MOUNTAIN SIGNALS

2012

Sailing High Seas

Thoughts from The Chaplain on Signal Mountain

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MOUNTAIN SIGNALS 2012:

Sailing High Seas

Thoughts from The Chaplain on Signal Mountain

Contents

The Chaplain's Comment.

This year of 2012 is a significant one
for The Chaplain on Signal Mountain.
It is the reason these essays
have been assembled into this document.
It is a celebration of many literary efforts - worthy and not -
written over the years leading up to this date.

Many of these essays' themes
have been in mind for over a decade,
finally penned in these last few years.
Many have been written for previous specific purposes.
Others have been written this year in reflection on times past.

Readers may not agree with the thoughts expressed.
Some readers will recognize those which were dedicated.
More importantly, others have never read any of this.
Someday, they may find interest to browse through and find
what the Chaplain has been all about.

Read on with contemplation, inquiry, and enjoyment.

Chaplain on Signal Mountain
01 November 2012

MOUNTAIN SIGNALS 2012

Sailing High Seas

Thoughts from Chaplain on Signal Mountain

Expanding the "Arc of Existence:"
## Tatian, Fechner and the span of Becoming.

The Arc of Existence is the construct of Tatian, a second-century Greco-Roman writer. Tatian wrote the Arc of Existence to refute those who believed in human immortality. The arc was specific: the span of human life is only from birth to death; there is nothing human after a life's natural existence.

Is Tatian correct?   Or, does the expanse of his arc fall short?

Whereas certain philosophers promise their adherents
life after death and describe human existence as a circle
without beginning or end, Tatian holds out to his readers
the prospect of their own transience. He speaks of 'our own
span passing away.' Man passes, changes, finishes his span, dies.
Not a circle without beginning or end, but an arc, a short segment
of the circle with a defined beginning and definitely prescribed end
would be the proper figure of human life, according to Tatian.
Man's life is described by the arc of existence.

This is Tatian's Arc of Existence as explained by Jaroslav Pelikan in
"The Shape of Death," (Abingdon, 1961).

Tatian's Arc says, death means natural physical death. When life reaches its end, life is done. The body ceases life functions and then decays. Tatian's arc denies any expectation of human immortality; denies any concept of reincarnation (samsara); and, denies any circular human existence. Tatian is specific in his thesis that humans have no authority or control over "what happens next" - after their physical demise. That authority remains solely with the "source of which life has originally come." Pelikan adds, "Neither for his original birth out of the nothingness of non-being, nor his ultimate rebirth out of death can man take the credit." Tatian places the source of life in the sovereign realm of the Creator. It is only the Creator that has authority over immortality; to believe otherwise would place a human existence as equal to a cosmological existence. The "original source" beyond the human is the arc's theological orientation.

Tatian's
Arc of Existence

Birth   Life   Death

non-existent
human immortality
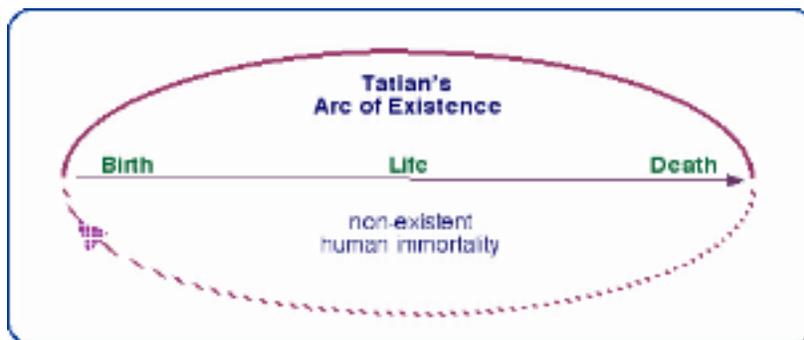
There is another orientation. The "what happens next" offers the potential for something else after organic death. This raises further questioning. What was the before nothingness? What came from non-being? What is rebirth? What goes to the what happens next?   These are the issues of the arc's metaphysical orientation.

To investigate both orientations, let us first discuss what is or is not beyond human life, as in the after life. Many faith traditions believe Heaven is the after life. Heaven is the most referenced after life state of existence. The pleasure of Heaven is often the goal for the manner in which one lives one's life. Zillions of people believe in a Heaven. It answers the where of the "what happens next" question. Heaven is at the theological end of Tatian's Arc. So if Heaven is accepted, then, what goes to enjoy the pleasures of that Heaven? For many, the answer is the "soul."

What is the soul?   This is tough, considering all the variants of the soul concept that exist; from classical thinking through numerous religious beliefs into modern philosophical thought. One line of soul thinking is, the entire body is a tripartite construction consisting of the body, the rational and the irrational. Another is the Cartesian "ghost in the machine." And another is, the soul is the governing entity, the psyche of the human species. The problem in explaining the soul is, where is it? Is it a physical organ, sinew, fluid, or molecule? If the soul cannot be identified, pointed to, held, or surgically removed, does it actually exist? (This is similar to the debate over the mind and brain being separate entities.)

Explaining the soul is difficult. Even so, many agree there is a soul. Moreover, many believe the soul goes somewhere after death. As an anecdotal exhibit, this writer conducted a survey of twenty graduate anthropology students taking a Death & Dying

course. The survey asked: if they believed in a Heaven; do humans have souls; if so, what is a soul; does a soul die with the person; if not, where does the soul go; and, what happens to the soul when it gets there? The twenty students prescribed to various western and eastern faith traditions, including atheism. Not all believed there was such a place as Heaven. All twenty indicated they believed humans have a soul, but were unsure of its description. Out of the twenty, eighteen believed the soul went somewhere after death. Among those, none could be definite about where it went. Most were sure the soul did not return to human life. That is, it stayed wherever it went. The reader is encouraged to consider these questions, and to conduct their own survey.

Let us agree, for this discussion, that a soul does exist. Also, let us agree the soul is a separate entity within the body, which does not die along with the body's organic death. So, what happens to the soul? Does it hover over the dead body, the corpse, not knowing what to do with itself? Is it lost or stuck? The answer might as well be Heaven. What then? Do souls just pile up in Heaven?   Do they just hang around with nothing to do? Or, do souls get used again? Are they sent back for further assignment? Maybe. If souls have some existence before and after death, then it may be possible that souls have an existence before birth? This was a view posited by Tatian's teacher Justin Martyr. That is, if one believes something exists after human life, then one must believe there is some form of existence before human life. If the soul somehow emigrates to somewhere, then it must be possible that it immigrated from somewhere, prior to it entering its human life form. One might accept the soul moving on to a Heaven, but would one accept something like a pre-Heaven?

Now, this discussion needs a more recent view. Nineteenth-century German philosopher Gustav Theodor Fechner (1801-1887) wrote a very interesting book called Life After Death. It is his only book translated into English. In it, Fechner offers the concept that the human body dies twice. The first death is upon birth from the womb. That is, the fetus was a body in the womb. It had to die that existence to be birthed. After that death, the body became a person and lived its life as an individual. The second death comes as that earthly body ceases. Fechner believes, just as there is a life after the death in the womb, there is also a second life after the death in this world. Something must exist after that second physical death.
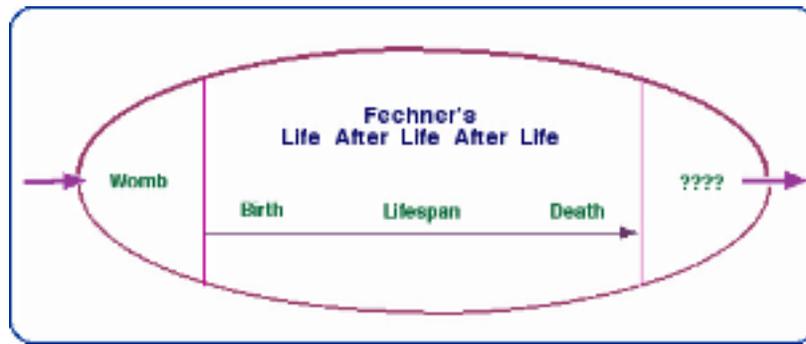
This writer now offers a précis of two other elements in Fechner's Life after Death.

Our lives continue on after we go to the grave.

Think of how we carry the memory of a loved one

after we have put their remains in the ground.

Think of the ways we memorialize our lost souls

with headstones, monuments, statues, plaques, buildings,

names over doors, photo albums, portraits, artifacts and heirlooms.

Some past lives may be contained, retained and maintained.

One might say they are institutionalized; for example,

Washington, Victoria, MacDonald, Lincoln, Pontiac, King, and so on.

Are these not lives after death?

Fechner also believes that when we remember a lost one,

it is not us who creates the remembering.

It is the lost one who returns to be remembered.

We are being visited by that life after death.

One can feel it. This is not far fetched. (Sorry for the pun Fechner.)

Has this happened to you, too?

Some would say, the spirits are returning. Maybe the word "spirit" answers all questions in this entire discussion: of a life after death; of the existence of a soul before and after; and, the what happens next. The concept of spirit appears in many faith traditions. It represents not only a divine entity, but a transcendental entity. It represents an attitude, a human self worth, a congealing doctrine, an esprit de corps, a lingering, a resilient philosophy, a ghost, an ancestor, the "other side." Possibly, the human spirit is the human soul that carries on from the generations before the womb, to

the generations that follow the grave. On and on it goes. This is the basis of what is called Process, or Becoming.

Process is both a philosophical and a theological construct. Alfred North Whitehead (1861-1947) posited Process as a philosophical concept. Charles Hartshorne (1897-2000) added the divine to Process to make it a theological concept. This writer offers a contemporary explanation of Process.

Consider the three dimensional product

well know in the construction industry as the "Traffic Cone."

This conical item, often bright orange in color, is known for its use

to demarcate areas where builders and constructors

do not want people or vehicles to enter.

It is a safety notification device of that which is being constructed,

for those who are doing the building,

and for those who are traveling nearby.

Often a large quantity of these cones are used on a work site.

Their storage takes up a great deal of space when not in use.

Because they are hollow cones, they can be placed one over the other

This is the basic idea of Process.

The cone at the very bottom is holding up all cones above.

The cones above cannot be held up without the cones below.

The cones below are the uplifting force for the cones above.

The cones above receive their placement from the cones below.

The stack, as it grows higher, receives its form from all the cones.

Cones above, receive some form of energy and influence from all below.

There is a transfer of energy between all cones in the stack.

The cone at the very bottom is the origin of that energy.

A transference of something is within this entity, this stack of cones.

Life is no different than that stack of Traffic Cones. Our parents transferred a substance, an influence, an energy, to us while we were in the womb. Before we were conceived, they received that same substance, be it influence or energy, spirit or soul,

from their parents. How far back in time does this go in our genealogies? Maybe forever. If we have children, we move that same substance on to our offspring and they to theirs. On and on it goes; the Process, the Becoming.

> This is "life after death, after death, after death, ..."
> This is the spirit coming from somewhere, going on to somewhere.
>
> Is this the soul transmigrating over the generations?
> Is this life without a defined beginning or end?

Tatian, did your arc fall too short?

> One fact is for certain:
> whoever we are today, some part of us no matter how small
> - whether spirit or molecule -
> has been given to us from the very first soul, a long time ago.
> This is Tatian's "source of which life has originally come."
> It is a very long ever expanding Arc of Existence.

Best Regards to All.

Chaplain on Signal Mountain

2010

WHERE DOES THE UNIVERSE END ?
by Chaplain on Signal Mountain

Where Does the Universe End??

Astronomers tell us, the Universe is expanding - pushing outward.

Physicists tell us, the Universe may have been caused by an explosion - the Big Bang.

Nuclear scientists tell us, they may have found the source of all - the "god-particle."

Sacred Scriptures tell us, the world was formless, and God made the firmament - heaven.

Theologians tell us, God is the Ultimate Being - Creator of "everything."

Statements such as these suggest a conflict between science and faith.

This tension is nothing new. For sure, they offer material for inquisitive minds:

a) astronomers could determine the Universe's expansion by measuring

changes in the distances between known celestial bodies;

b) an explosion of some sort could explain the Universe's outward movement;

c) an atom-smasher could bust apart an atom into tiny, tiny pieces;

d) a belief in one Ultimate Being as the Creator of all things could come from ancient

writings of an ancient people - among many others who believed everything was created

and determined by any number of cosmic gods.

For the sake of conversation, consider these thoughts.

1. The scientific stuff. Accept that the Universe is expanding, with all its gases, masses,

voids, visible and invisible matter, radiation and gravitation energies, protons, electrons,

neutrons, neutrinos, quarks, "god-particles," and whatever. Also, accept the Big Bang

theory and existence of a god-particle as the source of creation.

2. The faith beliefs. Accept that an Ultimate Being created all the above, and formed all

into what is visible and known today. Also, accept that the Ultimate Being controls all the

effects upon the living species. And for some, consider the potential of Intelligent Design

and an Intelligent Designer.

Since the ultimate source of creation is in contention, consider this scenario?

Let us say, the god-particle and the Ultimate Being (call it God) unite, they are now a Unit.

Also, the firmament is the Universe. God and the god-particle Unit unleash the Big Bang,

sending its particles outward, racing throughout the firmament-Universe. Crashing into

each other, these particles take on various forms. Nuclear fusion then produces complicated molecules with various atomic structures.

Result: God and the god-particle Unit has created a new world,
                   which is forming and pushing outward from its nondescript locus.

