling with cancer, he was increasingly unable to write and speak publicly. The last meetings he participated in with the New York association were to plan a program introducing interspirituality and his vision of the Universal Order of Sannyasa at the 2004 Parliament of the World's Religions. Slated to be both host and keynote speaker, he was too ill to attend. After his transition in October 2004, friends and caregivers gathered for a tribute in Austin, Texas, the site of many of his pioneer interfaith discussions with such figures as the Dalai Lama and Father Keating.

At Brother Teasdale's last meeting of the New York association in 2003, he described in detail what he called his Omega Vision. He himself was never able to write about it, though an account of this vision was published later by two of his friends, Gorakh Hayashi and Kurt Johnson in *Vision in Action*, the internet journal of integralist Yasuhiko Kimura. The essence of the Omega Vision captures Brother Teasdale's global interspiritual vision. It says simply: Omega (be that God, The Totality, or the highest spiritual knowledge of any spiritual tradition or individual) always exceeds the sum of all the experiences of it. If such a premise is accepted as the basis of

all spiritual exploration, humans might be able to take a humble seat together on planet Earth. In his usual humor, Brother Teasdale said that night of the vision, “Maybe this means something; maybe it is the $E=mc^2$ of spirituality.”

⁵ “Developmentalist movement” refers to Integral theory (Ken Wilber) and Spiral Dynamics (Don Beck and Chris Cowan). As can be seen in Appendix I, Integral uses colors for the various periods of development so that representative institutions and behaviors can readily be discussed (“red behaviors,” “amber institutions,” etc.). Some colors originating with the Spiral Dynamics historical scheme were altered later by Integral to provide a closer relationship to the actual color spectrum and levels of developing consciousness.

⁶ Detailed in Paul Hawken’s *Blessed Unrest* (2007).

⁷ Words from Brother Wayne Teasdale’s *The Mystic Heart* (p. 4 forward) read at the founding of the Universal Order of Sannyasa, January 9, 2010 (<http://www.orderofsannyasa.org/joinus.htm>).

⁸ Teasdale wrote on Griffith’s interspiritual views for his theology doctorate at Fordham University in New York; see Teasdale, W. 2003 in Bibliography.

⁹ John 17:11, Revised Standard Version.

¹⁰ www.isdna.org.

Everyone Is a Mystic

“We need to understand, to really grasp at an elemental level, that the definitive revolution is the spiritual awakening of humankind”

Wayne Teasdale

WHILE BROTHER TEASDALE EXPLORED MONASTIC MYSTICISM, IN THE early 1970s a promising graduate student felt called to leave first his medical studies, then his doctoral studies in biochemistry, to take up the search for a “theory of everything.” As Brother Teasdale was convinced there was a common experience in the daily living of consciousness and love, Ken Wilber—and a host of eventual colleagues, such as Chris Cowan and Don Beck—searched for a common understanding of how human beings experience things and what this might mean for the future. Drawing on material from an academic movement that had arisen in the late 19th century called the “structuralists” or “developmentalists,” these pioneers were inspired by the Darwinian revolution to apply the implications of development to wider concerns of humanity.

Not without stiff opposition from the academic establishment—often because they circumvented conventional peer review to get their ideas to the public—Wilber and his colleagues were to become pivotal figures in our current understanding of how consciousness, spirituality, science, and everything else may be interrelated. Wilber’s first book *The Spectrum of Consciousness* was penned around 1973 but was rejected by twenty publishers, so that it didn’t appear until 1977.

Pioneers like Wilber, Cowan, and Beck are sometimes considered either lucky to have eventually been heard or lauded for their perseverance against overwhelming odds. Such has often been the case. For instance, in the 1950s an isolated Venezuelan scientist, Léon Croizat (who was also writing only in Spanish!), was a biological champion of the generally scoffed-at theory of continental drift, known as plate tectonics. Like Wilber, he had left the scientific mainstream to make time to “read everything,” subsequently coming up with his own synthesis. His critics referred to him as “idiosyncratic” and “from the lunatic fringe.” Unable to publish his ideas through respectable channels, Croizat married a wealthy widow and turned to self-publication. Even more ironically, it wasn’t until geophysics (not biology) proved plate tectonics to be correct a decade later that Croizat became an honored man (with his works finally translated into English).

The integralists took a gamble in choosing an independent path of exploration. Although still not viewed as authentic scholarship by some in the traditional academic establishment, their books appear today in 39 different languages.

This pursuit of a new view by Wilber and the integralists yielded many surprises. Wilber came to see that unity is even more deeply embedded in how humans understand reality than he expected, noting that all humans experience four simultaneous worlds.

A normal day for everyone in the world is a simple meeting with three of these worlds: “I” (individual), “We” (collective), and “It” (institutional), coupled with our attempt to make sense of them. Getting along with the institutional world (or “It”) is the rub for just about everyone. But if you wrapped all the institutions together—everything that goes on from institutional structures themselves to ideas and belief systems—you got a fourth, even more potentially intimidating arena: “Its.” How often do the bulk of our struggles come down to dealing with “Its”? Truly, it’s a small world.

