



A regular bulletin highlighting the energy of goodwill in world affairs

THE QUEST FOR SYNTHESIS

In this issue, humanity's quest for synthesis is approached from a number of angles. In the past, we have seen the tendency of religions to claim that they are the One True Faith, or have access to the One True God. And in the present, it seems that science has taken over this attempt at presenting a comprehensive description of reality, with the quest for the Theory of Everything. But perhaps the picture is both simpler, and more complex, than either approach is willing to admit. Might it not be the case that the many faiths exist to provide for the spiritual needs of many different types of people, offering multiple paths towards the Divine? And might it not also be the case that each of the myriad theories, both scientific and philosophical, that seeks to describe the Real, is incomplete without all of the others? The attempt to identify the One True Theory is surely an intuitive response to the underlying synthesis that lies behind all forms. This synthesis is rooted in the abstract realm of Spirit, which explains why it can never be reduced to one single form; rather, every form of thought, every theory or ideology, is a fresh attempt to capture some aspect of the Real.

Humanity's difficulty has been, and continues to be, the tendency to identify with one form of thought, to the exclusion of all others. One of the most pernicious of these forms is the idea that the satisfaction of material needs is the be-all and end-all of existence. The ideal of a Common Good is then sacrificed on the altar of the selfish greed of individuals, as every man

struggles to grab his share of the limited physical resources of the planet. This is the blind alley of materialism, which has led humanity into the serious economic and ecological crises of the present time. Humanity will find the ideal of a Common Good, a true **Commonwealth**, elusive, until there is a genuine willingness, not just to recognise our radical interconnectedness, but to put in place social and economic arrangements that respect that interconnectedness.

Another area where the quest for synthesis has gone somewhat astray is in the legal world, where the growing attempt to encompass all possible situations by the law, through the extension of rules and regulations, is another example of endlessly multiplying forms without capturing their essence or spirit. There is also a related tendency, which is facilitated by the easy availability of information and entertainment through the Internet and other electronic media, to allow the mind to be scattered in a multitude of directions, rather than dwelling upon the key principles that could form the basis for a just society. Again, it is the form, rather than the spirit, which becomes central. The key to releasing the human mind from the shackles of form lies in the heart – for it is only compassion for our fellow creatures that can provide the strong incentive needed to turn the energies of the mind towards service of the whole. Only then can the veil of forms be pierced, to reveal the uniting essence that is the true goal of the quest for synthesis.

The tragedy of the Commons

What is common to the greatest number has the least care bestowed upon it (Aristotle)

In the long evolutionary history of the human race there have probably been few more difficult periods than the one we are in today. Difficulties have arisen

because human consciousness is awakening at a rapid rate, even exponentially. This is good and meant to happen. But such rapid growth of the critical mind

Please note: the text of the articles is drawn from the latest "World View" articles that are, since the end of 2009, being posted monthly to the World Goodwill home page on our website (www.worldgoodwill.org) An archive of past World Views is also available. Another recent development is the addition of a blog focusing on examples of goodwill in the news.

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www.worldgoodwill.org

presents challenging demands – politically, economically and psychologically. In the past five hundred years there has been a sharp rise in human self-assertiveness, selfishness and competition, leading to increased conflict and warfare worldwide. Adding to the problem is a human desire for a consumer-driven life style which has created a high demand for the common resources of the planet.

The mineral, vegetable and animal kingdoms have successfully sustained each other for millions of years and have become a solid base of support for sustaining human life. As human beings have evolved in intelligence, however, they have increasingly taken what they needed from the lower kingdoms – for food, clothing, housing, etc., – but, for the most part, provided little to help sustain these kingdoms. As human consciousness has evolved it has drawn further and further away from the common quality of nature to sustain itself. Nature was thought to be created for humans to exploit. As this imperious attitude developed in man, it led him to think that he had the "right" to use nature's resources as he saw fit. The concept of "freedom to exploit" became a guiding ideal; an ideal that is strongly held today.

Striving and fighting for freedom is a great spiritual path to follow, and is a relatively new attitude that is looked upon with great favor by the spiritual guides of the world. Striving for freedom will eventually lead humanity into the next kingdom in nature – the Kingdom of God or the kingdom of souls. But freedom as it is interpreted today (focused mostly on the material plane) leads to problems in human relations; and it is directly related to human use or misuse of our common resources. In fact, this sense of freedom is often the cause of the tragedy of the commons.