Moving on with this scenario. The firmament is equal to the Universe. The creator Unit of the firmament-Universe is now identified as "God the god-particle." This Unit causes the Big Bang, pushing the firmament-Universe outward.   If the Big Bang is expanding the firmament-Universe, then in what space is this expansion taking place? Is the expanding firmament-Universe like a vessel having an outer shell? Could this Universe-vessel resemble a balloon floating in some other firmament-universe? As an example, we play with balloons filled with water. The water is the expansion of particles, the balloon is its vessel. The water filled balloon is now a universe-vessel floating in a space we call atmosphere. In what space is both our water balloon and our atmosphere floating? Do these now represent a new universe-vessel which is floating in a greater universe-vessel? Should our water balloon universe-vessel burst, the water particle expansion empties into the succeeding universe-vessel and the expansion continues on. If this example works, then it suggests there are greater and greater concentric universe-vessels, each holding a balloon-like firmament-universe. Even the greatest of concentric universe-vessels, the overarching firmament-universe, must be contained in something? Where is the outer limit of these universe-vessels? This is like a photograph of a photograph of a photograph. Inward and inward goes the image. The same concept applies to going outward.

There is a second level to this: where was God the god-particle, BEFORE? God the god-particle had to be somewhere before the Big Bang occurred. Which universe-vessel contained God the god-particle? If God the god-particle was in the innermost universe-vessel, this might explain the initial expansion that astronomers observe. Still, how did it get there? How did it form? If God the god-particle was outside and beyond the outer most universe-vessel, could God the god-particle have been exterior to all of the firmament-universes, distant from us. Where was it waiting? Why did it begin creating?

This essay suggests a summary of thoughts for contemplation.

First, there must be an extreme end to the Universe, somewhere.

Second, there must have been a form of atomic action creating our physical Universe.

Third, our Universe cannot be the only one. We must be a part of something greater.

Fourth, it is possible that our own unique created Universe is only the one we know of and can see. Consider that there may be more created universes made by more big bangs caused by more than one God the god-particle. Some will call this heresy, blasphemy.

Fifth, all this opens the door for a possible ultimate-ultimate God the god-particle which oversees many penultimate God the god-particles. This establishes one ultimate-ultimate never-ending source of everything else. Scriptural historic exegesis initiates this thought, as in, El, Elohim, El Shaddai. Even so, where is its home? It must be somewhere. Maybe those simply holding faith to One Ultimate Being causing all, are the most settled.

Sixth, there must be some way we, the Universe, and God the god-particle are connected.

       Here is a belief system proposal,

offering how the Universe, the Ultimate Being, the god-particle, and we are all connected.

First, credence is given to both the scientific and the faith scenarios,

Second, contemplate the total enormity and unknown of, Where Does the Universe End?

Third, place God the god-particle and universe-vessels in the firmament-Universe.

Fourth, insert pantheism and panentheism:

             - we concurrently exist as part of and within what is thought of as God. and

             - that which is thought of as God exists within and is part of each of us.

We exist within both theologies. Interchange the word God with either Ultimate Being, god-particle, or Universe and the dialectic structure remains the same.

       Alfred North Whitehead called this connection a Flux. It is an inward and outward Process of Becoming, providing elemental energy both ways. Charles Hartshorne created a variation on this. He added a cosmic Ultimate Being to this secular Becoming. Hartshorne turns Flux into an ever changing flow of energy between mortal and immortal. Add Martin Buber: His "I and Thou" offers a dialectic between the mortal Us and God. These are not twentieth-century-only thoughts. The ancient writings of Chinese Taoist Lao Tzu said, "our self is lent to us by the universe." We are all within the universe. The universe is within all of us: its elements, its molecules, its energies. Our bodies are mostly water. We are energized by the sun. We breath atmosphere - both good and bad.

We gain vital nourishment from the soil, We alter the natural habitat. That habitat alters us. (Examples: hurricanes, forest fires, earthquakes, solar radiation, ozone layers and more.)   We look into "the heavens" and desire to travel there. We are in search of life on other planets. We search for our beginnings out in space well beyond our Earth. We seek to understand our place in the Universe. We are both part of and within the firmament-universe created by God the god-particle.

Where does the Universe End? Maybe, someday, we will find out.

Is there an Ultimate Being? Is there a god-particle? Possibly, one or both. Whether the ultimate source is God or a god-particle, we humans are within both. Each of these sources are within us. We are also within the Universe and it is within us. We have a responsibility to and for all of this.

Should the reader follow these thoughts, they might consider that we humans may actually be closer than we think to the never-ending source of "creation" in our Universe. Here on Earth, unless we destroy ourselves, destroy our environment, our atmosphere, our earthly elements, our fellow humans and other species, we may be able to continue to create that which God of faith, and the god-particle of science gave to us

"In the Beginning" with "The Big Bang."

Best Wishes and Thoughts for All.

Chaplain on Signal Mountain.

Summer 2012

IS THERE AN ERROR?

Is there an error in the essay, "Where Does The Universe End?" "Where Does The Universe End?" presents a theory of the Universe as a series of concentric spheres which have been created by an ultimate creative source. In that essay the ultimate creative source could be God (also known as the Ultimate Being), or it could be the Big-Bang (with the discovered god-particle). As well, it could be the two were joined, to form an Ultimate unity called "God the god-particle." Creation was then initiated by this "God the god-particle," and the Universe spheres were driven outward.

The essay asks a second question, "Where was God the god-particle, BEFORE?" That is, where was the Ultimate unity before the spark of creation? Was it within or outside the Universe spheres? In that essay and in this one, the question is unanswered. Even so, that essay's conclusion draws this view of the Ultimate unity:

Whether the ultimate source is God or a god-particle, we humans are within both. Each of these sources are within us. We are also within the Universe and it is within us.

This conclusion is based on pantheism and panentheism, and natural theology. These can be found in ancient writings from the Tao and Plato, to Spinoza and Locke, to the contemporaries Hartshorne and Gibson.

What is the error in "Where Does The Universe End?" The essay infers that since the Ultimate unity is within us and we are within it, the unity is in the here and now. Being that humans are part of this Ultimate unity - God or God the god-particle - it must be imminent, always with us and in us, part of us. Thus, as long as there are humans there is the Ultimate unity (which implies, if there are no humans there may be no Ultimate unity). What if this is wrong, and the Ultimate unity only did the creation, then stepped aside? Meaning: whether God created the firmament, or the god-particle created the Big Bang, when it was all done the Ultimate unity stopped being a factor in what happened next. This way, the Ultimate unity is no longer imminent - not alongside us, away from us, and not active in our everyday lives. Possibly, the Ultimate unity gave the Universe and all its living forms the power of autonomy. That is, we humans are in

charge of our own destiny, leaving it up to us to make it or break it by our own choices, regardless of how it works out.

There is a basis for this line of thinking. It bears fruit from what is happening in our world on Earth, even as this is being written. Violence, war, destruction, crime, starvation, hatred and greed abound across our planet. Start with a purely theological view of God as the Ultimate. If God is Omnipotent, why would God allow these Evil acts to persist? Natural disasters and disease are present everywhere. If God is All Beneficent, why would a loving God allow these to happen? If God is Omniscient, would not God provide solutions to overcome these Evil occurrences. "Where Does The Universe End?" suggests that God (as the Ultimate unit) experiences all this Evil, just like us. Think, if God is actually imminent - with us, within us, active in our everyday lives - why would God want these problems to continue? Is this the error of that essay? (Read more about this theme, in Charles Hartshorne's, Omnipotence and Other Theological Mistakes.)

This leads to the subject of Theodicy - in brief, God's goodness and justice. Moreover, Theodicy includes the question of God's authority over Evil. This is both a theological and philosophical question. Basically, if God is All Powerful, All Knowing and is All Good, then how can there be Evil and all those bad things listed above? Why would God leave all this for humans to deal with? The question has been asked by a range of writers; like, Augustine, Leibniz, Spinoza, James, and countless other theologians and philosophers. There are various explanations: 1, Evil is a part of God, one which God is not able to control or overcome; 2, Evil is a challenge for God, but God's power is limited. (These suggest God is not Omnipotent.) Another explanation: God permits Evil in order for humanity to have Freewill, so through humanity's moral decision-making it overcomes Evil on its own.   (This suggests God is Omniscient and created Evil as a thoughtful "gift" for humanity.)

Others propose Evil as a separate issue from God. That it exists on its own. That it is a necessity. That Evil is a matter of human existence.

There is the doctrine of the British Neo-Hegelians that this world is
a "vale of soul-making," that soul-making requires struggle against evil,
and therefore evil is a good, a positive-element in this being

the best of all possible worlds.   (AK Rule, in 20-th Century Religious Knowledge)

Here, Evil must exist to be a contrast to Good, giving a choice in human morality.

If Evil must exist, is it part of God (Ultimate unity), and is it for the good of humanity? Is Evil existent outside of God, not created by God, and uncontrollable by God? Augustine believed Evil was not created by God. If Augustine is to be accepted, then Evil must have been created outside of God, and thus equal to God. This might suggest that Evil existed at the time of creation, along with God the god-particle, waiting in the wings, BEFORE creation. If so, it is possible that Evil had a part in creation, which explains why Evil appears early in sacred texts. Evil appears in the Hebrew Torah, Book of Genesis with the evil serpent. Evil appears as the fallen angels. Evil appears in the Christian Testament with Satan tempting Jesus in the desert. Where did these antitheses come from? If God (Ultimate unity) created all, then either God created Evil as its anti-God, or some other equivalent ultimate source created Evil to oppose God. Or, Evil created itself by itself to exist as an alternate to God.

If God created Evil acts as a means for humanity to find its own moral compass, why did God (Ultimate unity) create devastating natural occurrences, like earthquakes, hurricanes, floods, and drought? Why has God taken the innocent and the young with diseases, like childhood cancer? These are beyond the control of humanity. It seems to not make sense for God to willfully allow these Evils to happen. How many times has the cry been heard, "God, why did you let this happen to me?" Or, "God why have you abandoned me?" Maybe through all this, God (or Ultimate unity) is just not here with us. Is it possible the real answer is God or the god-particle did creation and has let humanity do what it does, all by itself, even in the presence of Evil? Christians believe Jesus the Son of God, one of God's Trinity, "died for our sins." Why does sin continue, rampantly? They also believe, "God sent his Son, the Prince of Peace." How well is that working? Excuse these challenges, they are merely questions for consideration.

Faith is just that, faith - as Kierkegaard wrote, "A Leap of Faith." Those beliefs challenged above are examples of what organized religion has infused into its followers. Those who blame God for not being there for them when they are "in need," for God allowing "bad things to happen to good people" (reference to Rabbi Kushner's book), and

for "not answering their prayers," might consider that God has done all of what God intended to do: create the Universe and humanity, leaving the rest in our hands for us to mess it up or fix it.

Is there an error in the conclusion of "Where Does the Universe End?"

Here are the choices:

a) God or God the god-particle created all including us,

created the good, the bad, and created or allowed Evil

to be part of human existence, then stepped aside,

to not actively participate in our everyday lives,

such that, humanity could control the end result, on its own; or,

b) the original conclusion of "Where Does the Universe End?" is correct,

that is, the Universe, Humanity and God the god-particle (along with Evil)

are a unity - one big package - all in it together.

Either way, we are to blame for the Good, the Bad, and especially the Evil. Choosing a), we are on our own to do as we desire. Choosing b), we are a part of God, as well as God's Theodicy. So, when one asks why God has "forsaken me," they must turn the question upon their own self, and struggle for an answer.

This essay is about thinking. More over, it is a call for the faithful of any belief to look beyond and question the words they are given by any organized religion, faith tradition, or philosophical thesis. Even the concepts expressed and proposed in this essay need thoughtful consideration. What seems to be most important is for our minds to be open to new concepts. Accepting them or not, it is important to realize and appreciate there are many views and beliefs on what is the Ultimate and how it affects our lives, on any given day. Finally, the deepest contemplation should be, what is Evil and how can we change that which is in our control. This is our world, we live here, we have the ability to redirect it away from Evil. We must redirect it away from Evil!

Chaplain on Signal Mountain

Fall 2012

Let Me Tell You A Story.

I would like to tell you a tale; an animal tale, or should I say "tail." This story I shall call, "This Little Piggy Went to Market." (Apologies to the author of this most memorable nursery rhyme.) Oh, before I begin to tell my story, I must ask the reader to think about these few questions. The little piggy went to market, how ? Did it go to shop like you and me ? Did it go in the back of a truck to a shop ? Did it ask to go to market ?   What happened to the little piggy when it got there ? Do you get my thought ?

This Little Piggy, its name is Lucky, and what it did is the first chapter of my story. Lucky is a little piggy on a mission to provide essentials for its little piglets. Lucky is about to do what many of us do, we shop for things at a marketplace. As with those of us who have families at home, Lucky knew its responsibility was to supply the proper nutrition and material goods to keep up its family's well being. So to market Lucky did go.

Now, there is another Little Piggy in my story. This one is named Not-So. Not-So was on its way to market, but not for the same reason, and not to the same market. You guessed it. Not-So was on its way to the meat market to become proper nutrition. Do you think that Not-So wanted to go to market this way ?   Maybe Not-So, being a neighbor of Lucky, was angry that its destiny was chosen to be what it was to become. Why Not-So and not Lucky ? Why Lucky and not Not-So ? Were not these two Little Piggy creatures equal ? Did the origin of their creation decide that one piggy was better than the other ? Was it predetermination ? Was it just the luck of the draw - no pun intended ? Who was to decide ?