In further clarifying the implications of the worlds of “I”, “We”, “It,” and “Its,” the integralists were quick to realize that the familiarity humans have with “I”, “We”, “It”, and “Its” derives from the way we have structured our languages. It’s actually the way we think—what, in grammar, is called 1st person (I), 2nd person (You, We), and 3rd person (It). Wilber, Beck, and others realized that this world of relationships is expressed in every aspect of our complex existence.

The Everyday Reality of “I,” “We,” and “It”

An easy exercise allows us to see that there are three arenas in everyone’s life. One can understand these experientially by thinking through the three following steps:

Step 1: Your individual or “I” space. Close your eyes and walk yourself through getting up in the morning. This is when you are completely by yourself, coming out of sleep, going into the bathroom to go through all the “wake-up and get going” chores. This is your solitary “I” bubble, which you will carry with you as you move through your day.

Step 2: Your collective or “We” space. Move your attention to the first people you meet each day. They may be your family, friends, people on public transport, or colleagues at work. Suddenly your “I” bubble expands as you enter your particular world of “We.” Your “We” space is peopled with circles of individuals with whom you have a measure of intimacy or familiarity.

Step 3: The institutional or “It” space. Move your attention to the fact that when you go to work, to a store, or to the post office—in other words, when you engage in all the activities that connect you with the rest of the world—you become involved in an arena that’s less personal or even impersonal. These less personal situations are most often the source of your instructions concerning what to do. You are told what to do at work, what to do by the IRS, what to do by your bank, what to do to get your driver’s license. This is the institutional space, where you act as expected. It’s the world of your church or political party, the ideas to which you subscribe, and the groups that represent them.

Step 4: Move your attention from your “I” space to your “We” space to your “It” or institutional space, getting a feeling for what your life is like. Then realize that every single one of the 7 billion people on this planet does this same thing every day. Their institutional or “It” space tells them what’s true, what to believe, and how to behave. Take some time to imagine yourself in different countries and cultures. What’s possible for you in terms of freedom and civil rights? What’s okay or not okay in terms of books or entertainment? What political system is forced on

you? What religious beliefs are you expected to hold? These dynamics confront you and your 7 billion fellow humans on a daily basis.

Steps 1-4 describe what's going on in the world—and everything that's been going on in the world for the 106.5 billion people who are estimated to have lived on this planet since humans emerged. Each of them has just been dealing with their “I,” “We,” and “It” spaces on a daily basis.

Throughout history, the trend has been for “I” and “We” to create an “It” space that then controls us. Have you ever realized to what degree the institutional or “It” space calls the shots in the world, telling the “I” and “We” that created this “It” space what to do?

In the “I” and “We” spaces, not only is life more personal with some sense of heart connection, but there is also accountability and responsibility. When we enter the myriad institutional settings that surround us—our job, the shopping center, the bank, our relationships with authorities ranging from the police to the IRS—we are in much less personal territory that's also less accountable to us and less responsible, feeling, or caring. Not only can such arenas be impersonal, they can also prove downright demanding, pushy, and even hostile. Yet it's these arenas that tell us how we should behave, what we should buy, and what we should believe.

Almost everything wrong with the world is the result of the way the institutional space is misaligned and out of control.

When was the last time your bank did you a favor? What was your opinion of the “no questions asked” multi-trillion dollar bailout of the financial industry? When you examine social structures anywhere in the world, the most obvious disconnect is between the needs and wants of the “I” and “We” that built the institutional space, and the way the institutional space behaves toward us.

The insensitivity of the institutional space varies from mostly tolerable in open, free societies such as democracies, to downright intolerable in dictatorships. This is the case not only in terms of political systems but also economies. Where do we see responsibility, let alone sensitivity, to the public in much of the economic establishment, such as banks and corporations? The unaccountability of the financial sector is brokered by a political establishment that's dramatically misaligned with the “I” and “We” who created these institutions.

As grassroots social change guru Paul Hawken pointed out in his bestseller *Blessed Unrest*, across the world goods have more rights than people. The health of goods and money are generally put ahead of the wellbeing of people. Value is measured by wealth and power, not by wisdom or contribution to the general good of the community.

How does a world headed toward globalization begin to correct this misalignment?

Fruits of the Integrative View

During the last two years of his life, Brother Teasdale engaged Ken Wilber closely. The last public discussion he took part in, against the advice of his doctors, was with Wilber.¹¹ It was natural that Brother Teasdale's understanding of interspirituality should connect with the views of the integralists. Indeed, he recognized that his own vision of a better future for humanity through interspirituality isn't only implied in the developmental view, but that interspirituality might need to adopt the integralist map of where the future may be going. Everyone needs a

map. Whether driving down the highway, entering the subway, or going to Disney World, everything is easier when one has a map.