The tragedy of the commons is a term coined by Garrett Hardin, a biologist, in 1968. The classic parable he gave involved the sharing of a communal pasture land for grazing cattle. The pasture would continue to sustain itself if used only by a certain number of cattle. But if one herdsman increased his herd by even one cow, that could set off a chain reaction among the other herdsman who, out of self interest, added more cows to their herds as well. That would lead to the tragedy of over-grazing and the destruction of the sustainability of the pasture.

This problem was summed up by Hardin: "Therein is the tragedy. Each man is locked into a system that compels him to increase his herd without limit – in a world that is limited. Ruin is the destination toward which all men rush, each pursuing his own interest in a society that believes in the freedom of the commons" (1968).

In this simple parable, tragedy occurs when one herdsman believes he has the "right" to add more cows to his herd, because it would be profitable to do so. He believes he should be free to increase his profits. That is simply good business. Of course if the other herdsman also sharing the common pasture demanded the same "right", then the outcome is inevitable: the eventual depletion of the limited grazing land.

The result would not only be tragic, there would also be a loss of freedom. He and the other herdsman would no longer have the freedom to use the common grazing land.

Even though this is a small example of what might occur within the limits of a common consumable resource, it raises the moral dilemma often facing humanity in similar situations all around the world. Is it morally right for one individual, one group, one corporation, one nation to exploit a resource without considering the long-term effect their actions could have on others who depend on the same resource?

An egregious example of this moral question occurred in the 19th century in America where huge herds of buffalo roamed the western plains. They were a common resource for food and clothing for many Indian tribes in the region. The Indians killed only what they needed to survive, giving the herds time to replenish themselves. But with the arrival of hundreds of buffalo hunters from the East – spurred on by the high demand in the fashion industry for buffalo hides – the survival of the herds became endangered. Thousands of buffalo were slaughtered only for their hides; the meat and bones were left to rot on the plains. There was little concern for the basic needs of the Indians. To the hunters, the buffalo was a resource free for the taking. Soon the buffalo all but disappeared along with a life-sustaining resource for the Indian tribes.

Today such a selfish exploitation of a consumable resource would be unthinkable and even criminal. But it is still happening with other international resources like some oceanic fisheries. The once plentiful Atlantic cod and wild salmon have nearly disappeared due to over-fishing by large commercial trawlers. A similar fate may lie ahead for certain species of whales. Corporate self interest can be just as selfish as individual self interest, but on a much larger scale and with even more devastating effects. There are international treaties drawn up to protect the resource from selfish exploitation, but the difficulty comes in trying to enforce these treaties. The self interest of nations often blocks any attempt at sanctions or penalties.

Dealing with the power of self-interest is the most difficult challenge when it comes to the equitable management of a consumable resource. It is difficult because it usually requires all users of the resource to adopt a new mind-set, a new way of thinking about the fairest way to manage a limited resource.

Today, the human mind has evolved to a stage where it is now highly active and creative; it is able to comprehend issues on a large scale. This upward and expansive thrust of the self is good and necessary. But it also has its drawbacks: an awakening self is more demanding that its voice and ideas be heard. The individualised self feels it has the right to choose the best way for him to obtain his slice of the good life. As a consequence, short-term gain is emphasised over long-term interest in sustaining the resource.

But while the mind is now highly active, what is often missing in this search for the good is a particular quality of the

heart to balance out the self-interested mind, a quality that would condition the mind to think differently; a mind that would enable the individual to think and reason from a new, more inclusive perspective: to place the interest of the resource first, before the interest of himself. For many, this would require a huge leap in consciousness. And where a common pool resource has ended in tragedy, the inability to make that leap is often the cause.

When the mind has not, or cannot, make this leap in consciousness, then the management of a resource has to be settled by negotiations of some kind. Rules have to be set up, boundaries established, monitors to oversee the resource have to be chosen, conflict-resolution mechanisms have to be set up, etc. (Studies and analysis of such cases have been made by Elinor Ostrom, among others, in the book "Governing the Commons" (1990)).

Humanity's ability and willingness to negotiate the use of common-pool resources is really being put to the test over the issue of climate change. The common-pool resource in this case is of course the air, the water and the land of the entire planet. What is at stake is the health, the well-being and even the survival of millions of people on earth. Self-interest really takes over when dealing with the economics of nations and global corporations. Decisions are made based on political grounds and competition and usually not on what is morally the right thing to do for the whole planet. But we face the same dilemma on a planetary scale that the herdsman

GOODWILL IS...a living expression of synthesis

The unscattered mind

*Distracted from distraction by distraction
Filled with fancies and empty of meaning*
Burnt Norton TS Eliot

The pace of life is accelerating. Indeed, there seems to be an insatiable desire to continually speed up the rate of change. Pop singers and other celebrities are famous for a year or two and then vanish into oblivion, as the public's appetite for novelty for its own sake grows. As soon as a gadget appears it is 'old news', and speculation begins on the next version. This hunger for the new has a slight air of desperation about it – perhaps it is an attempt to compensate for the ongoing destruction of economic, religious and political certainties. Whatever its source, this hunger contributes to the scattering of attention; another source is the proliferation of channels of communication – email, instant messaging, SMS etc. etc. – with the consequent opportunity to chat endlessly about all the new things under the sun. This scattering of attention may seem relatively harmless, but it conceals a subtle danger: it can undermine humanity's capacity to focus, and to make wise decision, on the many difficulties that face us as we move into a new age.