Many questions are raised in the opening chapter of my story. Where does the story go from here ? Let us both look at the questions just presented. Lucky and Not-So were both animals created for a reason by the origin. Here the origin is God, through the workings of humans - animal husbandry persons. God made both animals equal in being; although they may not have been equal in stature. For Lucky, it was a piggy given the mission of being human-like in its responsibilities. Not-So obviously was given the mission to be, well, you know. The correlation to humans is easily observable. Humans were created to be equals, even though they may not have been equal in stature (using a broad definition of stature, here). Sure, humans do not treat each other as equals. God did. God created Adam as one human and Eve as another human; as Hebrew Scripture tells us. At the beginning they were both equal - the (Tao) yin and yang of human - beings. They had a purpose given by God to be partners, a team , "one flesh," to be "fertile , increase, and fill the earth... ." That is, to cultivate and nurture the earth, and live side-by side with

the other creatures of the earth who were the first helpers for Adam - human. (Torah, Gen. 2:18) Good story. But, there is another version in Genesis chapter one (Gen. 1:28). Here God indicates that man, without name, is to rule "every thing that is to creep the earth in which there is the breath of life." Here is one answer to the question of why Lucky and Not-So are not being treated the same: it is man - humans. God saw humans as good, so says Genesis. But, humans wanted more. And, a non-human creature (also created by God, remember) became the promulgator of the saga that life became. The concept of equal became not so equal. One element of the species became unequal to the other. Species became unequal to each other. Who was to decide which was more equal, more superior ? Humans became the deciders. Humans took the decision-making away from God; or, did they ?

The legendary theologian, scientist, cleric, and oracle of early Christianity St Thomas Aquinas, became the source of much of the theological thought of the early church. His Summa Theologica established numerous elements of church dogma. Even more, he established some of the critical doctrines of humanity which are still regarded today (one being a Just War criterion.)   St Thomas divided humans and non-humans into two categories : those which are rational, and those which are not. Easy to guess which category humans fell into. Aquinas was not a non-human. For Aquinas, animals possessed no mind and no reason. Because of their nature, St Thomas opined that animals were to be in the service of humans. Why ? Because God said humans were the rulers, as it was spoken in Genesis 1:28. To this, I suspect St Thomas added an interpretation from Genesis 2:18 which places animals as the helpers of humans. And finally, because Aquinas thought that animals cannot love, and that love is for God and human neighbors only, then animals have no status with God. (Aquinas did not own a dog I bet). .

As time went along St Thomas' thoughts dug into the fabric of Christian thinking. Karl Barth in the early twentieth-century stuck to this theme. As Genesis states, God gave the responsibility to be "fertile, increase and fill the earth" to humans, that made humans the entrusted species in the lifeline paradigm. Barth also saw the emergence of Jesus as God incarnate, as the indicator that humans were to be the superior species. Barth seems to believe God was not going to give the honor of being the Saviour to an animal. Thus Barth, a respected scholar and honored Christian theologian of the Roman Church, entrenched the concept that animals were put on this earth to be used by and treated by humans as humans pleased.   These two voices held court for a while. There were other voices which came forth to raise up the value, importance and respect for all living beings, as God said " in which there is the breath of life." One such was Albert Schweitzer.

It is Schweitzer who I owe the initial spark for a new belief in the place that animals have in the

God-sphere. God created animals at the same time as humans, depending on which creation story you choose to follow (in one animals came first). Schweitzer's essay "Reverence for Life" (Schweitzer, Civilization and Ethics, 1923) raises up the "life-affirmation" of all living beings. The will to live is a universal instinct held by every creature, regardless of size or location. (Schweitzer's book was first published the year before the "Scopes Trial" on evolutionary thought versus creationism.) His beliefs also left open options for human responsibility towards non-humans. That was the door which when opened showed that outside of absolutely no human use of animals - as helpers - any action towards animals should not be thoughtless or unethical. These are the concepts that society has now slowly grown into, regarding treatment of non-humans - animals.

A reverence for life does not mean that those humans who are carnivores are bad people. Beings have a food-chain hierarchy. A human eating a little piggy (oops, sorry Not-So) is no different than a whale swallowing hundreds of smelt in one gulp, or a lion consuming a gazelle. The chain is evident at every level. Luckily of sorts, or maybe not, the only animal in the food chain which is above another human is a human. A reverence for life does mean that how we raise those animals we use for food production or consumption is the issue. Do we treat those animals with respect, without pain, without inhumane treatment ? Interesting how inhumane as a concept has always existed, but not observed. These thoughts go beyond animals as food. They include testing purposes for the benefit of humans, animals which are used for sport - either legitimate of illegitimate (there is a dichotomy) - or for protection, and so on. Beating a dog such that it become a fierce guard dog is just as horrible as training that dog, or a rooster, to become a fighter in a ring for betting purposes. Enclosing a chimp in a small cage, to not roam around with some freedom, while it is a subject for medical experimentation is no different than enclosing a parakeet in a cage with no room to fly. Pain and discomfort for an animal is no different than that for a human.

We as a society abhor the maltreatment of humans. We revile conditions like Darfur. We gasp at the loss of life from a suicide bomber. We do not understand how an angry parent can abuse or kill their own children. Need I say more. No. So why do we overlook the treatment of animals ? Is it because we do not care ? Is it out of sight, out of mind ? Is it that we do not know how animals are treated for experimentation, sport or food ? In a recent discussion of these questions with a few colleagues, one phrase kept coming forth when these questions were contemplated: "I never thought about it that way."

Aquinas may have thought that non-humans were not feeling beings - I am certain he never owned a pet. Barth would have never accepted Darwin's theory, I believe. Schweitzer had a theory which

has gained acceptance. But, in the final review, why has the human species overlooked the fact that God created animals, just as and at the same time God created humans ? If God loved life and existence so much that God also created animals to be fertile, expand and fill the earth, why do humans feel that they are the only living creatures who should not and cannot feel the pain of abuse and maltreatment ? Why did Lucky get to go to market to shop; and, why did Not-So go to be shopped (sp) ? Humans have decided - with or without God's blessing. Lucky for them it was not the animals.

Epilogue.

This story is about Lucky and Not So. It is a story about humans and animals.

Does the reader notice some of the same concepts in how one human treats another ?

Is this story a metaphor on how one culture, class, society, community, Race, treats others who do not wear the same "Label?" That is a conversation for another story.

Best Regards to All.

Chaplain on Signal Mountain.

2010

It's Good Friday, Let's Do Stations of the Cross.

As an early grade schooler I attended Catholic school at Saint Boniface parish.
Each Good Friday, the nuns would march us down to the old church
- a massive late 1800s structure.   It was three o'clock and time to go home.
There we would sit in our blue shirts and black ties, quietly.   Then the mass would start.
Incense would fume throughout and my eyes would start to burn.
Up in front was our pastor and some monsignor reciting words in Latin.
The adorned entourage - altar boys, candle-bearers, and several nuns at the rear -
would then work their way down the outside walls of Saint Boniface, stopping and going.
All I can remember of the Latin they sang was the word " levate " and then,
we'd get up from the kneelers. The whole experience was an aerobic workout.

On those walls were sculpted depiction of Christ's passion.
Sadly, I admit I think there were twelve - I am not sure now. Must be I've blocked the
memory. Even so, the church would be filled; some men, mostly women.
Saint Boniface was a high immigrant descendant parish : Irish, Germans, Italians.
All would recite the prayers, sing the hymns, and do the up-and-down for an hour.
As my life went along, I swayed from the RC direction and became a protester
in the shadow of Martin Luther. I too had problems with the RC way of things.
But, there again on the walls were those same stations, although not so elaborate.
Since, I've attended Anglican and Episcopal services and have seen those stations.
I've been to Church of Canada, Presbyterian, Methodist, Baptist, Congregationalist,
AME, and non-denominational churches and services and have not seen them, again.

Well, that's a nice history.   So what, you say ?
The "what" is in the connection between the representation of Jesus in those stations,
the attributes of Christian congregation members, and the word "Christ."
Let me start the explanation by first using pop-culture. I have not seen Mel Gibson's
movie "Passion of the Christ."   Many have. I've seen "Jesus of Montreal" and some
older bible flick starring Charlton Heston (?). And, I have seen and do enjoy the movie
"Jesus Christ Superstar." In all these films, who was Jesus?   How was he represented?
He was a human man. He was a Jew; although the films seem to make little of this point.

I'm not sure they make much of his religiosity. He does seem to pray often to the Father. My impression from these movies is that his Christianity is happening, right then and there. And, of course he was tan in color. Was Jesus, the Christ, in those stories? Was he still Jesus of Nazareth ? Watching those films, I can recall thinking that Jesus was very "Christian" at that time - maybe this came from the nuns drilling into me the title "Jesus Christ."

      Apply my recounting of the movie images of Jesus to the imaged representations of Jesus on the Stations of the Cross. They look the same. They bring the same thoughts. By the way, somewhere I have read that the portrait of Jesus used most often was painted by some Italian several centuries ago. I cannot confirm this. When I look in many illustrated bible versions there is often a picture of Jesus looking like this Italian portrait, or similar. Very handsome and definitely tan, of course. In my attaché case I have a Sunday newspaper coupon for an LED portrait of Jesus praying in the garden. The ad promotes that this backlighted glass portrait as, "Created from Christ's own words," and is, "Formed with Jesus' every word from the New Testament." I am compelled to carry this ad with me everywhere. I need it, as it "will serve as a constant reminder of God's love in my home" - or so says the reason the ad wants me to make this sacred investment. (If you want one, hurry, order it from Bradford Exchange: $ 125.00 plus $14 s+h.) Unfortunately, the picture of Jesus is in black and white, so I cannot tell if he is tan. Please note that it is proudly made from both "Jesus' words and from Christ's words." The ad doesn't tell me which words are which though. It's a mental dilemma.

      Sadly, whether Jesus was a man of Nazareth, or a deity made man by God, who is the Christ, JC has become an enormous " product." He's become books, artwork, music, etc. For some, he's a great income generator, both on the "stump" and on the "tube." In the current environment, JC has also become a powerful political tool. But, this has been happening from the time Jesus the man became the Christ. "What a power we have in Jesus!" "Praise the Lord< and send you check to the PO Box at the bottom of your television screen."

      It is this using of Jesus Christ that begs the question: who was Jesus of Nazareth

and who is Jesus the Christ? Moreover, how does the everyday Christian, whoever and wherever they are, consider Jesus and Christ? How and when do they differentiate the two? Do they really care? My answer is they do not. It seems they are seen as all one. In the mainstream of Christian followers, I believe that for those followers Jesus of Nazareth was the Christ, right from the get-go. By Christian doctrine, Jesus is the only begotten Son of God - so we are taught. Christians are taught, at birth that Jesus is divine and shares in the Trinity, etc. If one is brought up Christian there is nothing else to know.   It's church doctrine. This is especially true if one is Roman Catholic, Lutheran, Anglican, or received their religious education in a European-based Protestant denomination. In America, too numerous denominations and congregations drill the concept that Jesus is the Christ, the savior, the only Son of God, and the only God in this world. And, the only way to get to Heaven. It seems the direction for these hard-core Christians is that any other god worshipper is a charlatan, a sinner, and is doomed. Jesus is God. Jesus is it. End of story, even if the God of Jesus just happens to be the same God of Abraham and Mohammed. As well, Jesus has become The God for a variety of evangelical Christians. For some, there seems to be a disconnect between Jesus and God. Jesus is the totality of their worship experience. God is a secondary or tertiary entity. There is no three part Godhead - it's just Jesus. It is here that I believe the Jesus product emerges. It is a source for the basis of Jesus as a political tool. It is a tool that is being covertly applied onto many who do not or chose to not look beyond the words of those who "preach" the words of Christ (in LED portraits, no less).

      This venting may seem in its own way a "preach" from a different view point. It's the way I relate to the Christianity of this Old World-driven New World-context. Do not discount my comments before revisiting and assessing the evangelizing methods used by the early Christian church to spread Christianity. The Roman Church spread the faith across Europe often in a forceful manner. As the Roman Empire believed in Pax Romana, so did the Holy Roman Empire. Converting the heathen of Europe was a necessity for land and power control. Without any explanation, consider the Spanish Inquisition, English Inquisition, use of the Knights Templar and the Crusades. Consider the disputes between the French and Roman papacies, the Roman and English church, and the Reformation.

Christianity was spread by way of physical struggles, all in the name of Jesus the Christ. The indigenous peoples of French Lower Canada were coerced to Christianity in order to draw their allegiance to France and to control their fur trading activity. British North America was settled by "white-men" escaping Christian persecution. The indigenous tribes of Spanish South America were ravaged into slavery and converted to Christianity to control their actions as well as their precious resources. French, Dutch, Belgian, and British went into Africa to control its land and assets. One must not forget how American slave holders used Christianity to maintain control. Christianity has been a tool to find a means for communication and control of power. The same has been happening in Eastern and Southern Asia. French, Spanish, British, and American missionaries for centuries had been working to convert the indigenous peoples and those of eastern faiths to Christianity. They were and have been successful.

The question that now comes into this discussion is how did they do it. Of course, the missionaries created schools to teach the locals to read, write, and adopt Euro-Western cultural ways. They also opened hospitals for humanitarian purposes, and for keeping up the health of indentured workers. But, how did they convince indigenous peoples to abandon their own traditions and adopt a very western religion of a very tan man who was then not even Christian? Enter the historical Jesus, Jesus the man of Nazareth. Also, enter here scholarly study. There has been a great effort of late to investigate the historical elements of Jesus. This includes his experiences in the ambient condition of Roman control, Jewish temple worship and Torah, lifestyle and work environment of his peers, and their anticipation for deliverance by way of God from their " hell on earth." Scripture had told them a man would come to deliver to them God's Kingdom. Here comes Jesus, a person of similar condition, a seemingly wise peasant type. Jesus, as related in the Gospels, did many things that the prophets had foretold. His miracles and his teachings showed him to be not just a normal human. As he developed his message and acquired his followers he became a leader. His mannerisms and his actions opened the doors for everyone, especially those who were on the margins of life. He railed against the abuse of the Jewish laws as being applied by the priests. He preached that the purity laws were flawed. Jesus embraced those who were the outcasts to the accepted status levels of society. This included the sick, the poor, and

those accused by Torah to be sinners. He reversed the view that women were no better than chattel. In essence, he defied the Jewish purity rules and boldly showed his defiance to the religious leadership. His spiritual message established him as a prophet of God in the eyes of his followers. There were some who thought he would lead a revolt against the Romans. Some found his message and actions detrimental to Rome's controlling status quo. Others found his spiritual stance too heretical in the Jewish religious world view. These elements are all attributed to Jesus of Nazareth - the human, living, tan man. In this way, Jesus can be summarized as a teacher, prophet, healer, leader and a rebel. All this before he died.