A major fruit of the integrative map is the exploration of common ground between science and religion—the external way of knowing and the internal way of knowing. As well as assisting us in elaborating the difference between religion and spirituality, this also predicts the nature of the consciousness that might be possible for our species.

How Religion and Spirituality Differ

It's often joked that religion is for people who are afraid of going to hell, whereas spirituality is for people who have been there. In everyday life, the distinction between religion and spirituality is mostly overlooked, especially by the media, which seems to seldom distinguish them—and thereby renders both a great disservice.

In the beginning, spiritual paths involve a founder or founders who deliver a compelling message that attracts a following. In terms of our integral map, this is a simple I-We dynamic, straightforward and interpersonal. It remains so until the founder either creates an institution or departs the scene. The followers who remain behind develop written records, directives, and creeds that define the institutional or “It” space. The vital experience of spirituality is thus subsumed in the institutional religion. This divergence becomes even more dramatic as the founder's life fades into the past. The question then becomes whether followers will seek to emulate the essence of the founder's life or focus on adherence to beliefs, creeds, dogmas, and rituals.

Adherence to the institution is often fostered by the threat of punishment or the promise of reward. Religions of this “ticket to heaven” variety stress belonging to the right group above one's personal behavior. Ultimately religion is about right belief, with the institution telling the individual how reality should be understood and placing the highest value on allegiance to this understanding. This is why religion tends to value creed over deed. Spirituality concerns right being and right action, which is why it tends to value deed over creed.

These explain why fundamentalism is usually connected to religion and not spirituality, since spirituality is inclusive and pluralistic. It's also easy to see how terrorism can be justified by religion but not by spirituality. Terrorism justified by religion reflects behavior from an early epoch of human development that linked religious belief with authoritarianism and placed a higher value on loyalty to the religious authority than on how people were treated.

The more deeply one pursues spirituality—the inquiry, values, and essence of any of the great founders of spiritual traditions—the more likely it is that one will experience profound interconnectedness and the dropping away of a sense of separation.

It's Ultimately the Same Experience

Picture a tree whose branches are all the religions and spiritual paths of the world. This illustration appeared in a chapter entitled “The Paths Are Many But the Goal is the Same” in Brother Teasdale's book *The Mystic Heart*.

The world's religions are often viewed horizontally, not vertically like a tree with its trunk and branches—as if the religions on Earth at the present time were the sum total of religions. This is akin to considering the plants and animals currently found in nature as the sum total of flora and fauna in the entire history of the planet, forgetting that all these organisms have histories as more primitive species, not to mention the countless extinct species that played a role in the evolution of life. Similarly, thousands of religions have come and gone.

The history of religions is a history of compelling narratives. We might liken these narratives to books, some of which are current bestsellers, some of which enjoyed a wide readership in the past, others of which were read by only a small number, and still others of which are out of print. Today there are five current “bestsellers” in terms of religious narratives: Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Many lesser sellers are also current, such as Taoism, Confucianism, Shinto, the Sikh faith, Baha'i, Jainism, Babism, and the Latter Day Saints.

Brother Teasdale viewed the trunk, branches, and twigs of the tree of religion as part of a single existential human search that has been unfolding through our history as a species—a search that leads ultimately to our potential to manifest an interspiritual consciousness. He saw authentic awakening as the outcome of seeking along any of these branches. It was his firm belief that the world's religious experience has been one experience on behalf of our destiny as a species united in oneness. Hence it isn't a matter of picking which path is best, even though paths may have varying efficacy, but of realizing that the ultimate awakening is possible in any tradition. The same view is taken by the developmentalists.

The Mystical Pursuit

Brother Teasdale's statement that “everyone is a mystic” shouldn't come as a surprise. Writing in *The Mystic Heart*, he commented, “The real religion of humankind can be said to be spirituality itself, because mystical spirituality is the origin of all the world religions.” He further stated, “How we make this journey is what spirituality is really about,” adding, “There is nothing else in life more worth doing.”¹²

The mystical pursuit is often associated solely with religion and spirituality. This is because the word “mystical” is often confused with “magical” in secular and scientific contexts, and thus easily dismissed. Fundamentally, mysticism involves the same kind of inquiry, the same kind of attention to direct experience, that permeates the everyday consciousness of all humans—particularly the pursuit of insight into how reality functions. It's the same inquiry that science engages in using a different set of tools. If we can say that mysticism is essentially the exploration of consciousness, we need only repeat the words of scientists such as James Watson (the co-discoverer of DNA), E. O. Wilson (the father of sociobiology), and David Gross (physicist and founding string theorist), who each assert that understanding consciousness is the next frontier for science.

The other essential element that connects everyone with the mystical pursuit is its relationship to ethics. Brother Teasdale states in *The Mystic Heart* that the mystical journey concerns the highest ethical understanding possible in this life. The elements he listed in that journey reflect the aspirations of all humans, no matter what their beliefs and background. These are the highest fruits of consciousness: will, creativity, feeling, character, imagination, and behavior. Brother

Teasdale focused on universal aspirations such as wisdom, sensitivity, other-centeredness, acceptance of others as they are, self-transcendence, openness, presence, listening, being, seeing, spontaneity, and joy. Such aspirations characterize the foundational documents of our modern world, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the UN Charter, and the Earth Charter.

