

World Goodwill

NEWSLETTER

A TIME FOR NEW THINKING

"The heart of humanity is now coming to life", writes Alice Bailey. What better evidence is there to support this claim than the skilful, dedicated efforts to meet human and world need by groups, large and small, and in every country.

In this issue of the Newsletter we feature extracts from three recent talks sponsored by World Goodwill in London, New York and Geneva. Over the years the many speakers at World Goodwill events have given inspiring insight into the heart of humanity as they have shared their visions and described their service programmes.

Sometimes these speakers represent a new initiative. Others may be already established world servers who are making a significant contribution in their particular field of service. Yet in each case the work spoken about has its beginning in individual action. An inner heart impulse in response to a real need has been registered and acted upon, and constructive energy has flowed as a result.

Where such efforts really make a difference the transforming power of goodwill is at work. Goodwill is an expression of the often misunderstood power of love. We invest the word 'love' with so many different meanings. In its highest form it denotes the most complete and perfect quality: for do we not say that God is love? Yet we also use it to describe fleeting and sometimes trivial emotions. It is even used in relation to the most selfish desires as in, "the love of money is the root of all evil".

Real love is not easy to understand or to practice, yet the primary injunction is that we are to love one another. Wise ones down the ages have been clear in their view that love is fundamental, that it is the saving force for

humankind and the planet. How, then, can we be more loving? Where do we begin? We have to begin where we are, in the place where we find ourselves, in our present relationships in the home, the community and the work place. Yet, precisely because love is all-pervasive, it is especially useful to focus on its expression as goodwill, for goodwill is practical and its effect is often immediate and identifiable. You can cultivate goodwill day-by-day wherever you are, and whatever your circumstances. An individual skilfully thinking and acting with goodwill can transform his or her environment. A group consciously serving a worthwhile cause with focused goodwill has an impact far greater than its size or outer actions may suggest.

The articles in this issue by Richard Barrett of the World Bank, Gerrit Huizer of Nijmegen University, and author Peter Russell, offer differing perspectives on the need for a more spiritual, inclusive approach to life. The inequalities and injustices in the world demonstrate the inadequacy of the materialistic paradigm that has given rise to them. Ours is a time for new thinking. The "clarion note of joy through goodwill activity" can inspire the vision of better possibilities that are appropriate for the future of our one world and our one human family.

1997 N°2

REFORMULATING VALUES	2
AN AFFIRMATION OF LOVE	4
WORLD INVOCATION DAY	5
THE NEW GLOBALISATION	5
SCIENCE AND SPIRITUALITY	7



REFORMULATING VALUES IN AN INTERDEPENDENT WORLD

Richard Barrett

Richard Barrett is the Values Co-ordinator of the Department of Institutional Change and Strategy, World Bank, Washington, D.C.. He is the author of the book, *A Guide to Liberating your Soul*, and founder of the Spiritual Unfoldment Society for World Bank staff. This article comprises extracts from his presentation in November, 1996, at the World Goodwill Symposium in New York. The full text of this talk will be published in 1997 in his forthcoming book *Liberating the Corporate Soul*.

I believe that the value system of our Western civilization is destroying the life support systems of the planet and condemning hundreds of millions of people to poverty. Environmental destruction and social disintegration are capturing the headlines around the world. We are living in a world where the environment is seen as an economic resource to be plundered and discarded, a world where species are becoming extinct at a faster rate than ever before in the history of humanity, a world where the gulf between the rich and poor continues to grow, and a world where the basis of every negotiation is: "What's in it for me?"...

We have collectively caged ourselves into a fear-based belief system that values economic survival above all else. We are driven to accumulate wealth because we believe it is the only thing that can guarantee our survival in the future. Our goal has become to accumulate enough wealth to make sure we can live in comfort and good health when we are no longer able to work. If you are among those that have amassed enough wealth to ensure a comfortable old age, then theoretically you have no need for more money. You should be content to stop accumulating – but the glamour of wealth is too appealing. Everywhere we turn, we are besieged by advertising that promises us greater happiness if we buy the latest gadget or the most technologically advanced car. The pleasure that is promised is the shallow happiness of self-esteem. Our need to be admired and respected drives us into the slavery of consumerism. We do it just simply to feel good about ourselves.