So, what about this death? It was not a pretty way to go. If he was to be the awaited Messiah, how come he died in such a non-heroic manner? It's not how he died, but his subsequent resurrection that established Jesus the man, to be revered as Jesus the Christ, the Son of God, and a member of the Godhead. Without the resurrection the deal could not be clinched. This has much to do with the fact that no other faith tradition can say that their venerated deity was once human, died, then arose to a transcendent life, and then reappeared to prove it.

Now we have what the contemporary marketing folk call the talking points: human, peasant, peer, teacher, healer, leader, divine, God. How do these talking points become the selling points for Jesus, the tan man, to draw in all aspects of the Christian community? Since this community has come to include not only the original societies of the early church, but peoples of different cultures, races and continents; both men and women; as well as, those of former faith traditions; and, people who look black, brown, red, yellow, tan and very white.

When the disciples became the apostles and carried the new faith into societies other than their own, they began to encounter different world views. They first took the new faith into the Jewish synagogues creating Jewish Christians. Then on to the gentiles. Eventually, the movement "conquered" Rome and beyond. The faith evolved into the state, and advanced across Europe and became entrenched in the colonization scheme of the European imperials. As noted above, missionaries were sent out along with the imperialistic adventurers and militaries into the far reaches of the globe - once

the kings found there was such a shape. When they encountered the inhabitants of those lands, how did they convert them? These people were not "emigrants" like those immigrant descendants of my church. As noted above, first there were schools, hospitals, and plenty of new churches built. But, these people were black, brown, red, yellow, and very not so European. Jesus of Nazareth was now the Christ, Messiah, Son of God, God, etc. And, he was the object of this new Christianity, but this Jesus was a Jew, and tan (olive, maybe). How could those to be converted accept Jesus, who was not Christian and did not look like them, as their new God? How could they look at the images of Jesus, and be told that mankind was created in the "Imago Dei," but not see their own colors, eyes, noses, hair, etc. The answer goes back to the talking points.

Many of these distant societies had similar faith structures. Their traditions relied on ancestors and gods who were identified as peasant, teacher, healer, and leader. Traditional indigenous religions like those in eastern Asia, pan-Pacific, Africa, and some western hemisphere cultures were based on ancestor-worship. Ancestors were those people from their past who had lived a good "holy" life. They were the leaders of the past, their protectors, and often their healers. These ancestors shielded their villages from the bad spirits and the demons. They were revered and honored, and had passed on to the next world by a good death. And, in the minds and worship factors of these peoples, their ancestors were always present, always ready to aid their courage and help in their struggles. The ancestors were with them to share in their hopes for a kinder life Jesus, the historical figure, satisfied many of these qualities. He was a leader, a teacher, a healer, a spiritual man and for some, a rebel who tried to change the peasants' world. Even the good death factor could be overlooked: in death Jesus came back to life. Plus, in the teaching of Christian doctrine, Jesus was always present, "sitting at the right hand of God." His aid was a matter of one's faith and prayers. Jesus was their ancestor - they just did not know it, until they were "taught it." Their ancestors could not be seen and had not risen from their dead state like Jesus. Being God, as proved by the resurrection and by his reappearance, Jesus could be seen as more powerful than these peoples' ancestors.

It's easy to see how the Jesus talking points have made the Christianity sale. It worked in the North American experience, both for indigenous Canadians and

for southern American slaves, along with others. In the emerging third-world Christianized nations, many who represent the church in leadership capacities - theological and ecclesiastical - work to make a case to relate former indigenous and traditional faith structures with the attributes of Christianity and Jesus. These contemporary Christian views seem to profess and desire a genuine acceptance of Jesus the Christ as the original forebears of their own historical traditions. (Take for example, Patrick in Ireland.) Some say that Jesus is to be seen as the original and most powerful ancestor; and, all of their own venerated ancestors should be seen as only equal to the spectrum of Christian saints. For me, this view is apologetic. In fact, I see it as ludicrous. It is an acculturation of European Christianity. It is a taking of the European doctrinal methodology and molding it into their own methodology, to appear as if it is original. Those who lead with this technique will try to dissuade those who see it as acculturation. This is to be expected: they know that for someone to accept Jesus the Christ as savior, that someone has to understand and accept the message of Jesus is being liberty. Liberty means to choose one's direction freely - their liberation.

Jesus lived in a solid patriarchal society, this borne out by the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures. So, how can women find Jesus the tan Jew man as their savior? This is especially compounded by the institutional church's tradition of minimizing of the role of women - then and continuing now in some denominational structures - to a secondary status behind men in ministry, leadership, and privilege. Today, a refreshed movement of women has become intent on raising the status of women by way of a new read of the Jesus gospel biographies. Through these gospel stories they have identified a revised testimony to the importance of women in the time of Jesus. And, they have carried that image into an acceptance of Jesus as their savior, their messiah. In the Torah, women were close to being only property. Their rights as humans were controlled by men. Females could be used by and offered for use by husbands and fathers, as they so pleased. Women not men were the sinners in certain relationship situations, regardless of the circumstances. They were used as sex objects and had no voice in religious, marital, or child matters. In Jesus, women found a man, a spiritual leader, who thought of women as equal. Jesus bucked the Torah's traditional view of women. He respected their humanness. The Christian gospels show that females played an

important part in Jesus' life. Women have reread the gospels to shed new light on their importance: a woman first recognized Jesus as divine; it was women who found the tomb empty, revealing that Jesus had risen (becoming the Christ); the male disciples went into hiding, while the women did not; Jesus was born of Mary, he did not just appear on earth. Women discern the gospels differently than men. It is all in the interpretation. But, it is the womanist perspective that has opened the door to exposing men to a more egalitarian viewpoint. Jesus was a spark. Women keep trying. Finding the wisdom of and actions by Jesus of Nazareth and his respect for women, and then carrying all that into the faith of Jesus the Christ is how many women are accepting Christianity in a new way. This is their connection to those selling points.

Finally, does Jesus the Christ reflect Jesus the man of Nazareth, today? Christianity began in the deserts and valleys of Palestine. It began among the Jews. One could consider it a third-world region as compared to a first-world Roman Empire. It slowly grew through the evangelizing of the apostles of Christ, eventually overtaking the then first-world. From that Old World, it was carried into what could be called at that time, the "second-world," the New World. That New World was won over. Over more than a millennium, Christianity came full circle - better said, full globe. It has been returning again, over the centuries, to the third-world regions. Along the way, Christianity has had significant positive impacts, and many bad ones. New nations, new cultures and new peoples are being absorbed into its folds for reasons that I have been explaining in this discussion. There have been and still are many nations and cultures who have been and are resisting Christianity's advance. This is good: leave well enough alone.

There are tragic battles going on in the name of religion these days. As I wrote earlier, Christianity was used as a tool to gain land and control. It is a political tool being used to control our own country (USA), in a very divisive way. The legacy of conquest by several religions over these millennia has brought renewed turmoil to a world which one religion thought it could bring "Pax Holy Romana." Jesus the Christ and Jesus the man of Nazareth were both the object of divinity and the symbol of faith which the early and later church believed would succeed in calming the earthly world. The expressed relationship of Jesus with others in the world is clear. There is every reason to believe

that being the Son of God, Jesus of Nazareth knew that a religion would form in his shadow and, would develop and surround the globe. I believe that Jesus had no idea of the manner and the absurd and abusive techniques which would be used to convert (or coerce?) populations and dominions to Christianity. If the gospel writer of John's end of the world scenario was inspired by God or Jesus, then it is possible Jesus knew all.   If it was only attributed to a contextual world view as seen by the writer of John, then its current use by the stump-and-tube "Jesus-product" preachers is just one more reason why Jesus the man and the Christ would be ashamed of the results of his mission to change the course of Jewish Israel. I wonder if those white, immigrant women and men in the pews at Saint Boniface during my childhood Stations experience ever thought that Christianity had been developed in this way. I wonder if they would have believed that there would be many more faces joining Christianity which did not look like them, or the tan Jew on those Stations, known as Jesus of Nazareth. And, I wonder if they ever could believe that Christians would become at odds with other Christians over the use of the power offered by Jesus the Christ. And, I wonder if those God fearing, faithful followers of Jesus the Christ would buy a LED portrait to be "a constant reminder of God's love" in their homes.

Chaplain on Signal Mountain
at Seminary, 2004

Have you watched television lately?

The kind of television source where there are hundreds of channels and programs. Have you ever stopped to watch any one of those programs which show one, two, or more people behind a podium, diaz, or coffee table often wearing elaborate garb? There is one in particular that draws my attention. It is a man with a lofty and plentiful white hairstyle wearing an ornate bloused shirt under an austere suit jacket. Down below this image, at the bottom of the screen is an 800 telephone number, actually it is an 888 number. "Call now, your donation helps us to keep giving you God's word."

Okay, you get the picture I am sure. I too see the picture, but I keep wondering what is it that God is telling that person, preaching and begging. Do you think God is saying: "Operators are waiting for your call. The first ten callers get a free dashboard statue of me (oh well, I guess it will have to be 'my only Son' '"cuz" this charlatan spent all your donations on his condo, a jet, and that dumb hairdo.')" But wait, "if you call right now and have your credit card ready you will get absolutely free, a magnetic key ring embossed with 'God Loves You Every Time You Use This." What a bargain. Thanks God.

The reader has now classified me as a heretic. (For the record, a heretic is one who holds an unorthodox opinion.) Are those words heresy, or mere skepticism (doubting all accepted opinions)? The message here is, "when did God become a product - a marketing tool? Is it not that, what is being done by that bouffant hair "preacher"? There is an advertisement that came in the coupon section of my Sunday paper. It is an ad for a digital image of Jesus of Nazareth praying in the garden of Getsemene (that is, before Jesus became the Christ upon resurrection). "Captures every word of Jesus in the New Testament. Only $125.00! I wonder how much royalty goes to JC, or to the writers of the Gospels. Another ad in the same coupon section is for pistachios: "God's Gift for the Holidays," ... with this coupon (expires December 26). Buy Now.

Creative license? Good taste? Exploitation of God? An exploitation of believers is more likely closer to the truth. Is God or Jesus a product? That is my question. In the daily newspaper are personal ads that include "appeals to the the Virgin Mary." The paper actually gives a template prayer, which purchasers can fill in the blank. I have not checked the advertising rates, but I am sure Mary gets no part of the profits. Are God,

Jesus, and Mary products? Let me ask now, is not this heresy?

This skepticism goes far beyond profit making. There are so many avenues in the human experience where God has been used as a reason to commit violence. You can guess without my being direct my exhibits. How about one half of one western nation island holding a war over political control, divided by sects of the same faith? How about two sects of the same faith in a middle eastern region killing each other over whose last clergy was the true last clergy? How about a very large eastern nation, co-opting a faith tradition in order to control a territory politically? And, how about a nation so near and dear to the western world whose former leader issued a proclamation of war because "God told me to do it?"

When did God become an excuse for violence created by humans? If one abides by Genesis, as all faiths of The Book do, God said all that was God created was good. Then again, also Genesis portrays God's wrath as response to the ills that humans did to the world God created (sin, greed, jealously, sex, murder). According to Genesis then, God is a beneficent creator, but a vengeful judge for the malevolence done to God's creation. That could be read that God created good, and through God's actions only God alone is meant to issue violence on humans.

So, when and where did God turn over that responsibility to individuals, leaders, nations, non-nations to reek havoc violence and destruction on each other, especially in God's name? In my opinion God did not. And, I suspect God did not see God or Jesus or any other deity as a product.

How does this get changed? One way is for followers of various faith traditions to stop listening to those who say they speak for God.

at Seminary 2004

Chaplain on Signal Mountain

MOUNTAIN SIGNALS 2012

Sailing High Seas

Thoughts from Chaplain on Signal Mountain

To Lie, Or Not To Lie. That is the question.
A Play in Three Acts.

ACT ONE. "Your Nose Is Getting Longer."

White Lies.

> This is the simple lying we may do because the lie seems trivial.
>
>> "I did not drink for the milk carton."
>
> Or, the lie is justified as a better result than upsetting someone.
>
>> "No honey, that dress looks fine, even if it is two sizes too small."

What are the consequences of such lying?

> One, we avoid conflict with the other.
>
> Two, we avoid potential embarassment for the other.
>
> Three, we open the potential for a lack of our credibility, if caught in the lie.
>
> Four, we are showing disrespect to the person told the lie.
>
> Five, we may not tolerate receiving such lying in return; So why do it?

ACT TWO. "You Are A Habitual Liar !   Or, Not ? "

Our Habits.

> Much of our upbringing and our moral base comes from
>
>> parents, education, religion, life experience, and so on.
>
> It can also come from our exposure to certain societal norms.
>
> If a norm is to lie, then lying is acceptable. If not, the opposite.