Humans are also united in their yearning for a constructive vision. Worldwide, polls on globalization indicate that on average 80% believe the world should be moving toward a global vision. Some 80% of those who believe this assert that basic skills of understanding and working together are necessary to achieve this objective.¹³

If the planet is ultimately seeking a comprehensive “theory of everything,” as mathematician and cosmologist Roger Penrose believes, this pursuit is precisely that of mysticism—when mysticism is truly understood.

Reversing a Dangerous Course

Eckhart Tolle challenges in his bestseller *A New Earth*, “Our species now faces a stark choice: Evolve further our comprehensive and integral sense of interconnectedness, and our mutually shared sense of the inherent value of all humanity and planet earth which hosts us, or die.”

The shared directions much of the world has taken so far for securing our future appear quite counterproductive. In fact our actions have bequeathed to us the problems that now threaten catastrophe.¹⁴ This is why a holistic, unitive approach must emerge.

Globalization is inevitable, as leaders from Kofi Anan (former UN Secretary General) to Carlos Salinas de Gortari (economist and former President of Mexico) and Jian Zemin (former General Secretary and President of China) have publically declared. World opinion polls show at least 70% of people believe the ramifications of ongoing globalization must be sorted out or we will face more serious consequences.¹⁵

On the positive side, a 1998 Yankelovich poll—the world’s largest consumer and marketing research group—showed that 91% of the people in their international sample agreed that globalization means it’s even more important for people to understand each other. A 1999 Pew poll found that 71% of Americans agreed that success in terms of cultural diversification can lead to a better life for all.

On the negative side, the same poll of six nations showed that an average of 50% or more in richer countries fear globalization because it may dilute their wealth. In the United States, this fear is higher in conservative, less ethnically diverse areas, with up to 64% expressing concern about globalization and multiculturalism. On the other hand, an average of 63% in poorer countries¹⁶ embrace globalization, hoping it will ensure they receive their piece of the pie.

Experts throughout the world debate what globalization itself will produce. Will it mean westernization, Americanization, capitalization? Will it bring rampant materialism and consumerism? If so, are such results sustainable?

Nearly all futurists and social scientists are emphatic that a successful future can only be achieved if there are multiple points of analysis and feedback. The debilitating legacy of the Iraq War for America’s financial health reveals the fallacy of making decisions based on faulty information. Our future direction as a world must either involve moving decision making to

where accurate information can be found, or moving information to where the decision making is taking place.

This is generally not the world we live in today. Few decisions are based on multiple points of view. Most measures of nearly everything revolve around gross domestic product, currency values, economic growth, and the number of millionaires and billionaires. Only one nation in the world, the tiny country of Bhutan, includes a measure of “human happiness” in its evaluation of national life.

The situation is even more precarious if, as so many sense, the world financial establishment essentially rigged the “world financial casino.” It’s well known that wealth and financial power have shifted into the hands of a tiny minority, perhaps as few as one percent of the world’s population, essentially disenfranchising everyone else. The system, which is mostly beyond the jurisdiction of the world’s governments and collective regulatory institutions, is in the hands of an elite minority who have no sense of a world collective. Propelled by completely Darwinian views of survival of the fittest, their mentality is one of “take no prisoners” and “give nothing back.”

Aligned with or in collusion with governments and world leaders who are controlled by the elite’s wealth, or at least under the influence of countless paid lobbyists (if not subject to out-and-out bribery), the “too big to fail” expect their downside risk to be covered by the masses of average taxpayers who will be required to pay up when their greed has gone too far. With no sense of a collective, and living in the illusion that their world touches no other, they simply take again with no compunction to ever give back.

Even if this elite can’t be touched, the system isn’t sustainable, so that if it collapses across its entirety, it will take down the elite as well. We might liken it to the pesticide DDT, which wasn’t banned until everyone understood it could cripple the entire planetary ecosystem. We have to ask what it will take to generate some sense of accountability to the collective in the financial industry, before the house of cards comes toppling down.

How did we get into this predicament of moving from the relative happiness and prosperity that followed World War II, to facing the many doomsday scenarios currently before us?

If we have been brought up to value exterior things more than the interior, we will clamor for external things and won’t shrink from escalating competition into conflict to achieve our ends. Our sense of wellbeing will be bought at the expense of someone else’s.

On the other hand, if we have been brought up to value our interior world more than exterior things, we will be happy with interior resources and have less need to compete for externals. Our sense of wellbeing will be intertwined with the wellbeing of others. Most of the moral codes stemming from the Great Wisdom Traditions have attempted to teach these values. While there has been an overall failure to achieve such ideals, our species has shown gradual improvement.