As we become more and more obsessed with wealth accumulation, we seek to place our surpluses where they will get the highest returns. We don't really care how they are created. Just give us more money. This is where business obliges. It is always looking for surplus wealth. The bigger a business becomes the more wealth it creates for investors. Conserving precious resources and preserving the environment and wild life for future generations are not values that interest investors. They want the largest and fastest returns they can get.

Meanwhile the workers – those who create wealth for business – fear for their economic survival. They worry that they will not be able to send their children to college, or have sufficient funds for their retirement. They need employment and are ready to sacrifice their higher values to get it. We have all learned that the values that sustain our families, such as planning for the future, communicating openly and honestly, and living in integrity, are not values

that are welcomed at work. We cannot afford to have different values from our employer, so we develop two sets of values – those that we embrace in our family life, and those that we take to work. This schizophrenic existence, combined with our fear for survival, creates an impossible burden that tears us apart from our soul. We live in unwelcome complicity and collusion, trapped in a cycle of wealth and survival. The rich need the poor to create wealth, and the poor need the rich to provide employment. Meanwhile, we all watch the world and our communities die slowly before us, and we feel helpless to stop it.

Our fears for economic survival and our need for respect, status, and power, are the principal causes of our desire to accumulate wealth. They are also the principal causes of three of the most important issues threatening our world – environmental degradation, inequality, and social upheaval.

Environmental Degradation

... At a recent World Bank conference on ethics and spiritual values in development, Timothy Worth, the United States Under-Secretary of State for Global Affairs, clearly linked environmental destruction with economic survival. He put it this way: *The economy is a wholly owned subsidiary of the environment. When the environment is finally forced to file for bankruptcy because its resource base has been polluted, degraded, and irretrievably compromised, then the economy will go bankrupt with it.*¹

If the leaders of business and industry are not able to shift their dominant paradigm from "What's in it for me?" to "What's best for the common good?" then they, and the whole of humanity, face a future of desolation and suffering. At the same World Bank conference, Willis Harman asked the question: *What is it that has to change in order for sustainable development to be really possible?* He replied: *It is not so much individual values we are talking about. Individually, both rich and poor express wholesome values. It is, rather, the values embedded in the institutions of business and finance ... that are the problem. People feel a discrepancy between what they know in their hearts is right and what they feel forced to do to support their organization's values and goals.*²

We are all accountable for what is happening to our planet. It is time we also became responsible.

Inequality

It is becoming increasingly clear that the rules that govern our global economic system favour the rich and injure the poor....

At a global level over the past five decades world income increased sevenfold. However, most of this wealth went to the rich. Between 1960 and 1991, the richest 20 percent of the global population received 30 times more than the poorest 20 percent. By 1991, the difference had grown to 60 percent. The share of income of the poorest 20 percent of the global population today represents approximately 1 percent of the total global income. The richest 20 percent receive more than 85 percent of the total global income.³ The extent of the global polarization of wealth was starkly illustrated in 1995 by an article in *Forbes Magazine*. It listed 358 billionaires whose combined net-worth was equivalent to the annual income of 45 percent of the world's poorest population.

The United Nations Development Programme estimates that approximately three quarters of the world's people are economically insecure. High population growth in the developing world will prevent this figure from changing much over the next 30 years. Although there is enough food to feed the world, some 800 million people go hungry every day. The majority of these go hungry because they cannot afford to buy food.

Social Upheaval

According to the International Labour Office, global unemployment and under-employment is higher today than at the height of the Great Depression of the 1930s.⁴ In *The End of Work*, Jeremy Rifkin shows the impact that technology has had on the type of work we do. He shows the important role technology has had in shifting work from agriculture to manufacturing, and from manufacturing to the service sector. He shows how, in every sector, human labour is being replaced by machines....

There is also a strong link between unemployment and crime. Studies show that homicide and crime rates increase dramatically with growing unemployment and wage inequality.⁵ As employment decreases and poverty increases, the need for economic survival drives people to a life of crime and violence. Crime rates escalate as people seek to survive. The situation is worst where inequalities between the rich and poor are the most severe. In Rio de Janeiro, where the disparity between the rich and poor is extremely high, one person is murdered every hour. In Johannesburg, one person is killed every two hours. Even in industrialized countries, poverty and economic inequities are causing alarming increases in crime rates. In Italy and Portugal the murder rate doubled in the second half of the 1980s, and in Germany it tripled....

We are facing a situation where increasing inequities and rising unemployment are exacerbating social disintegration, and where increasing material consumption and pollution are exacerbating environmental destruction.