Hence there is growing concern that human consciousness is being extended in too many directions at once, leading to chronic distractedness. This scattering of attention takes

place not only in leisure time, but also during work. It is becoming more widely accepted that the performance of complex mental tasks, such as computer programming, is severely impacted by interruptions. Multi-tasking is beginning to seem like a myth, or at least overhyped. Research indicates that when people try to perform two or more related tasks, either at the same time, or alternating rapidly between them, errors increase, and it takes far longer to get the jobs done than if they were done sequentially. Even young people, who have grown up with computers and mobile phones, aren't nearly as good at multi-tasking as they think they are. An article in *TIME* magazine, reflecting on the experience of educators with the changing skills of young people, suggests that, while their skills at accessing information, particularly in visual form, have increased, there is also evidence that their tolerance for ambiguity and complexity is decreasing. In *Wired* magazine, the author Nicholas Carr cites evidence from studies which suggest that regular use of the Internet 're-wires' the brain surprisingly quickly. Carr notes that in a *Science* article published in early 2009, prominent developmental psychologist Patricia Greenfield reviewed more than 40 studies of the effects of various types of media on intelligence and learning ability. She

placed with the grazing land: whether to let self-interest continue to rule, or whether to strive for more self-control over the human desire for short-term gain, at the expense of the sustainability of the earth.

In the final analysis, whether a common resource is well maintained to serve human needs, or is exploited for personal gain and thus ends in tragedy, depends not so much on adhering to a list of rules and regulations; it depends on acting with an awakened state of consciousness. Each struggle with the management of a commons – as seen recently at the 2009 UN Climate Change conference in Copenhagen – seems to be a test to see whether human beings are ready and willing to adapt to the coming Aquarian consciousness of sharing, goodwill and selfless service. On first inspection, the result from Copenhagen seems to suggest that self-interest is still pretty much the rule. However, a deeper analysis reveals that an awakening state is also now in evidence. The fact that many of the representatives from all the nations of the world came together out of a common concern for the world's changing climate (a world commons) is a demonstration of an emerging global mind capacity. It indicates that human beings are starting slowly but surely to recognise and adapt to the coming Aquarian consciousness of sharing and goodwill. And where Aquarian spiritual values influence the management of the commons – locally or worldwide – there one will see good health and sustainability and the avoidance of tragedy.

concluded that “every medium develops some cognitive skills at the expense of others.” Our growing use of the Net and other screen-based technologies, she wrote, has led to the “widespread and sophisticated development of visual-spatial skills.” But those gains go hand in hand with a weakening of our capacity for the kind of “deep processing” that underpins “mindful knowledge acquisition, inductive analysis, critical thinking, imagination, and reflection.”

So if the world is not to become like a fairground carousel running out of control, flinging attention out to the periphery, away from the most important issues of human life, we need to learn (or re-learn) the skills of centring our attention on these perennial issues of deep meaning that lie at the heart of civilisation. In the past, established orthodoxies in politics, religion and culture helped to anchor and direct this process, but as these orthodoxies erode, humanity is faced with the difficult task of creating new ways of expressing such central Ideas as Goodness, Truth, Justice, and Beauty. The old ceremonies

and rituals which gave collective meaning to life must be forged anew in the fires of the enlightened, compassionate mind, a mind that is not “filled with fancies”, but is fixed unalterably on unveiling the Sun of Meaning. This means that we must give time and priority to *meditation*, in all its many forms. Stilling the mind, or rather emptying it of fancies, is only the first step in meditation, although it is sometimes mistaken for its sole purpose. If the mind is to live up to its true potential as an intermediary between Divinity and humanity, it must be actively used in contacting Divine Ideas, and then in creating forms of thought through which these Ideas can be expressed. This is the process through which great works of genius in every field – science, education, politics, the arts, religion etc. – have always emerged. Finding ways to nurture this process in every field, and to protect our minds from the pull of distractions, is a key need for the world.