Although many of us hold high values in terms of “I” and “We,” the degree of misalignment with and unaccountability to “I” and “We” on the part of the institutional “It” space threatens to lead us down a destructive path.

Centuries of the Materialistic and Mental

In recent centuries our species has gone through a major “mentalization,” placing most of its eggs in the basket of intellectual and technological endeavor. As we modernized, we unwittingly moved away from our inner, more subjective nature, as modernism labeled much of our ancient subjectivity “supersitition.” This process has uprooted us from other elemental qualities in ourselves, resulting in a disconnect between individuals and institutions.

By placing an emphasis on the intellectual and material, we have created heartless institutional spaces. This is the source of paradoxes such as the fact we can put men on the moon but can’t even get along in our own neighborhoods, while many with wealth or celebrity status are so unhappy that some even end up killing themselves.

Religions, instead of emphasizing the authentic elements of the spiritual and ethical journey, turned also to the mental, promulgating dogma and proffering rewards in an afterlife. Meanwhile the intellectual, academic, and scientific establishments satisfied themselves that the new skills of modernism were sufficient to secure a bright future. Consequently, despite a noble intent to improve our lives materially, we lost our balance—a situation that couldn’t go on forever. A period of prosperity after the world wars ended abruptly in the 1960s and 70s, with the emergence of a string of menaces touching personal human happiness, political confrontation, environmental health, resource availability, energy issues, population stability, economic sustainability, and global governance.

No sooner did the good life seem to be within our grasp than the possibility of destroying ourselves presented itself. The bell tolled an end to living for the external only. When a life lived in exteriority implodes, the only hope is a creative stepping up from our interiority—our vast, largely untapped inner resources.

Of the world’s top 100 economies, 51 aren’t nations but corporations. Given this, it’s easy to see why the need for fundamental adjustment puts the world of “I” and “We” in conflict with the “It” of these big corporations and financial institutions.

For a healthy world future, we needed to develop through these past centuries of materialism and exteriority. Undoubtedly they resulted in many wonderful improvements for humankind. But now there must be a readjustment, or the outcome will be catastrophic. As Brother Teasdale explained, “We need to understand, to really grasp at an elemental level, that the definitive revolution is the spiritual awakening of humankind. This revolution will be the task of the Interspiritual Age. The necessary shifts in consciousness require a new approach to spirituality that transcends past religious cultures of fragmentation and isolation.” He added, “Taken together, they are preparing the way for a universal civilization, a civilization with a heart.”¹⁷

This is the message of all the religious and secular futurists, from Wayne Teasdale to such luminaries as Eckhart Tolle, Ken Wilber, Don Beck, Willis Harman, and Paul Hawken.

¹¹ The provocative discussions between Teasdale and Wilber, which can be viewed on YouTube, are characterized by their emphasis on the world’s emerging unity consciousness and its relationship to a positive global future.

¹² MH, p 26, 18, 124.

¹³ FT & Harris polls, 2007; Yankelovich & Pew polls, 1998, 1999.

¹⁴ A quick reread of our list of needed shifts in global awareness enumerates how this is the case. See page 56.

¹⁵ Poll for United States, Germany, France, Italy, Spain, Britain (FT/Harris Poll, 2007).

¹⁶ Egypt, Turkey, Azerbaijan, Iran, Indonesia, Nigeria, and the Palestinian Territories (University of Maryland, International Policy Program at WorldPublicOpinion.org).

¹⁷ MH, p 12, 5.

Framing the Big Picture

“To the Creative, all things owe their beginning”

Lao Tzu, Chinese Philosopher

IN BUDDHISM’S AGGANCHCHA SUTRA, THE GREAT BRAHMA SETS EVERYTHING in motion. In Hinduism, the Day and Night of Brahma initiate lila—the divine play—in which Brahman transforms himself into the world. In the Abrahamic religions—Islam, Judaism, and Christianity—everything begins on a day without a yesterday, streaming forth from a singularity. Underlying the philosophies and metaphysics of these religions is a first cause.

For the myriad indigenous traditions, there appears also to be a common core. Everything is upheld by “the great mystery,” and what we are made of is billions of years old.

Belief in a first cause is one thing. But when it comes to what happened as a result of the first cause, science and some fairly large segments of religion have parted company, especially when it comes to a discussion of our species’ origin. Humanity is divided between widespread belief in creationism and the evolutionary view supported by modern rational inquiry. The implications of this disagreement are far-reaching, impacting human survival.

Process and Common Sense

All of us are familiar with process, which is in essence cause and effect. If we want to buy groceries, we make our way to the grocery store, pick out and purchase the groceries we need, then bring them home. Or we sit at our computer, go through the steps of ordering online, and someone brings our order to our door. What we can’t do is snap our fingers and magically have the groceries appear in our kitchen.

None of us would disagree that buying groceries involves a process. Yet when it comes to how we got here in a biological sense, the gradual process known as “evolution” gets bad press among fundamentalists.