Counter Trends

Despite these serious negative trends we have made some

important gains in human well-being during the past few decades. Life expectancy in developing countries increased by one third and net enrolment in primary education increased by two thirds. Democratization has made significant advances and human rights and women's issues have received increasing attention.⁶ There is also an increased questioning of our predominant global assumptions. *The State of the World Forum* in 1995 concluded that: *...many of our fundamental assumptions require redefining in order for us to address adequately the emerging paradigms shaping the 21st century.*⁷

Behind this questioning lies a growing shift in consciousness. Increasingly, people all over the world are seeking to understand their motivations and what makes them tick. The sales in self-help books have escalated significantly in the past thirty years. The most popular of these books deal with psychology and spirituality. There is a deep searching that is beginning to take place at the level of the global human psyche.

It is important to recognize that our global gains all fall under the category of human development, while our global losses (the environment, unemployment, and social upheaval) are linked in one way or another to economic development, business, and commerce. The fundamental problem we are facing is not the breakdown of our society, nor the destruction of our life support systems – it is our own inability to embrace values that support the common good.

It is time for each one of us to recognize that our own survival, and the survival of our children, depend on each one of us accepting personal responsibility for the future. We must see humanity and the environment as it really is – totally interdependent and totally interconnected. We must recognize that the decisions we make individually, and in our organizations and governments, have repercussions around the globe. We must not be afraid to bring our highest values to work. It is time for each one of us to fully engage ourselves in transforming the values of our governments, organizations and business. When the economist E.F. Schumacher was asked, 'What can we do?', he said: *The answer is as simple as it is disconcerting: we can, each of us, work to put our own house in order.*

The World Bank and the Spiritual Unfoldment Society

This leads me to the story of how I put my own house in order, and the work I have been doing with the World Bank....

Toward the end of 1992, when I was nearing completion of the second draft of *A Guide to Liberating Your Soul*,⁸ I invited about a dozen of my more spiritually-minded colleagues in the Bank to discuss the ideas and theories expressed in my book.

Two colleagues from the discussion group approached me and asked if I would set up a spiritual study group. That was the start of the Spiritual Unfoldment Society (SUS). Naturally, there was some fear in our early planning discussions about what we were doing and whether it would be acceptable to management. As I saw it, there was nothing to lose. Our mission statement was perfectly laudable:

The Spiritual Unfoldment Society promotes personal transformation through self-knowledge, understanding, and awakening higher consciousness. SUS provides a safe forum for the exchange of beliefs and ideas that promote spiritual awareness. SUS encourages the integration of higher consciousness into every aspect of our lives. SUS seeks to create within the World Bank a consciousness of love and understanding that contributes toward transforming the way we interact with one another and the way the organization interacts with the world.

We began holding weekly meetings in March 1993. We did not ask permission. We simply advertised the meetings in the staff weekly bulletin and waited to see who showed up. Within two months 40-50 people were attending the meetings. People came out of the woodwork, both attendees and presenters. It was as if suddenly we had given permission for those interested in personal transformation, and those seeking a deeper meaning to life, to come out of the closet. At first, some of the internal presenters didn't want their names mentioned in the weekly announcement, as they feared how their colleagues might react. Within a few months, it became perfectly respectable to be associated with the SUS. We began to announce our meetings on the internal e-mail system....

Since the very first meeting of SUS, I have received countless e-mail messages from members about the effect of the meetings on their lives. Some reported significant life-changing insights. For yet others, it was the sense of community and open sharing that attracted them to the meetings. We knew we were doing something right because people kept turning up.

Ethics and Spiritual Values Conference

Then, from the steering committee, came the idea for an international conference on spiritual values to be put on by the World Bank that would explore the link between spiritual values and sustainable development....

This international conference took place at the World Bank in Washington, D.C., on October 2 and 3, 1995. No one could believe that the World Bank was putting on such a conference. I heard people say: 'I am totally amazed.' The outside world was finding it difficult to believe that this conservative monolith was holding a conference on ethical

and spiritual values in relation to development. The real, but subtle, significance of this conference was that Bank staff now had permission to talk about values in development, to question their beliefs and their right to impose them on others, and to bring their hearts, as well as their minds, to work. The supremacy of the intellect was being challenged in the World Bank....