Our Habitual Selves.   As we grow we develop repetitive tendencies, such that

> we do not know we are doing those tendencies.   No forethought.
>
> This is the case with lying. We may do it regularly without thinking.
>
> The same is true with honesty. Some are habitually honest.
>
> Then again, each may consciously decide to do the opposite.
>
> The ultimate test is, what the person does consistently, without thinking.

What are the consequences of such habits?

> We cannot easily break the cycle, the "learning" as LaFollete calls it.
>
> We become known by our habits. Some to be trusted, some not.
>
> We arrive at the slippery slope: moving from white lies to big lies.

ACT THREE.   "Avoiding Death By Peanut."   Professional Lying.

      What if: you worked for a firm that was knowingly causing harm to others ?

         When asked if you thought your firm's product was safe,

            what would you answer ?

         Dilemna   your position requires you to abide by the rule of the firm;

               your job depends on you giving the company line;

               the court, government, police, whatever, requires the truth;

               you know what you have to say is not the truth, entirely.

         Do you step aside from your position, risk your position, your fortune;

            do you tell the truth or lie ?   Is such lying, really lying ?

         Do you eat from a can filled with your peanut snacks, or claim the Fifth?

         Are you a deotologist or a consequentialist / utilitarian ?

Epilogue: "A Classical Kantian Dilemna."

         Gene is walking down a street.

         Francis runs up and says, " Terry is trying to kill me, and runs off."

         Terry runs up and asks, "did you see which way Francis went ?"

      Question 1: Do you tell the truth ?   Are you a deontolgist ?

      Question 2: Do you lie to save Francis ?   Are you a consequential utilitarian ?

      Best Regards to All

      Chaplain on Signal Mountain

      2010

FOUNTAIN OF MORAL ESSENCE

Juan Ponce de León was a real man.

The Fountain of Youth was a legend.

The two found fame in Florida.

Ponce de León searched for the legendary fountain. He never found it. The legend survives. The fountain is untapped.

While a real Fountain of Youth remains elusive, your Fountain of Moral Essence is near at hand. That fountain, that morality, that essence resides within each of us. Somewhere in the depths of our being is the fountain head of our moral essence. This is where our moral structure has been given its life and begun to grow. The flow of that fountain has brought each of us to where we are today - at whatever point in time we choose to call "today'.

To begin, here is a bit of psychological history.

Swiss psychologist Jean Piaget is known for his theory of how human intelligence is developed. His theory is based on a cognition model which involves a stepped process with changes being made over a sequence of chronological eras, ranging from childhood into adulthood.   Piaget's work exhibited how a child's reasoning quality improves over these eras, resulting in more accurate and thoughtful answers to questioning. It was a model which investigated how children arrived at the answers they gave, not what they gave as answers. That is, he observed the approach they used to solve the problems presented them. Over time a child receives - their cognition of - a variety of influences, such as, from family, education, environment, and so on.   The thrust of Piaget's theory was that, the human mind operates on the elements of organization and adaptation (adaptation might be assimilation or accommodation). The important factor in this is, an adaptation to an existing organization of thought occurs as we pass through each of Piaget's chronological eras.

Enter Laurence Kohlberg.   Kohlberg used Piaget's early twentieth-century work and theory to develop his own, "cognitive-development theory of moralization."   It begins with Piaget's assumptions that thought and feeling develop on parallel tracks.   Meaning: as one begins to think more thoroughly, one begins to feel the nature of what one is thinking.   Kohlberg's contribution adds: as we develop physically, mentally, and emotionally, we begin to establish values, or alternately, we begin to live by values that are established.   These values may be introduced while we are infants, such as, "the crib means sleep."   Or, as toddlers our parents inform us, "crying is for babies."   As youngsters our elders demand, "children are to be seen not heard."   As adolescent students we are told, "sit down or you'll go to detention."   As teenagers the rule is, "be home by eleven or your grounded."   And, as adults the requirements are, "get a job, start a family, pay your taxes, and don't complain too much."   Values are ingrained over time by family, school, government, church, circumstance, and hard knocks.

Okay.   It is time to think about one's own cognitive-development of moralization.   How did your moral essence develop?   Much of it began within those eras indicated above.   But, and a big but, along the way those established, imposed and expected values were altered by you.   This writer cannot tell you how or where on the road of life you changed, adapted, accommodated, or possibly assimilated your adherence to those values.   At this point, it might not be of concern to you.   Even so, you got this far in this essay.   So, let's continue.

You ask, why is this important?   Think of it this way.   You know you like potatoes but will never eat a brussel sprout.   You love warm weather and avoid cold and snow.   Along your road of life, you determined certain likes and dislikes were to be part of your comfort zone.   In the same manner, for example, somehow you came to abhor animal abuse.   Something informed you of that.   Maybe, as a child you had a neighbor who loved to hurt small animals.   That experience informed your world view, your moral essence.   Other experiences along your life's highway informed you as well.   So now,

Other experiences along your life's highway informed you as well. So now, why not explore the source of your moral standards?   Agreed?

Moral Influences	Era by Age 0-7	8-12	13-18	19-24	25-44	45 +	
Parents							
Siblings							
Spouse							
Your Children							
Family Member							
Neighbor							
Friend							
School							
Teacher							
Religion							
Clergy							
Profession							
Work							
Program							
Counselor							
:Literature							
Politics							
Military							
Life							
Laws							

When finished, you will arrive at an accumulation which reveals that certain elements had more influence than others. As you did this exercise, hopefully you were thinking about why those elements had their influence. It is possible you cannot answer or identify that. To help with this, we must go beyond particular people and institutions in your chronology. We must also explore the environment in which you were developing.

To help identify that environmental influence, we will use what is called a

To help identify that environmental influence, we will use what is called a Histogram. The Histogram is used to identify what was happening in and around your life at specific points in your time line. Draw a Histogram like the one shown here, leaving plenty of room for writing in the spaces.

Moral Histogram
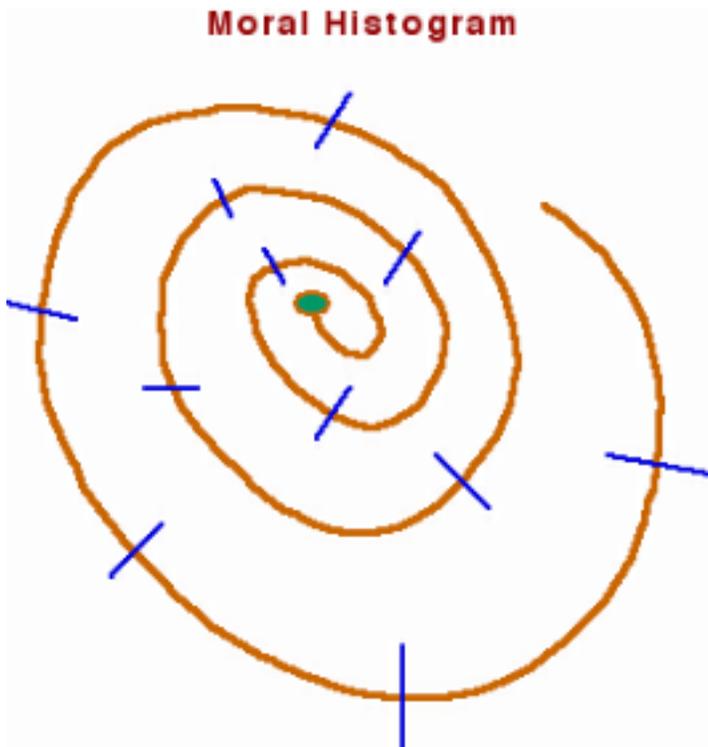
The gradations should be seven to ten years. Mark your age at each gradation. Then, fill in the space between each gradation with what was happening in your life; and, alongside that, a notation of what was happening around your life. (As examples: age twenty one, you graduated from college and you met your future spouse; at age thirty, you got divorced and you lost your job; sorry about that!)

When finished using both tools, sit back and take some time to think about your results. Why did those influences have their effect on you.? How did the happenings of your life affect you? What have you learned from all this?

Can your mind see what has brought you into "today"?

The answers are near at hand - as close as your paper and pencil. Again, this writer cannot answer for you.   Even so, now that you have completed these exercises, you should have a better portrait of you, your moral development, and an understanding of the "waters" that now flow from your Fountain of Moral Essence. Good job!

What Labels Do You Wear?

Go to your closet. Look what's hanging there.

Look at the labels. Are they designer brands? Discount brands?

Natural fibers? Machine or dry clean? New. Old. Unknown.

Have you worn them recently?   Are they your everyday wear?

Do you keep them because, well, you've always worn them?

Do you wear them because they're the "thing" that's in?

Have you ever changed labels because your tastes changed?

Why did you change your taste in the labels you wear?

Has anyone ever asked you what labels you wear?

Are your labels clear to others, without your own description?

Asking too many questions about something too simple? Simple answer: we all wear labels that we often don't see. Labels can be hiding on our backs, or hiding inside. Sometimes we rip them out so no one knows the real value of what we wear.

Of course, I'm not writing about what's hanging in our closets. I'm writing about the labels that hang on us. So, let's think about why we wear the labels that make us what we are? Did you notice, I did not write, "who we are?"   Often, it is not clear that we knowingly, and unknowingly, define and describe ourselves by specific labels. Not sure what I mean? Here are some examples: American, alien, conservative, liberal, wealthy, middle class, suburban, urban, senior, boomer, yuppie (if that is still current usage), generation XYZ, my faith, your beliefs, your race, my ethnicity, my house, your apartment, your car, my public transportation, my club, your public park, I watch hockey, you play golf, we speak English, they don't.

On and on this could go - add some yourself.   These are all labels. They may be words on this page, but those words represent an attitude by which we define and conduct ourselves. An attitude, which separates us from others and often joins us with others of like labels. Labels have a community feel, at the same time they

have a barrier feel. This chaplain often says, this is the picket fence syndrome: "I see you, but I cannot touch you, and it keeps you from touching me."

Labels create boundaries. They cordon us off from others who are not like us. They allow us to remain in the company of others like us. At the same time they help us remain in a "safe place," such that we do not have to encounter others who we do not understand, are uncomfortable with, and do not care to meet. This can happen even if it is not in our best interest.

Labels allow others to define us. Whether those definitions are accurate, warranted or desired, our wearing them - along with the like-labeled others - sets us up to be seen in a specific way by outsiders to that label. If my label minded buddies are party people, who often drink a touch too much and get a bit too wild, is there a possibility that I am seen as a similar type person - even though I rarely drink? If I am an independent thinker who may agree with progressive ideas, does that make me any less of an independent? Does that mean I am the opposition to a conservative thinker? Who decides that? Maybe I do, by how I let those decisions outwardly control my actions and words. Maybe I do, by overtly joining in with those who are more dedicated to that thinking. Maybe I do, by not wearing a label that says, "what they do is not me."

When we wear labels, we allow ourselves to slip into defined groups, isolated experiences, exclusionary circumstances. When we wear labels we actually "hold prejudice to our own beliefs" (so says Thomas Paine). That prejudice holds us back from expanding our minds and our world view. Labels can create a prejudice within ourselves, and a prejudice by others towards us. This is not growth evolving. It is personal devolving.

Best regards to all.
Chaplain on Signal Mountain
2010

Honor-Shame: Its Effect on Community Harmony and Harm.
Is There is a Place for Restorative Justice?
by Chaplain on Signal Mountain

Honor is a virtue which a society needs to hold itself together in Harmony.
A society in Harmony is one where all members attend to their commitments,
adhere to established norms, and do nothing to shatter the fabric of that society.
To maintain this state of affairs, society members must respond with the same rhythm.
That rhythm includes how members perceive themselves and how they are perceived by others.

In all societies, honour has both a private and a public aspect.
On one hand it describes an individual's self-respect;
how a person sees himself and his relative value in society.
But at the same time, measures of honour also dictate the extent
to which society accepts a person's self-worth and help determine
the level of status and material benefits which it accords him as a result.[1]

The princely man cultivates his self-respect.
Show self-respect and others will respect you.[2]

The individual society member and the society as a whole are a "Self" and an "Other,"
respectively. Each is a dance partner within the society. Self and Other are connected
hand-in-hand; sometimes happily, and sometimes not. Honor and Shame are connected
as well. Honor and Shame exist in a dance of opposing forces; one demonstrative, one
diminutive. A society, or a community, requires their dancers to be in step with a
favorable harmonious rhythm. Just as when a dancer might step on their partner's foot,
a corrective action is desired in order to maintain the partnering. Otherwise, the dance
is over and the dancers separate unhappily, maybe to never partner again.

Shame is Honor's opposing force. Those in the state of Shame do a Harm to the
community's rhythm. Even so, those in Shame need not be needlessly scorned, isolated,
or un-partnered from the community. A return to Honor and respect is not only the
responsibility of the individual (the Self), it is also the responsibility of the community
(the Other). This is a necessity in order to preserve Harmony. Dealing with these
opposite states and returning all to Honor is where this paper is directed. It is an
investigation of Honor and Shame, and how to turn Harm into Harmony. Along the way,
the principles and techniques of Restorative Justice will be applied.

SOURCES of HONOR

The concept of Honor is found in societies across the millennia.
Our contemporary society defines Honor as:

(n.) a good name or public esteem; a showing of merited respect;
high respect; glory; nobleness of mind.