Curiously, current discoveries in the fields of chemistry and physics—both of which support evolutionary understanding—are more readily accepted. For instance, who has any difficulty with the notion that humans are made up of atoms and molecules? It’s also widely accepted that when we consume the groceries for which we go through the process of shopping, they undergo the gradual process of digestion by which they are changed into forms that provide the body with sustenance. These are matters of such common sense that no poll has ever been taken on “who believes in atoms” or “who believes in digestion.” Further, the synergy of atoms and molecules forming more complex combinations and hierarchies—evolution in the most general sense—is generally understood by the public.

Polls indicate that 41% of chemists and 40% of physicists have no problem with the idea of God,¹⁸ while 40% of professional astronomers list a religious affiliation.¹⁹ Physics and chemistry don't seem to be in conflict with religious belief, whereas the biology of evolution is a different matter. A 2011 Reuters poll ranked the United States 18th among countries that accept biological evolution. A Gallup poll conducted annually since 2007 reveals that only about 13% of Americans believe in naturalistic evolution in which a deity played no part, whereas 48% believe that a deity created "humans pretty much in their present form at sometime in the last 10,000 years or so." A poll of strict creationists, numbering 48% of Americans, by The Skeptical Society indicated 95% think belief in God and science are incompatible.

Taking a middle road, 30% of those polled believe "humans developed over millions of years from less advanced forms of life, but God guided this process." Another 9% are unsure. The 78% who see God in the process stand in contrast to the 93% of trained biologists who reject any idea of creationism or its close ally, intelligent design. Note that pollsters didn't ask whether the God people believe in is a God within the system or acting from outside the system—two very different phenomena.

Science, which is humankind's most public way of collectively inquiring, evaluating, and developing a consensus about what's true, wins only mixed results with the public when it comes to culturally controversial issues. While virtually no one is able to magically snap their fingers and cause groceries to materialize in their kitchen, a large percentage of people are convinced that the 5-10 million species estimated to inhabit the earth got here with just that kind of magic. Perhaps nothing better illustrates the persistence of the magic-mythic viewpoint.

As expected, the Gallup poll also correlated anti-evolution sentiment with highly religious cultures that host significant fundamentalist populations. Several Islamic countries lead the list,²⁰ followed closely by the United States, while those favoring evolution include largely secular or atheistic regions such as Western Europe and China. India, whose Hindu religion favors stories of process, was solidly in the evolutionary camp, whereas Italy, the civilly conflicted home of Roman Catholicism, ranked high among those "unsure."

Of interest economically, public education prowess paralleled these results, with anti-evolution countries turning out to be less competitive in overall educational skills, especially technology, whereas pro-evolutionary societies were the most adept.

The Two Cultures of Knowing

The root of this conflict over our origins is to be found in the different ways in which humans come to know things, both individually and at the cultural level. In philosophy this is the complex domain of epistemology, which is the study of knowledge. This is a realm that becomes even more specialized and multifaceted when science and philosophy consider how relationships between parts generate collective action, and how systems interact with the larger environment. Humanity and Earth are obviously such a system.

We can discern the truth of a matter from our uniquely personal ways of inquiring. We think of this as a subjective, inner way of knowing something. We can also discern the truth of a matter from our collective, public ways of inquiring, including science. This we think of as an observational, outer way of inquiring that's more objective.

If we return to the matter of grocery shopping, we can decide which groceries to buy by reading a list at a store or on our computer, then checking off the items we require. This can be a useful approach to stocking the larder. But when it comes to finding a romantic partner, although we might use internet sites to “match” us with someone initially, few of us are going to select such a partner solely by perusing a list of characteristics. In the end we want to fall in love. In other words, head-knowing and heart-knowing both have their place. Subjective and objective ways of knowing can also complement and inform each other, especially in matters of personal import.

There is of course a place for much deeper inquiry, of which our everyday level of experience is but a microcosm. The nature of science, religion, philosophy, the arts—all these can be inquired into at the level of the larger landscape, as indeed they have been investigated by such famous names as Kant, Spinoza, Goethe, Schelling, and Schiller (to speak only of the West). At the heart of the matter is the challenge of how humankind can plumb the depths of its subjective, inner reality (Kant’s “secret springs of action”), coupling this with understanding provided by science (which must understand its limitations when it comes to the investigation of the nature of reality).

Our lives are governed every day by standards determined by the collective, public method of inquiring into matters and arriving at a consensus. Some such matters that immediately spring to mind are which side of the road to drive on, or the value of coins and bank notes. In a similar manner, we naturally trust the workings of science in such matters as the change given by the cash register at the grocery store or the bills dispensed by the ATM at the bank. If we need surgery, we obviously choose a doctor who has performed the needed operation successfully on other occasions, not someone who is a novice—let alone someone who has never attended medical school.

No one seems to have a problem with the consensus required in these areas of everyday life. Yet when it comes to evolution, and particularly the question of human origin, there’s a disconnect. In the United States at least, we rely on DNA evidence in a trial, with 95% of us regarding it as conclusive.²¹ Why then do 48% of us not accept that same DNA evidence of the relationships between various animals and plants?