Since the conference, the World Bank has given more attention to values, particularly the values that impact on the internal culture. In May 1996, I was appointed to the position of Values Coordinator in the newly formed Department of Institutional Change. We have created a Values Circle that meets every week to discuss values; we have created an internal values web site; and we have developed a Facilitator's Resource Guide for carrying out work on values, behaviours and incentives with teams inside the Bank....

The greatest need we have, right now, is for each of us who cares about the future of humanity and the planet to bring this consciousness into our workplaces and begin the process of transforming our organizations. We are the ones that are opening the doors to a new era. Our children are the ones that will walk through the doorway and create the new world. Each one of us needs to show up fearlessly in the workplace if we are to play our role.

The fundamental issue in the 21st century will become, not the creation of wealth, but the sharing of wealth. The only way that organizations will survive will be to fully embrace what is economically, socially and environmentally, best for the common good....

1. Richard Barrett and Ismail Serageldin, (eds.) *Ethical and Spiritual Values: Promoting Environmentally Sustainable Development*. Environmentally Sustainable Development Proceedings Series N°12, 1996, p.30.
2. *Ibid.* p.6.
3. Jeremy Rifkin, *The End of Work*. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1995, p.35.
4. International Labor Organization, *The World Employment Situation, Trends and Prospects*. ILO, Geneva, Switzerland, 1994.
5. Jeremy Rifkin, *op. cit.* p.208.
6. UNDP, *Human Development Report 1994*. UNDP, New York, 1994, p.20.
7. *The State of the World Forum*. 1995.
8. Richard Barrett, *A Guide to Liberating Your Soul*. Fulfilling Books, Alexandria, 1995.

An Affirmation of Love

**In the centre of all Love I stand.
From that centre I, the soul, will outward move.
From that centre I, the one who serves, will work.
May the love of the divine Self be shed abroad
In my heart, through my group, and throughout the world.**

Copies of this card are available from World Goodwill

THE GREAT INVOCATION

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

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

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

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

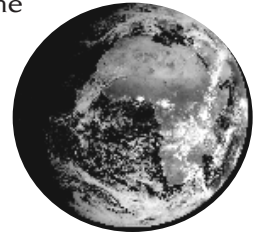
Let Light and Love and Power restore the Plan on Earth.

**In some translations of the Great Invocation the name by which the Coming One is known in different religions is used, eg. the Lord Maitreya, Krishna, the Imam Mahdi and the Messiah.*

WORLD

INVOCATION DAY

To build a more just, interdependent and caring global society what humanity needs above all, is more light, love and spiritual will. On **Thursday, 22nd May, 1997** people of goodwill from all parts of the world, and from different religious and spiritual backgrounds unite in invoking these higher energies by using the Great Invocation. Will you join in this healing work by including the Great Invocation in your thoughts, your prayers or your meditations on World Invocation Day?



THE NEW GLOBALISATION

Gerrit Huizer

Gerrit Huizer is the Professor of Development Studies and Director of the Third World Centre of the University of Nijmegen, Netherlands. Since the 1950s he has worked in various capacities for U.N. agencies in many parts of the world. He has published numerous articles and served as an advisor for many Third World NGOs. He has also initiated and directed various research programmes. These include projects on the role of traditional healing and other religious practices, and on the role of peasant and women's organizations in different societies. The following text is from a talk given in November, 1996, for the World Goodwill Forum in Geneva.

The sense of immortality, the surety of an eternal future, the innate belief in God, the revelation of the light, the achieving of a wisdom which helps and aids is not the prerogative of the Senecas, of the St Pauls, of the Akbars of the race. It is found (and sometimes in its purest form) in the humblest peasant. Words of wise counsel fall from the lips of the illiterate, and a knowledge of God and a belief in the soul's immortality are discovered to be latent in the hearts of the most unlikely, and oft of the most sinful. But when the highly evolved and the most intelligent of the race discover in themselves the divine Flame, and awaken the power of the supreme Controller, seated at the heart of their being, they are very apt to place themselves in a higher category than other people, and to classify those who do not have their mental grasp of the differentiations of the evolutionary development as differing so widely from them as not to deserve the name of Sons of God. They regard all not working in mental energy as lacking souls and hence as lacking eternal persistence as individuals.

This is only a glamour of the mind, is part of the great heresy of separateness, and indicates faintly the coming period wherein the mind will be as dominant and as misleading as is the sentient body at this time.

Alice Bailey, *A Treatise on White Magic*, p.356-7,
Lucis Publishing Companies, New York, London.