(v.)   to regard or treat with respect; to live up to the terms of a commitment;
adherence to what is right or to a conventional standard of conduct.[3]

Being in the state of Honor means one is within or part of a sphere of cyclic Harmony.
Their good deeds bring Honor upon their Self, and recognition by the Other. "To deserve
the name gentleman, he must be sympathetic, painstaking, and kindly; sympathetic and
painstaking with his friends, kindly towards brethren." (Confucius)[4]

Among the ancient sources of Honor are those found in China. Although Confucius
is readily known as Sage, there were also the Taoists Chuangtse and Laotse [or, Chuang
Tzu and Lao Tzu (≈571 BCE)]. Confucian writings were a cultural source for
relationships to duty. Laotse wrote romantic inspirations which were more tuned to life
and the inner soul: "In my words there is a principle."[5]   Laotse's writings were
paradoxical, representing Tao's active-inaction or creative-quietude: "Do nothing and
everything is done;"[6] also, lessons from the opposite powers of yin (-) and yang (+).
The same opposites exist in Honor-Shame. They operate in a dialectic, existing and
opposing each other in a unity. Honor is the positive, Shame is the negative.

Laotse relates the harmonious positive of Honor to happiness:

Perfect happiness is described as success. When the ancient spoke
of happiness and success, they did not mean the symbols of rank and honor;
they meant the state wherein one's happiness was complete.

... one should not forget oneself over insignia of authority,
nor should one do what the world is doing because of failure and poverty.
He is happy in failure, as well as in success, and therefore, he is without sorrow.
If a man is unhappy when things loaned to him have been taken away from him,
then it is clear that when he was happy, he had lost his true self.[7]

One upholds one's Honor through Self-respect, regardless of hardship, or experience on
the negative side of a pleasure-pain scale. This is Honor as asserted by the Self. There
is also Honor that comes from the Other.   Laotse describes it as, "Your life is not your
self, it is a harmony lent to you by the universe." (One description of Tao is, the 'Way of
the Universe.') It is, "... merely the working of the yang principle when it is in
dominance." So, "... entrust that which belongs to the universe to the whole universe (all
Tao 4:10)."[8]   Here, the positives of Honor are attributed by the Other - the community.
It is a "lending" of harmony, happiness and pleasure.

Two centuries later, Aristotle (≈350 BCE), in his Nicomachean Ethics, strikes a similar theme as Laotse. That is, an honorable person retains their self-respect (Aristotle uses pride) whether faced by good or bad affairs.

> ... honour is the prize of virtue, and it is to the good that it is rendered.
> Pride, then, seems to be a crown of the virtues;
> for it makes them greater, and it is not found without them.

> ... the proud man is concerned with honours;
> yet he will also bear himself with moderation towards wealth and power
> and all good or evil fortune, whatever may befall him, and will be neither
> overjoyed by good fortune nor over-pained by evil (Bk IV.3).9

Within the early books of Nicomachean Ethics, Aristotle proposes that, "men seem to pursue honour in order that they may be assured of their goodness; at least it is by men of practical wisdom that they seek to be honoured ... (Bk I.5)."10   Aristotle attributes the desire to do good as a means for happiness - the goal of men. When one is doing good, one is virtuous, one is happy, then one has pride, is praised, and thus one is honored - a sphere of cyclic Harmony.   Aristotle also recognizes it is within us to receive disdain rather than praise: "it is in our power to be virtuous or vicious (Bk III.5)."11

> Witness is borne to this both by individuals in their private capacity
> and by legislators themselves; for these punish and take vengeance on those
> who do wicked acts, while they honour those who do noble acts as though
> they meant to encourage the latter and deter the former (Bk III.5).12

The result is a judgment of pride/honour or blame/shame by the Self or the Other.

Although the Torah - Five Books of Moses - was written around 500 BCE, it represents a major influence on our contemporary society, enveloping three Semitic faith traditions. The Decalogue or Covenant Code (also known as the Mosaic Code, and commonly known as the Ten Commandments) is found in the Book of Exodus (Ch 20).13 It is a prohibitive code, with eight Shall Not's out of the ten, and two Shall's which pertain to sabbath and family. Whereas Confucius is an early source of the positive "Golden Rule" (Do Unto Others), the Covenant Code is a reciprocal version (Do Not Unto Others). The Shall Not's then, represent a set of guidelines to prevent one's removal from the state of Honor. More directly, it is a set of rules to not cross in order to avoid the state of Shame.

According to Jewish philosopher Saadya Gaon, "The great motive for the observance of these principles and the laws derived and branching out from them is, of course, the command of our Lord and the promotion of our happiness, but I find for most of them also some minor and partial motives of a useful character."14

This may be the result of the Hebrew's view of Sin. Hebrew Scriptures scholar Gerhard

von Rad reviews sin this way:

>   ... sin was any grave breach of this divine law,
> ... in political life, in the world of the family, and in every other sphere
> where people had dealings with one another ...
>
>   And wherever it was committed, it was looked on as a direct insult to God.
> Sin was also a social category. Through ties of blood and common lot
> the individual was regarded as being so deeply embedded in the community
> that an offence on his part was not just a private matter affecting
> only himself and his own relationship with God. On the contrary,
> wherever there had been a grave offence against the divine law,
> what loomed largest was the incrimination
> which the community experienced at the hands of God.... .
> The community thus had a vital interest in the restoration of order.[15]

     Native populations in North America are believed to have originated in Asia, and migrated to the new continent between 40,000 and 15,000 BCE.[16]   One group which settled in the north east of North America were the nations of the Iroquois. The Iroquois Confederation consisted of five nations in upper New York State: Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga and Seneca. Their "League of Peace" was created to bring peace between these previously warring nations. The league's tenants created a coexistence method, as well as a unified protection plan against the rival Huron Confederation in Canada. A key tenant of the league was Righteousness: "justice practiced between men and between nations." Men also meant women. The league's egalitarian tenants gave chieftain powers to females and males. The coexistence tenant was most important for harmonious life within the Seneca Nation. Known as People of the Long House, Seneca did their wintering in single dwellings occupied by the entire clan. (Search Ganondagan, capitol of the Seneca Nation.) Rituals were also a founding principle of the League of Peace. The Condolence ritual was a significant one. Its basic purpose was to express a grieving for the passing of a chieftain. It had additional benefits for the enduring harmony of the five nations.

>   The focus was on community and the renewal of kinship ties, ...
> The grieving people 'used the occasion to recite their history, rehearse social
> and political principles, and renew their commitment to order and reason.'
> The Condolence ceremony was so foundational for Iroquois life that it became
> the ritual model for diplomatic relations with outside groups.[17]

The Iroquois Condolence ritual is one origin for the Restorative Justice Circle process.

SELF and OTHER

To be in a state of Honor is to be in a peaceful place, a harmonious place. All is well. Life is beautiful. We are honorable persons. We know it and others know it. How did we get to this place, that is, being described by the word Honor? We developed these: specific attributes of ourselves; an identity by which we became known; and, an assortment of character "qualities, the hallmarks by which we are identified by others."18

Our actions, our methods, our beliefs have directed us to treat others with respect; or, to adhere to expected conduct; or, to fulfill our commitments to others and to the sphere of influence of which we are a part.

> The higher type of man makes a sense of duty the groundwork
> of his character, blends with it in action of harmonious proportion,
> manifests it in a spirit of unselfishness, and perfects it
> with the addition of sincerity and truth." (Confucius)19

We took on various roles as we developed in our lives. "What we value and what we fear are within our Self."20   The concept of Self (that an 'I' exists) "travels through its development, along with every other part of our life experience."21   Our life experience has been an era of Self Becoming, a Process. Alfred North Whitehead and Charles Hartshorne are well known for their concepts of Becoming and Process: the former in philosophy; the latter in theology.22   Process is the acquisition and shedding of personal attributes as we progress through our lives. This flow of Process can be examined through the mental and moral lenses of Jean Piaget and Laurence Kohlberg.23   Included in this concept of Self Becoming is also the matching concept of Other Becoming. Other can be described as anyone who is not us. This is a reminder of Martin Buber's philosophy of "I and Thou."24   He formulates that we are the "I," with God as the "Thou." We are the opposite of the "It," which equates to all the Other. We are in a dialectic of "I and It" - the Self and the Other. The result is an interplay of character constructs between both Self and Other Becoming.

COMMUNITY and HONOR

The concept of Community has a denotation and a connotation. The dictionary describes Community as "all the people in a specific location," and "a body of people in common, a similarity" (Oxford American). The macro Community is an overarching sphere of influence. In this macro sphere are numerous micro spheres. This recalls the image of a solar system: many cultural Community subsets revolving within what is the gravitational pull of the wider Community. In addition, on those subsets are numerous groups and individuals who exhibit diverse characteristics with a diversity of ideologies. These may be defined by such things as ethnicity, origin, faith, language, class, age, race and any other distinctive label.
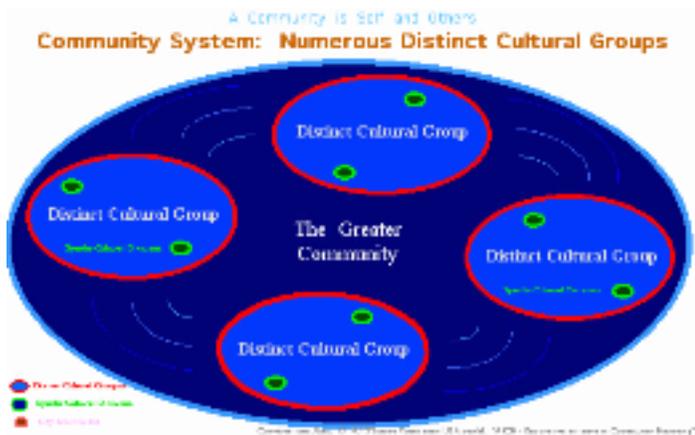
When a Community encompasses many individuals of similarity in a specific location - the micro subsets - distinct and diverse sets of Self and Other result. These each exhibit a range of attributes, identities, personalities, and roles played. "Each role assumed, each personality portrayed, involves some sort of affect-display." (Affect-display: a desire leading to some sort of visible action.) Roles assumed and Self identification open the door for actions acceptable to and/or contrary to the consensus of the Community. It is within this interplay between Self and Other where Honor may be challenged. "Those with the greatest difficulty in understanding the nature of Other are usually those who have the most trouble establishing a sense of Self."25   When there is this disconnect, there is the need for a consensus on expectations by all Self and all Other.

Developing Community consensus requires an understanding of the concerns and issues of those who make up that Community - both in the denotative and connotative senses. It requires a bringing together of the micro elements, such that a macro map of the Community's characteristics can be created. It is an inclusive discussion of attitudes, ideologies, likeness, preferences, and relationships. This is an education process. Each Self of the Community learns about the Other. It has been suggested that prejudice, dislike, and friction often occur through a "fear" of the Other. Fear can result from a lack of knowledge and understanding. This inclusive program of building consensus alters that lack of knowledge, and has the potential to reduce the fear of the Other; reducing its accompanying prejudice and potential dissonance.

Inclusive Flow of Concerns and Initiatives

Cooperation & Consensus Utilizing RJ Circle Process
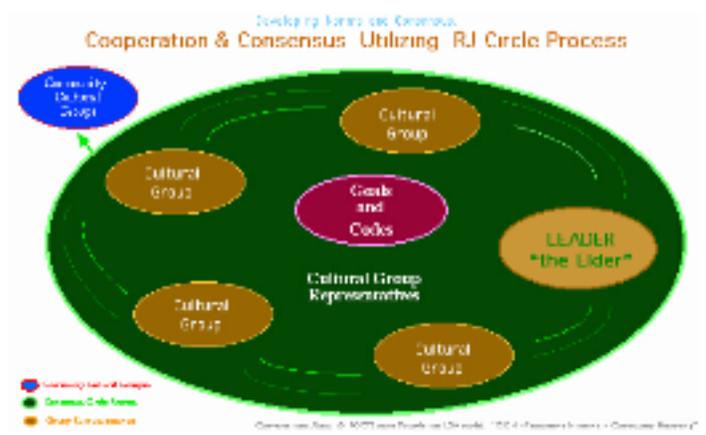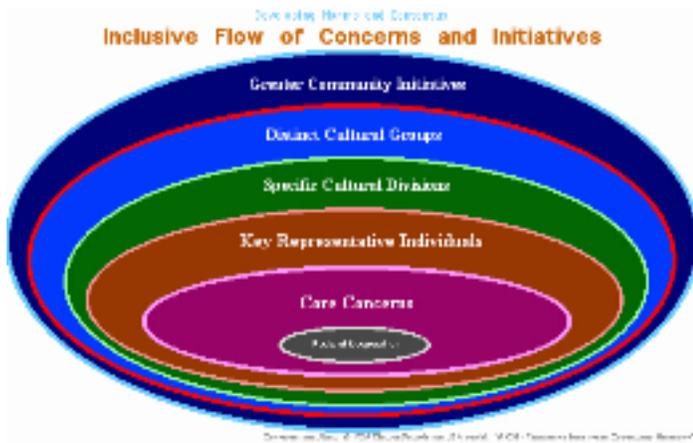
The intended and expected result is a consensus on goals and a commitment to those goals. This is the building of Norms and the criteria for a Code of Behavior. It is a seeking of the common factors which can "Establish a Culture of Harmony..." within the overarching construct of Community. As well, it is the exposing of root factors that may exist between the connotative communities which can create a lack of Harmony, "... the Presence of Dissonance." Or, as this writer likes to describe it: "When neighbors are not being neighborly."26   Achieving this ultimate goal of Consensus, Norms and Codes of Behavior can be obtained through the Restorative Justice processes - more about it later. Here is where historic ethical concepts apply: (a) the deontological law and duty for action from Immanuel Kant; (b) the pleasure-pain incentives for proper control of action from Jeremy Bentham; and, (c) the Utilitarian theory of best policies and best outcomes from John Stuart Mill.27

Honor then becomes the adhering to the Norms and Codes of Behavior. This is adherence to a Community Honor Code which recognizes both respect and esteem, and the means to maintain it. An Honor Code can help define, "... how people of certain identities can gain respect, how they can lose it, and how having and losing Honor changes the way they should be treated."28   Such a code signals all the expectations that strengthen Community Harmony, and provides criteria to prevent the loss of it. In this way, when each member of each Community group adheres to the code, they exist in a state of Honor. The Community remains in Harmony. All assist the Community and attend to their commitments, "dancing" with the same rhythm. Even as each member (Self) exhibits their individualism, they understand and exhibit their

allegiance and alliance to the Community standards. It is a cycle. When one is in the state of Honor, they have acted honorably and they receive Honor for those actions. They in turn, return the esteem of that Honor by continuing to act honorably - the cycle of Self and Other in a Community Harmony sphere of influence.