See also
www.wired.com/magazine/2010/05/ff_nicholas_carr/all/1

The search for the God particle

The symbolic nature of the Large Hadron Collider at CERN

Smashing things together as hard as possible to see what happens is one of the more predictable things a toddler will do when given toys to play with. As well as being an elementary learning process, it's also a lot of fun if the accompanying shouts of delight are anything to go by. Arguably then, the physicists at CERN (The European Organisation for Nuclear Research) have the best jobs in the world – smashing fundamental particles together at close to the speed of light – to see what happens.

Weighing in at over 38,000 tonnes and with a circumference of 27 kilometres, the Large Hadron Collider is the world's biggest and highest-energy particle accelerator. That something as large and complex as the Hadron Collider has been constructed to investigate something as small and simple as a fundamental particle provides an interesting symbol of humanity's intellectual development and the colossus that the intellect can become prior to its illumination by the simplifying light of the intuition.

While the prowess of the human intellect is something to be celebrated, the next evolutionary step forward will see it become a tool of the intuition rather than a governing principle in its own right. The intellect is a dissector, manipulator and rearranger of the mental, emotional and physical substance that makes up the field of knowledge, of which it itself, is an integral part. For this very reason it cannot perceive why the matter in which it is immersed behaves as it does – the secrets of causality operate at more subtle levels of reality. So while a particle collider will create ever more ‘fundamental particles’ (sic) out of those it smashes together according to its size and power, the intellect that processes the information it yields will, of necessity, create correspondingly larger and more complex theories to accommodate them and their behaviour.

Already this is being reported in the media:

“Surprisingly, it appears nature produces more debris from each collision than expected... However...something completely unexpected – could be discovered...We could find that quarks are made of something smaller or that there is a new fundamental force that we knew nothing about.”
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/theobserver/2010/apr/04/large-hadron-collider>

One of the main tasks of the Hadron Collider is the search for a missing element from the exotic zoo of particles it has so far discovered. This has been nicknamed “the God-particle”. So important is this missing particle for unifying the conventional model of the universe, it has been given God-like status in the world of theoretical physics. It is thought to endow the universe with the property of mass so fundamental to the act of Creation and life as we know it.

Of course, the search for wholeness and unity through the discovery of a particle of matter is unlikely to prove fruitful in the illusory field of knowledge wherein separateness and division are the rule. From the angle of spiritual philosophy, this continual peeling away of layers from the onion to reveal yet more layers will continue ad infinitum – or at least until the concept of the ether is reintroduced into scientific thinking. However, the notion of the ether as a substantial medium underlying the manifested universe is the polar opposite of the current model of an ever-growing zoo of strangely behaving particles spinning around in a void. While this latter view symbolises the intellect's natural inclination towards divisive thinking, the intuition naturally embraces the idea of the ether as a unified field of relationship and interconnectivity.

Here we have another facet of humanity's present state of consciousness symbolised. For just as ‘fragmentation’ of the underlying ether is the result of a particle accelerator's activity, so is ‘psychological fragmentation’ the result of the accelerated

pace of modern living in the field of knowledge. While no-one would accuse a theoretical physicist of having a scattered mind, there is a dispersal of humanity's attention in general as it jumps from one distracting bit of stimulating information to the next, oblivious of the Sun of Meaning that steadily shines from the inner realm of causes. This was explored in the previous World View article, *The unscattered mind*.

Although high energy theoretical physics is complex, at the heart of the search for the fundamental condition of matter lies the yearning for that simplicity and synthesis which characterises the world of meaning. Hence the physicist's hope of finding a Grand Unified Theory of everything (GUT) that can be expressed in a single equation. While this may be a vain hope, the research taking place at CERN is, more importantly, in itself a wonderful demonstration of synthesis and the will-to-good that arises from a purposeful group quest

The spirit of the law

We live in a world teeming with rules and regulations while at the same time the human spirit is yearning for greater freedom of expression. How we reconcile these two opposing factors remains one of the big questions of our times. To quote the Roman historian, Tacitus: "The more corrupt the state, the more laws" – an interesting thought to ponder upon in relation to the complexity of burgeoning legal systems of modern societies.

Although there is much corruption, this complexity is evidence of other phenomena as well. The kinetic energy of the human race is increasing dramatically as its mental and emotional faculties unfold. Human ingenuity is constantly launching new ideas and initiatives and these all need regulating to ensure that they don't infringe the rights of others. These rights in turn are constantly being redefined, leading to further new laws, rules and regulations. Until the higher, spiritual faculties of the human race unfurl and assume control of its thoughts, feelings and actions, complex man-made laws are necessary impositions simply to maintain some semblance of civil order.