A Treatise on White Magic points out that wise council and knowledge of God can come from the common people.... However, it would seem that listening to them is being systematically obstructed or made impossible for us by the Western media and science. Thus we can hardly get to know the more holistic ways of living and thinking that survive throughout the world. I was able to learn this during the almost twenty years from 1955 onward that I was a development worker with the UN in so-called Third World countries. During those years, I experienced that the globalization of the world economy and the role of the "invisible hand" of the "free market" have largely worked to the detriment of the local populations and that they are well

aware of this....

In fact, in my experience, the best human values seem to be often more vitally present with the half-Indian peasant farmers in Latin America, with the black village communities in South Africa and the rural population in India and China than with Westerners, relatively well-off in their consumer societies....

What we call “development cooperation” generally takes place in areas where earlier forms of penetration by conquerors, colonial administrators and missionaries have already made a decisive impact. This impact was not always assessed as positive or beneficial by the local people. In fact there is a large history of pillage in many areas which are presently the main concern of development workers. Therefore it is understandable that local people are often suspicious about the intentions of those who now come to help them to develop, or to investigate their life-style.

Precisely because of people's distrust and passive resistance, “applied” social scientists have increasingly been called upon to help evaluate and even monitor technical development projects, particularly when these projects did not sufficiently succeed in “transferring” technology or in the “extension” of modern agricultural knowledge to local people, who were often considered overly apathetic, and attached to traditional ways.

Togetherness and Solidarity

In my experience, almost everywhere, poor peasant farmers appear to be far less simple, weak or underdeveloped than Westerners in their readiness to help (or arrogance?) think. That those humble people feel rooted in a totality, I learned in 1955 as a UNESCO sponsored development volunteer in a small village in El Salvador. My learning occurred most clearly at critical moments, such as with the funeral of my three year-old neighbour, a boy who died of malnutrition-related illnesses. This was sad, and at the same time, festive – a “transition” to higher spheres. His funeral was part of their everyday life but also part of a sort of an eternal life that goes on beyond all individual events. Acceptance of death belonged to the survival of people and society. I noticed in the village the old holistic Maya culture had only apparently disappeared. In spite of five centuries of influence by white landlords, coffee planters and Catholic priests, there existed a sort of cosmically rooted spirituality, togetherness and solidarity. The villagers also felt a strong bond with Mother Earth, the land, even though they had lost that to the landlords. This solidarity and spirituality gave them the power to live and to survive and, in spite of everything, to hope for a better future. Their patience and even mild-naturedness towards their oppressors gave me a feeling that, precisely in their material poverty, they had a sort of inner civilization from which I could learn. Indirectly, they showed me a reflection of the barbarity of the Western “civilisation” that had devastated theirs and had used, rather misused, their “Mother Earth” to produce coffee and sugar on a large scale for the world market, while their children were undernourished. They were highly distrustful of any outside intervention.

This distrust became manifest when a well-intentioned and badly needed drinking water project which our agency tried to introduce failed because of the non-participation of the peasants in the project – they did not show up to work with us. I discovered the reason for the peasants' apparent apathy only after I had actually lived in their village for some time, not really knowing what to do, but simply sharing their life without asking too many questions. The peasants gradually taught me how projects, especially those where people had to contribute with voluntary labour, usually benefitted the better-off, particularly landlords, rather than themselves.

Peasant “apathy” and non-participation in “development-projects” initiated “from above” proved in this, and many other cases, to be justified as a rationally and consciously adopted strategy of not letting themselves be exploited more than they already were. I also experienced that under more encouraging conditions, their “apathy” could easily transform itself into enthusiastic support and considerable effort. On the whole peasants, and particularly the women, took their position much less for granted than outsiders (e.g. development workers like myself initially) thought. Moreover peasants, as well as the local elites, appeared to have a good deal of awareness of the fact that “development” (producing coffee, sugar, bananas etc. for the world market) had to do with creating blatant inequalities by taking away their land, and that it led to gradual erosion of the soil. On the other hand those “from above” were also quite aware of potential peasant rebelliousness and felt the need to maintain a strong military police force to keep people “in their place”. At times, indeed, peasants came into open resistance.

Persons with Charisma

During various such village experiences in Latin America, Sicily and North Africa, it often struck me that there were certain people, men and women, with a special capacity to express clearly what their peers were feeling about exploitative situations. I learned to recognize such people as persons with charisma, a kind of spiritual strength and radiation. Were they also world servers, without knowing this explicitly? When crisis situations became acute and confrontation with the powerful could no longer be avoided, those with charisma were the crucial motivators of their peers to act against the physical and psychological power landlords and rich farmers have over “their” peasants....