WHEN SHAME ARRIVES

Public policies are often made by representatives placed in that function by a majority of the Community. Without adequate public discussion, citizen input or review and comment, this form of policy making can open the door for some individuals, for example the minority, to be in radical opposition to those policies. Exclusionary initiatives create an opening for actions outside the expectations of the Community's sphere of influence. When one or more individuals operate outside of the Harmony cycle, the rhythm is disrupted. It becomes a dissonance, a noisy interference to the rhythm of the Community. The fabric becomes stretched or broken. Those dissonant individuals may become disrespectful and place themselves into a state of dishonor, as perceived by their own Self or by the Other.

What is dishonor? In many indigenous societies, dishonor is the state of Shame.
At this point, we need a return to Webster's and Oxford.

Shame - Webster's New Collegiate dictionary:
    (n.)   something that brings censure or reproach; a painful emotion caused by
            a consciousness of guilt, shortcoming, impropriety, disgrace, disrepute.
    (v.)   to bring shame to; to force by feeling guilty.

Shame - Oxford American dictionary:
    (n.)   a state of disgrace, discredit, or intense regret;
             a thing that is wrong or regrettable.
    (v.)   bring shame on; make ashamed; force by shame.

This acting outside the sphere of influence may seem inconsequential. For the Community which relies on its members responding with the same rhythm, this outside action is consequential. Think. If we were a Community of ten, and one member decided to step to a different rhythm, contrary to the excepted Norm, that one member represents ten percent. How about two individuals, or three?   Three now raises the ratio to near one-third. Does the rhythm then wobble? Does it become out of tolerance? The fabric of the Community may then be harmed. Harm is an opposite to Harmony. Harm can cause chaos. Harm can cause destruction. Harm disrupts the current and future course of the Community. This Harm affects both the member and the Community. The outsider has brought Shame to their Self, and is perceived as being disrespectful to the Other. Remember von Rad's view of Sin.

Sometimes, the Other purposely applies Shame to the outsider as punishment because of

this disrespect.   Remember, Honor is related to pride and praise, as described by Confucius and Aristotle: be kindly towards friends and brethren.

A Honor-Shame system which includes shaming as a judicial technique could produce both a positive and a negative result. In the positive view: the Community Norms have set expectations and thresholds, and Shame should be applied to those who have violated those Norms. The desire is for the violator to feel a Self-Shame. By having Self-Shame, the expected result is an inhibition to further discordant action. In the negative view: shaming as a tool for inhibition may create a further movement away from Community Norms and the desired Harmony. It also keeps the shamed member in a prejudiced place with continued negative interaction, and possible isolation, by all the Other members.

JUDICIAL SHAMING

"Judicial Shaming" establishes a method to create the states of Having Honor or Having Shame. Its positives: Having Honor brings "respect, a positive appraisal according to the Norms, and a recognition of some positive factor."29   Its negatives: Having Shame may be no more than a ploy to manipulate self-definition. "Shame forces a consideration of identity and label before Shame, during Shame, and what can be after Shame subsides."30

In his book The Monochrome Society, communitarian Amitai Etzioni lists a few examples of historic Community Judicial Shaming: in colonial times with the scarlet letter; 18th century British shipboard flogging; wearing the Star of David in Nazi Germany. Today, in the contemporary U.S. venue, there is Megan's Law which posts addresses of sex offenders, and requires distribution of those addresses in their neighborhoods. In one State of New York city, arrested customers of prostitution have their pictures and names posted in the local paper.

Etzioni believes shaming has its place, although in a restricted fashion.

> Shaming is morally appropriate or justified only
> when those being shamed are acting out of free will.

> To the extent that people act in ways that the laws or prevailing mores
> consider inappropriate, but cannot help themselves from doing so
> (such as those with a mental illness who act in a lewd manner)
> chiding them is highly inappropriate.

> These individuals are to be helped, removed if need be,
> but certainly not shamed.31

He believes in punishment as a corrective device. However, that punishment can only be prescribed by an authority who has an agreed upon set of shared values. Thus, the prescription for why and when the device is used must be formed by those who live under and are affected by those shared values: the Community - with its consensus, Norms

and Codes of Behavior. To be balanced, he also recounts the views of his detractors.
One believes individuals who do good should be publicly praised, honored and celebrated,
rather than shaming those who do not. Their thought is, educating the Community by
good examples and not by bad has greater value. Etzioni believes in the opposite:
educating what is wrong has more value. Curiously, this correlation of a good way and a
bad way is expressed by a Taoist dialectic:

> ... If we say that a thing is good or bad because it is
> either good or bad according to our individual standards,
> then there is nothing which is not good, nothing which is not bad.
>
> (Lao Tse)32

Using Judicial Shaming as behavior control can produce two sets of outcomes:

Honoring
[by self]   • living up to the terms of a commitment,
               • adhering to what is right, or to a standard of conduct.
[by others] • to regard or treat with respect,
               • a greeting of successful activity amplifies self-pride.
Shaming
[by self]   • doing something that brings censure or reproach,
               • amplifying self shame-humiliation and guilt.
[by others] • bringing shame to another,
               • forcing a feeling of guilt,
               • to make ashamed,
               • impeding contentment.

This potential for either outcome, is exhibited in the following actual case study.
Whether intended or resulting through a lack of forethought, this personal judicial
shaming episode was played out in a public arena. Story behind this graphic, below.
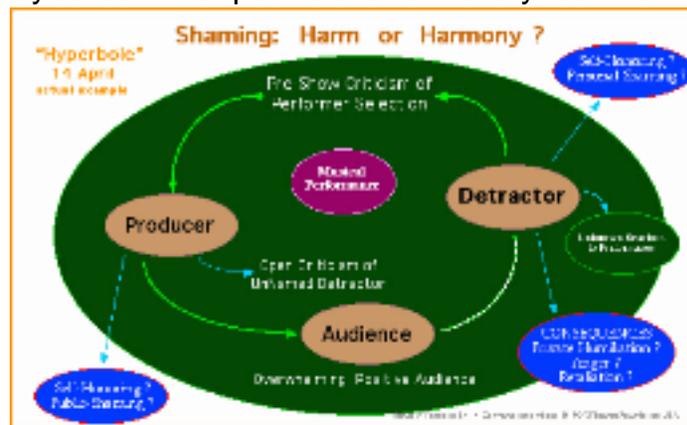
A concert producer presented a series of popular performances by musicians of various styles within his preferred music genre. This concert offered a performer with an unique selection of eclectic compositions. One longtime series attendee and acquaintance of the producer, privately, made numerous disparaging remarks to the producer, criticizing the choice. Apparently, the producer had great appreciation for the performer. As well, the critical remarks were taken as an attack on the producer's talents.

The concert was held. During the introduction, the producer presented a short biography of the performer, and offered an acclaim for their talents. As part of the comments, the producer injected a slight hint to the criticism. The performance was brilliant by all measure of audience reaction. The producer was excited by the result, and by the audience reaction. During his concluding remarks, the producer openly - although anonymously, blasted the critic. It is possible that the producer had mentioned the situation to his associates, who were in attendance. The critic may have known this.

The honor and shame dilemma within this story are many.
The critic resembles many who often wish to express their opinion on talent.
Since the critic directed this criticism towards its acquaintance, was this:
     - a self-honoring for its belief in its own talent selections;
     - an intentional or an innocent personal-shaming of the producer?

A producer of talent events is often seen as exhibiting its own artistic aesthetic.
     What was the real reason the producer made public the criticism?
     Was it a self-honoring or a personal-shaming?
     Was it necessary to counter the original criticism;
     - or, was there another way to address the dispute, later?

What are the potential consequences of this type of encounter?
     Does it create irreconcilable differences between them?
     Did it elevate any ongoing enmity between them?
     Does the result of any shaming have any enduring value?
     Has it created a Harm that did not exist previously?

Could the producer have handled this episode in a more honorable fashion?
These are ethical questions, as well as statements about Honor or Shame.

WHAT TO DO ABOUT HONOR AND SHAME ?

Jeremy Bentham's theories to alter discordant action,
examined the appropriate balance between reward (pleasure) and risk (pain).
     (1)   Any action considered as a punishment
                must not be too weak to instill a prohibition;
     (2)   It cannot be too strong, such that it goes beyond the sensible and fair.

What is the range of reward and risk? Does the Community punish or remove its members for acting outside the Norms? Is that always the best solution? Does punishment work, anyway? Some might say, punishment sets an example for others. Some might counter that punishment angers those who do not agree with that punishment. That results in another way to arrive at a lack of Harmony, and an advancement in dissonance. Then, what about removal? Sometimes removal is required to protect the Community from further shameful actions, especially when they cannot be altered. But, consider: is it not better to assist that member to return to the state of Honor? True, not all outside actions can be returned to honorable. When it is possible, the Community has a duty to try, to produce a return, and to take part in assisting that return. In their book The Missing Peace, authors Juhnke and Hunter discuss periods of violence and nonviolence in United States history. Their introductory words have application to the root of this paper.

> A just and lasting peace is marked by a concern for the welfare of all
> and a recognition, in the voice of Martin Luther King Jr's words,
> of the 'inescapable network of mutuality.' For this reason, efforts for peace
> move toward reconciliation and mutuality, rather than demonizing the 'other'
> as 'enemy' or 'evil.' (Taken from, 'Letters from a Birmingham Jail').33

The member who has acted outside the Norm, may have specific and legitimate reasons, concerns, disputes, or opposition to the Norms. That member needs to be heard by the concerned segments of the Community. That member also needs to hear from those Community members the reasons for their existence, and the Community's concerns for their adherence. This becomes a dialogue. Dialogue is not punishment. Dialogue is an understanding.   It is a quest for a return to Harmony. The perceived disrespect towards the Community which has brought dishonor and censure to the shamed member can be modified. The Community and the member working together can find a resolution to this discord. It is a 'Healing of the Harm' that caused a break in the rhythm. Dialogue is a positive way forward to a return of Community Harmony.
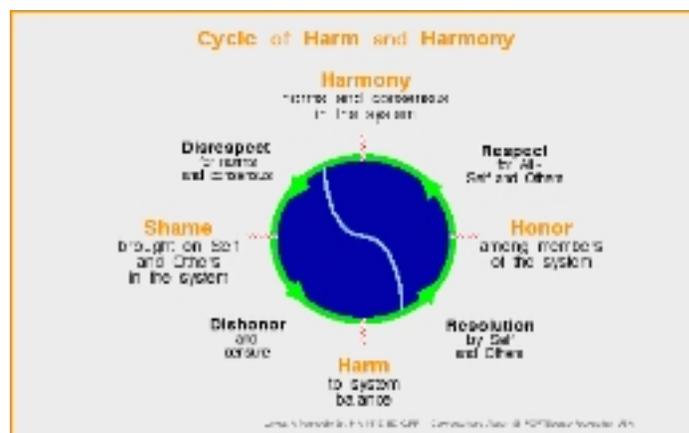
COMMUNITY RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

This is where Restorative Justice fits in. The Restorative Justice priority is to

'Heal the Harm' caused, not punish the one who caused it. Its methods are restorative not retributive, such that actions taken produce the best outcomes for all parties concerned. This is John Stuart Mill's "Utilitarian" extension of Benthan's theory. This is the finding and deciding upon the best action which will produce the best result for the most concerned, as well as the best consequences. Using the Restorative Justice Community Peacemaking Conferencing and Circle accountability processes allows dialogue without prejudice.34 All participants express their views on how the discord has affected themselves and the Community as a whole. The result is all participants agree to the restoring actions to be taken. All members participate in its process, and take ownership of the decided resolution. Harmonious rhythm is rebuilt. The outside member is received back into the Community. Honor is returned to all members, especially to the shamed member who has been outside the Norms. Restorative Justice methods provide three important functions: prevention, correction, and sustainability. Each method has its unique qualities.

PREEMPTIVE vs REACTIVE ACTION 35

How can Restorative Justice work to preempt community dissonance? It starts with the Restorative Justice principle: Healing the Harm caused needs all parties to find a satisfying resolution. Preempting dissonance needs all parties to agree to the shared principles of that Community. Community Restorative Justice brings into a Community Circle accountability process all parties who are at odds with each other. It may be used to bring in one party whose unacceptable behavior is at odds with the Community in general, and is spiraling downwards toward criminal activity. Both situations present parties going beyond the shared values and Norms of the Community. In the one case, the multiple parties are neither victim nor offender, they are both. In the other case, one party may be perceived as the offender, call it wrongdoing party, and the Community becomes the victimized party. In either case, this Community Circle accountability conferencing becomes similar to the indigenous Elder Circle. It brings into the Community Circle process the concerned primary parties, secondary parties, and Community stake holders. The Community Circle conference is facilitated by a trained neutral party who takes on the Elder role.   The involved parties must together find a satisfying resolution to the disruptive activity. They must find in themselves the ability to make right the Harm they have caused. The stake holders, the Community, must find not only a satisfying conclusion to the Harm caused, but a means to return the disruptive parties "back into" the Community with Honor. At this point, the Restorative Justice Community Circle process takes on a preemptive and corrective role rather than a reactive role.