Unsurprisingly though, the growing intricacy of law and order is being paralleled by a rebellion against authority of all kinds. In technologically developed countries, the voice of public opinion is more informed, sure of itself and consequently louder, leading, in most cases, to a greater democratisation of society. But alongside this, the championing of minor personal rights and gain has contributed to an excessive focus on the letter of the law with its stifling effect on society. A bewildering amount of dos and don'ts are now enshrined in law concerned with relatively minor issues and offences, while the greater crimes often go unpunished due to clever legal manipulations. As the law grows more complex, so does the potential to challenge one law with another and to defend misdemeanours through clauses, loopholes and obfuscation.

Perhaps though, this is all to be expected in the "meeting place" between the old age of the privileged few and the new

to understand the nature of reality. In a sense the Large Hadron Collider's 27 kilometre loop encircles the globe, because the project is supported by an enormous international community of scientists and engineers working together in multinational teams at CERN and around the world, building and testing equipment and software and participating in experiments and analysing data.

This is an impressive fusion of minds coming together in the search for answers to fundamental questions about the nature of the universe we live in. In effect, it is an example of a fledgling group mind functioning as one spiritual organism. As this group mind evolves, its intuition will also steadily awaken. A more spiritual and synthesised understanding of the field of knowledge will then dawn – while yet opening up even greater wonders and mysteries to our astounded vision.

age of universal rights that we are entering. Maybe it is a temporary side effect of the enormous freeing-up process that is occurring worldwide as people rise to take on autocracy, corruption and injustice. In undemocratic countries this is a great cause for rejoicing and indeed we should admire the bravery displayed. But in the world's democracies, freedoms gained through centuries of suffering, conflict and heroic endeavour could be strangled by the insidious creeping in of an age of legislation.

Several centuries ago, the philosopher Jeremy Bentham observed, "every law is an infraction of liberty". But the only escape from this situation is the realisation that true freedom is only found when it is actively sought for through service to others. In the words of Alice Bailey, "*the idea of freedom can itself constitute a prison. There are no free souls anywhere, except those who of free choice imprison themselves and find themselves within and by the law of service.*" If we are not to crucify the human spirit through entanglement in the letter of the law, we need to live more by its spirit, and to let our thoughts and deeds be on behalf of humanity, not just ourselves. Our actions must be guided by one great law of love – that attractive principle in the universe through which right relationships at all levels of manifestation are built and sustained. Only through right relationships can the love of God flow unimpeded throughout creation and true freedom be found.

Religious and philosophical teachings have set before us the spiritual laws with which to live our lives. We have the Christ's injunction to "Love one another" and the Buddha's familiar Noble Eightfold Path to right living and relationships: right values, right aspiration, right speech, right conduct, right modes of living, right effort, right thinking and right rapture or joyfulness. Since their first utterance, these simple tenets have now become crucial to humanity's future and no longer just an ideal for the individual aspirant. But are they too obvious, too simple, for humanity to recognise their power as solutions to world problems? >>

HELPING TO BUILD RIGHT HUMAN RELATIONS

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.

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Essentially, human laws are, or should be a reflection of spiritual principles, a means of safely containing the released potential energy of groups of people, organising and directing it for the shared benefit of all. As humanity is still learning to appreciate the concept of "shared benefit" as opposed to that of "vested self-interest", the organisational aspect grows ever more complex in order to contain rogue elements that harm the group good. As long as individuals try to take more from a group than they put in, others are deprived of an equitable share of the group energy; competitiveness, disharmony, vice and finally, disease, then inevitably follow – the "Tragedy of the Commons" being a prime example of this.

While Tacitus saw the corruption of the Roman state in the number of its laws, we look around and see quite a different trend in the many international laws and agreements of our times. Behind the letter of these agreements, the movement towards integration and group sharing is clearly discernable. In a world whose problems are global, there is a growing recognition of the need to encompass all the rights – of individuals, nations and the one humanity alike. The need to act together in the face of shared concerns is edging the laws of right relationship towards the forefront of human consciousness. Midst the complexity of world affairs and the suffering of its peoples, the signs are there that Humanity is awakening to the spirit of the one great law – the simple law to love one another.

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.

* Many religions believe in a World Teacher Who is to come in the future (hence 'Coming One'), knowing Him under such names as the Lord Maitreya, the Imam Mahdi, the Kalki avatar etc.. These terms are sometimes used in versions of the Great Invocation for people of specific faiths.

Adapted version

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

From the point of Love within the Heart of God
Let love stream forth into human hearts.
May the Coming One return to Earth.

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

From the centre which we call the human race
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.