The most important lesson I gradually learned in the course of many years in the villages where I worked was that “development” is not so much a technical problem but, particularly to the local people, a political issue with considerable ethical implications: Mostly the powerful (e.g. landlords or local elite) were benefitting considerably more, and often at the cost of the poor majority. I also learned that the best way to assess the possibilities and effects of development projects and their impact on local communities was to do so, as far as possible, through active participation in activities with the local population, “from within and from below”.

SCIENCE AND SPIRITUALITY

Peter Russell

Peter Russell is author of seven books, including *The Creative Manager*, *The Global Brain*, and *The White Hole in Time*, and is the producer of award-winning videotapes on these topics. He has degrees from the University of Cambridge in physics, psychology and computer science. In India, he studied meditation and eastern philosophy, and on his return spent three years at Bristol University conducting research into the psychology of meditation. Since then his prime focus has been the exploration and development of human consciousness, integrating eastern and western understandings of the mind, and exploring their relevance to our future evolution. He has worked as a consultant to a variety of international corporations on creativity, personal development and environmental issues. Peter Russell spoke on *Science and Spirituality* at the World Goodwill Forum, London, in December 1996. He can be contacted at 1 Erskine Road, London NW3 3AJ, and more of his ideas can be found on his web site "The Spirit of Now", <http://www.peterussell.com>

People sometimes ask me why a physicist is so interested in spiritual things. What I'm interested in is truth: truth about the world, the universe, the cosmos. Science has looked at deep space, deep time and deep structure. It has reached almost the limits in each direction and has very confidently found that there is no place for God, nor any need for God. The mechanical universe seems to function perfectly well without an old man up in the sky needed to control it. Yet it strikes me that no religion ever suggested that God was an old man in the sky looking after things. If God is to be found anywhere, it's within human consciousness, in the realm of what I call deep mind. But science hasn't even begun to explore mind seriously yet. Psychology is just beginning to look at mind, but it's rather as in physics a hundred years ago when people were just beginning to ponder the nature of the atom.

Spirituality, on the other hand, takes the opposite point of view. In any religion consciousness is primary. A lot of the questions in spiritual areas are about how spirit, consciousness, whatever you want to call it, gives rise to the physical universe. How does God create matter? Science asks: "How does matter create consciousness?" And spirituality asks: "How does consciousness create matter?" These are two completely different approaches. Yet I think they are asking, ultimately, the same sort of fundamental questions.

The real problem for the current scientific paradigm is consciousness. Nothing in the contemporary scientific model predicts that living systems will be conscious. And the current scientific paradigm has no way whatsoever of explaining how consciousness arises in the universe. Yet, the one thing of which we're absolutely certain is that there is consciousness. It's the one thing none of us can deny in our own lives. We are experiencing beings. By consciousness, I don't mean a particular form of consciousness, just

the fact that we have experience. You are not biological robots, at least I am assuming you're not. That is an assumption we all make. I know I am having inner subjective experience and I have every reason to believe that you all are too. So that is the one thing that is 100% certain – that consciousness exists. This anomaly has led to what some philosophers today are calling the hard question: "How does something as unconscious as matter give rise to something as immaterial as consciousness?" The two couldn't be more diametrically opposed.

Until the latter half of this century, where various things have come together to force science to begin to take consciousness seriously, consciousness has been put aside. I think we are now in the second stage of the paradigm shift. The first stage is when you ignore the anomalies. And that is

what we have done, we have ignored consciousness. We are now in the second stage, in which we try to explain it in terms of the old model. As a result there are several different schools of thought at the moment where scientists of all disciplines are coming together

to try and explain consciousness. Some think it is something to do with quantum phenomena, others are looking at information theory, computer theory, the chaos theory or the complexity of the neuronal networks.

The New Paradigm

What these approaches have in common is that none of them have actually got very far at all. Science isn't getting anywhere in trying to understand or explain consciousness. I think the reason for this is that we are still stuck in a paradigm which has eventually got to crash. And that is the paradigm that the material reality that we observe is the fundamental reality. I think the new paradigm which will emerge, isn't here yet. But I think where we are heading is towards a very different point of view, one that says that it's

The real problem for the current scientific paradigm is consciousness

not space, time, matter and energy which are the fundamental reality; instead it is consciousness which is the fundamental reality, out of which space, time, matter and energy emerge.