The format is as simple as the graphic below. It can be used in numerous situation where conflicts arise.

Community Circle
Accountability Conferencing

SUSTAINING COMMUNITY HARMONY 36

There are plenty of eyes and ears in neighborhoods that know what is happening and who is involved. Community Peacemaking Conferencing can be initiated on an ad hoc basis. That is, a trained facilitating person or group can form a Peacemaking Conferencing Circle for one particular situation. They may enlist the support of the municipal leaders responsible for the area. They may rely on police services to bring into the Circle the disruptive party/parties. The Peacemaking Conferencing Circle then must include a wide variety of affected participants. Supporters for each party of the situation are encouraged. Members of the affected Community should also be included. These may be those directly affected, or those knowledgeable of the parties and the situation, like clergy, school administrators, local service organizations, etc. . Conferences should be held in a neutral place, at a time convenient to all parties concerned. Pre-conferencing may be important for preparation. The facts are important. They are the seeds for growing a solid, fair and agreeable resolution.

Community Peacemaking Conferencing

The conference is a safe, respectful, and confidential place. Parties are expected to speak calmly, clearly, and respectfully. The facilitator keeps the speaking in an orderly manner. The completely neutral facilitator works through a line of questioning that allows all parties to have their say, bring forth their concerns, and their desires for a successful conclusion. A resolution is sought. This resolution is a neighborly contract

that allows each party to understand what is expected of the other.   After the elements of the resolution are accomplished, or during the achieving of the elements, all parties will hopefully find peace with one another - a return to Honor.   There is one factor that may enter into this type of conference.   That involves the police.   If the problem was approaching a criminal state, the disruptive party/parties must be made to realize that if the resolution is not accomplished as agreed, further action may be taken by the police.   This caveat means that someone is monitoring the progress of, or lack of, accountability.   As in criminal cases, Restorative Justice resolutions and subsequent consequences provide an understanding that this is not a fluffy technique to easily get out of a troubled situation.

There is a higher level of a Community Peacemaking Conferencing establishment.   This level is the development of permanent committees in various neighborhoods.   This falls under a public-policy implementation.   Such committees will have the specific underpinning and support of the municipality in which the neighborhood is a part.   In this case, the municipality supports the committees with either a liaison or a dedicated staff to service its functions, such as coordination of convening the committees, appointments for pre-conferencing, identification and invitation of secondary parties and stake holders, and the clerical services necessary for resolution recording and accountability monitoring.   It also should supply a level of funding for professional Restorative Justice facilitators.   A permanent presence may also involve training of Restorative Justice facilitators in groups within neighborhoods.   This advances the Restorative Justice concept and understanding of the principles.   Added to this should be peacemaking circle training.   The value of this effort allows consensus building among the diverse members of a Community.   Here, Norms and shared values can be revisited, revised, and revered in order to sustain Community Harmony.   A complete program of Restorative Justice education across the entire Community produces what is now known worldwide as a "Restorative Community."   Program models, such as Restorative Initiatives in Community Harmony (RICH) have been developed to do just that.[37]

CONCLUSION

Through dialogue, utilizing Community Restorative Justice processes comes understanding and resolutions removing Shame and returning Honor.   The cycle of Honor can be restored through discussion, consensus and agreement by all parties concerned - the individual members and the Community of members.   This is a restorative solution - an honorable solution.   Restorative Justice processes used in the presence of dissonance is a means to heal, not punish, the Harm caused by one person to another.   It is a process which allows the harmed party to participate in the decisions which are made to 'Heal the Harm' caused.   At the same time the party doing the Harm takes direct responsibility for their harming actions, stays present in the Community, and takes part in the healing.   The process also includes those who surround the parties directly involved.   Their part in the process is to help in deciding a fair, acceptable and

accomplishable Healing of the Harm, as well as what would be logical to help the harming party return to full acceptance by the Community.

Usage of Restorative Justice principles and processes can produce common ground, Norms and agreeable Codes of Behavior. Community Restorative Justice has the ability to preempt and defuse unacceptable behaviors and dishonorable activities. Community Restorative Justice has its place in finding solutions to redirect the turmoil, the dissonance, that resounds in many communities. Restorative Justice is an Honor building philosophy.   Restorative Justice is Harmony building.

<div align="center">

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As an independent professional advisor, Jim consults with government and non-government agencies, institutions and firms on ethical and cultural issues related to their policy-making and strategic action plans. His contract work includes identifying the root and nature of specific social and civic problems, assessing the factors which promulgate those problems, proposing solutions that meet relative cultural differences, and creating ethical and lawful action plans for municipal bureaus, police services, institutions and, profit and nonprofit entities. Creating community peacemaking initiatives, and advocating for implementation of community restorative justice programs are significant parts of Jim's current world view. Working on these programs has resulted in his lecture series "Establishing a Culture of Harmony in the Presence of Dissonance," which presents and promotes an Ethics of Right-Relations for community diversity and peacemaking. These lectures are presented at professional conferences and universities in USA, Canada, UK, and across Europe. In addition to his lectures at local colleges, faith communities, and community groups, Jim is an ethics instructor at a continuing education institute, teaching courses in social and professional ethics, and restorative justice. He is a conflict resolution facilitator registered with Restorative Justice Society USA, and a Certified Restorative Justice Peacemaker with a Rochester New York Police Department Family Services program. There, he facilitates Restorative Justice resolutions to confrontations in the City of Rochester public school system. He is a North American member of Restorative Justice Council, and Conflict Research Society - both in United Kingdom; and, of National Conference on Restorative Justice USA.   Jim holds Master degrees in ethics and critical thought from Queen's University, Kingston Ontario Canada, and Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity School, Rochester New

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NOTES

1   Centre for Social Cohesion, p 3.
2   Giles, Analects of Confucius, Individual Virtue, p 38.
3   Webster's New Collegiate and Oxford American Dictionaries.
4   Giles, Analects of Confucius, Individual Virtue, p 33.
5   Yutang, Lao Tse, Honor and Happiness, p 5.
6   Ibid. p 12.
7   Yutang, Lao Tse, The Lessons of Tao, p 95.
8   Ibid. pp 95-96.
9   Ross, Nichomachean Ethics of Aristotle, p 91.
10   Ibid. p 7.
11   Ibid. p 59.
12   Ibid. p 60.
13   Torah, Ex 20, pp 134-135.
14   Altman, p 100.
15   von Rad,vol. 1, p 264.
16   Juhnke & Hunter, p 18.
17   ibid. p 20.

18   Nathanson, pp 198-199.
19   Ibid. p 36.
20   Yutang, Lao Tse, Honor and Happiness, p 93.
21   Ibid. p 205.
22   See Selected Readings.
23   See Selected Readings.
24   Buber, "I and Thou."

25   Nathanson, p 199.
26   Termotto,   All quotes are by the writer from
        "Establishing a Culture of Harmony in the Presence of Dissonance," 2006.
27   See Selected Readings.
28   Appiah, pp 176-177.

29   Ibid. pp 177-179.
30   Nathanson, p 211.
31   Etzioni, Monochrome Society, p 42.
32   Yutang, Lao Tse, Relativity of Opposites, p 51.
33   Juhnke and Hunter, p 12.

34   Termotto, "The Essence of Restorative Justice and How it Works," 2010.

35   Termotto, "Community Peacemaking Using Restorative Justice," 2009.

36   Ibid.

37   FitzWilliam Global Institute,
      "Restorative Initiatives in Community Harmony," 2007.

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MOUNTAIN SIGNALS 2012

Sailing High Seas

Thoughts from Chaplain on Signal Mountain

Sailing High Seas.

There's Joy in Sailing High Seas:

Captains, proud of their vessels,
masters, keen to running smooth,
pilots, sliding easily into ports.

Is the sailor's Joy only
reaching desired destinations,
carrying precious cargo,
successfully delivering on time?

No. There's more.
Joy comes hours before.

It is the vastness of the view.
Silky skies of blue,
Breaths of ocean breeze,
Droplets of salty dew.

Gliding glassy waters,
Cresting challenging swirls,
Rolling with waves,
Riding unexpected swells.

Truly, Joys of Sailing High Seas

Best Regards to All

Chaplain on Signal Mountain

2010

Daddy Did His Duty

V Day Not Yet Done.

    Marching On Worn and Sooty,

    Dirty Hands Holding Gun.

    No One Said War Was Pretty!

Fear On Mind,

    Daddy Not Alone.

    What To Find,

    Behind That Stone?

    Think Something Witty!

Where's My Cigar?

    Damn, Gone Again.

    Left At The Bar.

    Move On Men.

    Great Cigar Such A Pity!

On Daddy Went,

    To Heidelberg Far.

    Orders Were Sent,

    Take Commander's Car.

    Make It Snappy!

Back To That Bar.

    Don't Look Happy!

    Find My Cigar,

    And Shut Your Trappy!

    Daddy Did His Duty.

Chaplain on Signal Mountain Summer 2012

UP THE HILL

Beyond the Tower,
  round the bend and
  up the hill.
  I could not see it
  before the end.

A place of God,
  A space for All Saints.
  A visit not made
  until I laid.

No other wife
  will I agree,
  of that my King, you know.
  He said yes, even so;
  "Now my friend, you must go."

Bended knee,
  head held low
  with folded hands,
  Please God, not to end my life slow.

Now I rest
  heavenly sent
  with All the Saints,
  round the bend and
  up the hill.

(Homage: St John Fisher 1469-1535
          Bishop of Rochester Kent England
          Buried, Church of All Hallows, City of London
        executed same year as SirThomas More
          for the same reason.

Chaplain on Signal Mountain, October 2012

LOSS

You weather a storm
        with family at side
        and friends nearby.

Whether choppy or calm
        brite or grey
        tomorrow a better day.

Joy in heart
        song on mind
        lips with smile,

You will be strong.

Chaplain on Signal Mountain
October 2012

Refuge from the Storm

Six columns over Woburn rise.

Greco figures, crypt guard spies
    Keeping peace Euston yard side.

Second place, first nearby
    Origin space to say goodbye.

Centuries pass gently over this place.

Recall martyr of faith,
     Sing in stalls, offer, meditate,

Melodies rise to peak,
     Bells bellow over street.

This place like many other.

You see it in darkness,
    More under cloud cover.

Behind six columns, on stone steps, by massive door
    They lay there fate unsure.

Cold, alone, no longer home,
    They seek refuge from the storm.

St Pancras Church,
Bloomsbury, London
Sung Evensong Vespers
Sunday, 21 October 2012

Chaplain on Signal Mountain

Saint Nicholas, Bishop of Bari

A Holiday Meditation for, 6 December
based on "Golden Legends of Jacobus de Voragine"

["Nicholas, born of rich and pious parents ... spent his youth visiting churches ... and the Holy Scripture he heard there. Being very rich, he looked for ways of using his wealth ... to praise God's glory. The bishops led him into the church and installed him on the episcopal throne. He was humble in his attitude towards others, persuasive in speech, forceful in council ... ."

"One day certain seamen, being in peril on the deep, prayed with tears: 'Nicholas, servant of God, if what we have heard of thee is true, let us make trial of it ... .' At once there appeared before them the guise of the saint. He began to assist them ... and in the twinkling of an eye the storm ceased. These sailors betook themselves to the church where Nicholas was, and recognized him instantly, although they had never seen him. They thanked him for their deliverance." (Golden Legends, Part One. Longmans Green, 1941.)]

A Meditative Reflection.
Saint Nicholas, this thought laments that many see you only as a jolly old man dressed in red. Nicholas, you are a beloved bishop, a protector, a man of charity, a maker of many miracles. Across the lands you are revered for the many gifts you have given your people. Only few know you are a patron saint of mariners. Your miracle of the tempest reflects that of Jesus crossing the Sea of Galilee. Frightened souls cried to you their servant of God to deliver them safely. You calmed your flock and they were saved. When they offered their gratitude, you told them to thank God - for it was due to God's mercy on them and their faith in Him.   Lord, God I will always pray for your mercy on me. I will always be grateful for the miracles which appear in my life. I will always have faith in you as Savior. And, I will always thank you for the joy that is brought to many by the plump bearded guy who wears the red suit.

Chaplain on Signal Mountain
Christmas 2011

SATURDAY WALKS

The Chaplain lives in the city center. On Saturdays the Chaplain takes walks along the avenues. These are the quiet days - soundless traffic, soundful creatures. This day, the sky is a mixture of grey, white and blue. The breeze is cool. The fresh smell of fall swizzles around. There is beauty in the sky, and beauty in the aromatic gardens along the avenue. The colors of green, orange, crimson and yellow seem more intense in early fall light. The sun appears on occasion. It warms the land. It is a day to appreciate what the world offers. In front of the museum there is an apron of landscape with bushes turning red. Somewhere in there, birds are chirping, maybe chicks. It is a happy sound. A promising sound. Out of the doors come little ones who enjoy this museum. Giggles, happy sounds they make. These are great sounds that fill the Chaplain's ears. Sounds like beautiful melodic music, choruses, thunder and rain, rustle of trees, the whistle of the wind over the window sill. Nature as we know it, and humans as we know them have the joy to make and hear these sounds. However they were designed, created, just happened, were influenced and learned, we are the beneficiaries. Often in a secular wedding, the official will tell the couple, "may your life be filled with art, music, the beauty of nature, and your love for each other." We are all blessed with these joyful things. As does the Chaplain on Saturdays, find your source of joy in nature, humanity, the cool and the warmth. Find beauty in all the colors and joyful sounds created for all of us to appreciate, enjoy and love.

Chaplain on Signal Mountain

Fall 2012

THE END
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THANKS FOR READING

Best Wishes To All

Chaplain on Signal Mountain
November   2012