This divide is particularly intriguing when it comes to what people are curious about. While 91% of atheists are college graduates²², a recent survey inquiring of college students what questions they most want science to answer didn’t include either the causes of cancer or AIDS.²³ Instead it included a list of more fanciful issues, such as the placebo effect, psychic powers, extrasensory perception, near death experiences, UFOs, *deja vu*, ghosts, mysterious disappearances, intuition and gut feelings, and persistent reports of unknown creatures such as Bigfoot, the Loch Ness monster, and aliens.

We can’t underestimate the hold that subjective knowing exerts. A classic example was the Cargo Cults that arose in the South Pacific after local natives first observed planes and ships delivering cargo in World War II. On the basis of their culture’s magic-mythic lens, islanders believed such objects were divined from the spirit world. Crowds therefore dressed up as soldiers, created crude airfields, hangars, and docks, and marched about singing and chanting, waiting for cargo to appear. When authorities tried to curtail the activity, it led to violence. People were willing to go to jail for their belief in magic cargo! Even odder, “cargo messiahs” arose. This is an extreme case, but it parallels the insight of interspirituality that it’s completely

natural for anyone having spiritual experiences to believe their insight is correct. The history of religious wars reflects the pathology that can develop from this simple fact.

Pattern Versus Process

While we don't think twice about stopping on red and going on green, understanding that it rained because gravity-prone droplets of water formed in the clouds, or knowing that oxygen enters and exits our lungs throughout the time we are asleep, the simple matter-of-fact realities of process become difficult when we try to determine what kind of process accounts for a certain pattern we observe.

The issue becomes even more complicated when we confuse the pattern with the process we use to explain it. For instance, if you planned to use the ATM machine during your trip to buy groceries and found it no longer there, you could imagine any number of reasons for this, ranging from the bank moving it, to thieves making off with it, or extraterrestrials visiting in a UFO and confiscating it for investigation.

Questions of human identity are especially complex. It's one thing to agree we are composed of atoms and molecules, but quite another to believe we share a common ancestor with apes. It becomes trickier still when the suggested relationship with apes, couched in terms of random competition and Darwin's "survival of the fittest," could be taken to mean that humans can no longer regard themselves as special, with our attendant fears of meaninglessness. Darwin was careful in his books and published letters to emphasize that his theory was concerned with cause and effect in the observable world, not with how life and the universe came into being.

Less sensitive to the issues than Darwin, the intellectually advanced often identify religious and spiritual experiences as primitive superstition, dismissing them out of hand—of course, all under the guise of critical thinking. Confusing pattern with process, a predetermined "why" often determines the explanation of "how."

We can't forget that the world's most recent collective paradigm shift came precisely from such a violent collision—the events and aftermath of September 11, 2001. The ensuing era has pitted radical allegiance to simplistic fundamentalist notions of process in the Third World against secular and eclectic views of process in the economically rich First World.

Public disagreement about what an observed pattern means comes down to the variety of explanations that can be chosen to account for such patterns. In the matter of evolution, an obvious example is the undisputed fact that millions of fossils have been found, if not a billion. Ways of accounting for such fossils might range from leftovers from the Genesis seven-day creation process, to a pattern of gradual change over millions of years. No one argues about whether T rex existed, only about whether such creatures lived at the same time as humans.

Crop circles are another provocative example of the difference between pattern and process. They're there to see, no doubt about it. But are they created by hoaxers, extraterrestrials, or some other phenomenon? The implications attached to the various processes that could explain the circles are huge.

There are also examples of pattern and process that lie somewhere in between when it comes to the question of "what's true." Try acupuncture. A therapeutic method legally licensed throughout much of the world, it's widely thought to work. However, the original medieval metaphysical

explanation for its success was based on mythic elements of earth, air, fire, and water, which makes little sense by modern scientific standards. The result is a compromise, in that many scientists agree that it works and support the politics to license it for public use, while simultaneously seeking an understanding of the process behind it that's compatible with our modern concepts of physics and neurobiology. It's good news that modern science clearly distinguishes between pattern and process—an indication that common sense can prevail.

The topic of evolution continues to fuel dissent because, while there's not much question about the pattern, there's a lot of disagreement about the process that produced the pattern—particularly among the less-educated and religious fundamentalists. Is it comforting that, demographically, the matter appears to reflect levels of education? Perhaps—and perhaps not, when the statistics show that the fundamentalist view has proven more pervasive globally.

Paradoxically, the world's major religious traditions require of their clergy a robust general education, yet are divided on the matter of evolution, with the more educated tending to accommodate both evolution and religion—usually referred to as “theistic evolution”—by distinguishing the kinds of inquiry that science and religion each engage in. A quick web search produces statements concerning theistic evolution by nearly every major liberal Christian denomination. Seminaries associated with those denominations that welcome a synthesis of faith and evolution also tend to teach “the new criticism,” an approach developed in the 1960s that treats the scriptures of Christianity as cultural products that arose in particular historical settings.