Interestingly enough this view is something which you will find in most spiritual traditions. My own particular interest has been in Vedantic philosophy, and there you have the idea that the ultimate nature of the universe is consciousness. At the sub-atomic level we know there is no solidness. The appearance of the solidness of matter is an illusion. You find the same in Eastern philosophy which talks about maya. Maya is often translated as illusion, it is actually better translated as delusion. It means literally 'things are not as they seem' – the way we see things is not the way reality is.

If you look at the Eastern traditions you find the idea there that what we call consciousness is also what we call God. In the West that view has been lost. In fact, in medieval times, people who claimed to be God were burnt at the stake. To say that I am God was considered heresy. Yet the realisation that "I", the deepest essence of consciousness, can be equated with God is a recurring theme in just about every spiritual tradition, particularly in the more mystical aspects. When you start taking this view seriously, and tying it in with what we now know from science, religion begins to take on a different shape, which actually is no longer in conflict with science.

How Light "sees" the universe

The area I'm particularly fascinated by is that of light. The idea that God is Light features often in spiritual traditions. In physics, too, everything in a way comes down to light in the end. Interactions at the sub-atomic level are an exchange of photons, which are an exchange of light particles. In a very real sense, light is fundamental both in spiritual traditions and in physics.

What happens when you look at the universe from the point of view of light? Einstein showed that the speed of

light seems to be a universal constant. However fast you move the speed of light is always exactly the same speed relative to you, namely 186,000 miles a second. Even if you're moving at 185,000 miles a second, light still passes you at 186,000 miles a second. He also showed that the faster you go, the slower time goes and the shorter distance becomes. If you ever were to travel at the speed of light, time would actually stop and distance would have contracted to zero. Therefore, from the point of view of light, light lives in a universe in which there is no time, no distance and no mass.

From our mass-bound perception, when we observe the universe, we create space and time in a certain ratio, we create 186,000 miles of space for every second of time. It's a law of conscious manifestation which we interpret as the speed of light. It's not speed at all, it's the ratio of the creation of space and time in the universe.

How Light "sees" the universe is very much how the mystic sees it. People in very deep meditation states describe their experience as one in which there is no time and no sense of space. More than that, there is a unity, and, in very high states of consciousness, there is the experience not that I am in the universe, but the whole universe is within me. All this is pointing towards a new conceptualisation of reality. We're not there yet. I think we're just seeing the pieces. What I'm interested in is how the pieces are beginning to fit together. And it's not just of academic interest. I think the reason this shift really needs to happen is because the old materialistic paradigm is ruining our world today. I think it is this mode of consciousness that is leading us to destroy our environment, destroy our habitat and also destroy the very quality of our own lives. I also think it's really important that we begin to make this shift in ourselves. Again, this is what all the spiritual teachings have been saying. The real challenge is to carry out one's spiritual practice and finally arrive at the awareness that consciousness is fundamental and that everything else is a creation within consciousness.

helping to build right human relations

ISSN 0818-4984

WORLD GOODWILL is an international movement helping to mobilise the energy of goodwill and to build right human relations. It was established in 1932 as a service activity of the Lucis Trust. The LUCIS TRUST is a registered educational charity in Great Britain. In the USA it is a non-profit tax-exempt educational corporation, and in Switzerland it is registered as a non-profit association. WORLD GOODWILL is recognised by the United Nations as a Non-Governmental Organisation and is represented at regular briefing sessions at UN Headquarters. The LUCIS TRUST is on the

Roster of the United Nations Economic and Social Council. The WORLD GOODWILL NEWSLETTER is published four times a year. The work of World Goodwill is funded entirely by donations and there is therefore no charge for the Newsletter, but any gift you may care to make is most welcome. Multiple copies for distribution are available on request. The WORLD GOODWILL NEWSLETTER is also available in: Danish, Dutch, French, German, Greek, Hungarian, Icelandic, Italian, Portuguese and Spanish. The Newsletter Internet address is:– <http://www.oneworld.org/worldgoodwill/>

World Goodwill
3 Whitehall Court
Suite 54
London
UK SW1A 2EF

World Goodwill
1 Rue de Varembe (3e)
Case Postale 31
1211 Geneva 20
SWITZERLAND

World Goodwill
120 Wall Street
24th Floor
New York, NY 10005
USA