In moderate and liberally educated Islam, there have been vigorous attempts to synthesize faith and evolution—even classic Darwinism. Hinduism, always a friend to process, has had little difficulty with evolution, and a number of its classic thinkers, such as the late Sri Aurobindo, have been champions of process thinking both scientifically and socially. Buddhism, a spirituality rooted in the recognition of change, joins Hinduism in having a host of classical and modern thinkers working compatibly with the evolutionary model. Reform, Conservative, and Modern Orthodox Judaism, like liberal Islam, also tend to hold views of evolution that are generally compatible with theistic evolution.

What's There to See in the Pattern?

We can't make sense of the phenomenon of spirituality in humankind apart from the arising of consciousness in our species. Neither can we understand the arising of consciousness apart from the biological development of humankind—especially that most remarkable feature of our species, our brain. Not without reason do we classify ourselves as *Homo sapiens*, meaning the “knowing” or “intelligent” human.

Similarly, neither can we make sense of spirituality without understanding how our species wove from our internal diversity and complexity a web of cultural diversity and complexity through the creation of things, then told stories about our creations—and, ultimately, about ourselves.

To go further, whether we will continue to advance or go extinct as a species depends on our ability to appreciate the journey from which our biological makeup has arisen, not to mention the nature of the universe within which we may be among the first to be aware, if not its consummate explorer.

Everything we know of organization, structure, order, relationships, and even leadership comes from—or certainly in an integrative age should come from—our understanding of nature and the cosmology by which it all works and fits together. We can't appreciate any of this without a brief tour of this grand landscape, summarizing what our species has surmised in its 200,000 years of intelligent activity.

During the course of human history, the field of inquiry known as “science” has produced some 50 million scientific articles and books. A recent survey by Learned Publishers indicated the number is about 10 million for highly technical science and mathematics, moves up toward 40 million if you include the medical fields, and is around 50 million if you add a number of other scientific disciplines. That's the source of the pattern information available to modern humankind—not an easy body of information to ignore!

Confronted by the relative flatland of scientific information and the panoramic abilities of the human mind and consciousness, how will we ever distinguish the simple factual paths of data from the spontaneous wellspring of adjectives and metaphors that naturally arise to convey this data? Will this be worked out in an integrative epoch, the coming Interspiritual Age?

Currently some 30-40% of people worldwide embrace a religion that incorporates both science and religion in a theistic evolutionary view, sometimes referred to as “recognizing the Epic of Evolution.” This suggests that when we portray the findings of science in an inspiring way, in context with the central themes of most religions' accounts of creation, we generate a compelling context that deepens both religious faith and secular knowledge.

¹⁸ [The Los Angeles Times](#).

¹⁹ The prestigious scientific journal *Nature*.

²⁰ However, academic Islam's view of evolution is quite positive.

²¹ According to a CNN poll.

²² Who's Who (ukwhoswho.com).

²³ science.com.

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About the Authors

Kurt Johnson



Kurt Johnson is well known internationally as a scientist, comparative religionist, social activist, and former monk. With a PhD in evolution, ecology, systematics, and comparative biology, plus extensive training in comparative religion and philosophy, he was associated professionally for twenty years with the American Museum of Natural History and the One Spirit Interfaith Seminary in New York City. Ordained in three spiritual traditions, he is widely regarded as the closest organizational associate of Brother Wayne Teasdale, the founder of the modern “interspiritual movement.” He also works with the international Contemplative Alliance, Father Thomas Keating, (founder of the Centering Prayer movement) and the international Integral community. In science, Dr Johnson has published over 200 professional articles and seven books on evolution and ecology. His popular book *Nabokov’s Blues: The Scientific Odyssey of a Literary Genius* (co-authored with New York Times journalist Steve Coates) was a “ten best” book in science in 2000 at *Booklist*, *Library Journal*, the *Washington Post* and *HMS Beagle* and “Editor’s Choice for 1999” at *The Seattle Times*. Johnson, Teasdale, and colleagues cofounded the international Interspiritual Dialogue association in 2002, which presented at the 2004 Parliament of the World’s Religions and then expanded to become the virtual Interspiritual Multiplex web resource.

Dr Johnson resides in Brooklyn, New York.

David Robert Ord



David Robert Ord is a former Presbyterian (USA) minister and Graduate of San Francisco Theological Seminary. He coauthored along with Dr Robert B. Coote the books *The Bible’s First History—From Eden to the Court of David with the Yahwist*, *In the Beginning—Creation and the Priestly History*, and *Is the Bible True? Understanding the Bible Today*. David is also author of the Namaste Publishing book *Your Forgotten Self: Mirrored in Jesus the Christ* and the audiobook *Lessons in Loving—A Journey into the Heart*. He is Editorial Director for Namaste Publishing and resides in the United States.

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