

# PATTERNS

ASCD Systems Thinking/Chaos Theory Network/ American Society for Cybernetics

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## *From the Editor:*

I am often asked, "Just what IS Cybernetics?" and I've finally found an answer that, at least, prompts the questioner to ask the next question ..and the next...and the next. That answer is "What goes around comes around."

Certainly, the circular causality that is basic to the understanding of Cybernetics is becoming increasingly evident in our everyday lives as we watch the nature-made devastation of category # 5 hurricanes destroy the southern coast of the United States with the human suffering exacerbated by the diminished response of a federal government preoccupied with the human-made devastation in Iraq and Afghanistan. There is a circular connection — human society and natural environment are forever bound.

Having just returned from Vienna where I attended the international meeting of the World Café exploring the evolution of this people-to-people conversational movement, I was very much aware that the whole world has been shocked to see the poor and despairing faces that millions of Americans were seeing on their TV screens in these last weeks. I was also aware that as we deplore the moral scandal of such poverty in the world's richest nation, not only we in the United States but people throughout the world have been reaching into their own pockets to ameliorate the suffering brought about by other recent natural disasters such as the tsunami in South East Asia and now (as I write this) the earthquakes in Pakistan and Kashmir and floods in Guatemala.

There is a growing sense of abnormal disconnect in the recognition that as our natural world is changing in scary ways, our ruling institutions are preoccupied with narcissistic power

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## Keep the Space for Conversation Open

*by Meg Wheatley*

*Margaret Wheatley is the Co-Founder and President Emeritus of The Berkana Institute. She has been a speaker, consultant, and writer since 1973, having been inside most kinds of organizations —from the Girl Scouts to the U.S. Army, from Fortune 100 companies to small town churches—and lived and worked in many different cultures and countries. This article, printed by permission, sets the tone for this issue of PATTERNS.*

What can each of us do, now that Katrina and the aftermath have torn the curtain that concealed America's dark shadow side of poverty, inequality, corruption, and indifference to shreds? We have two and only two choices. We can retreat into anger, powerlessness, finger-pointing. Or we can turn to one another. We can turn to those we have ignored, we can include those we have bypassed, we can involve those we call ignorant, we can listen to those we profoundly disagree with.

Wherever we are, in these weeks after Katrina, I believe that the single most important thing for us to do now is to keep the space for conversation open. And to widen the circle of who is in the conversation. We had a similar opportunity after 9/11. For less than three weeks. Americans were willing to ask: "Why do they hate us? Why would anyone do this to us good people?" And then the questions stopped. President Bush answered them simply by saying: "They hate us because we're free." Once that was stated, most Americans retreated and took comfort in having an answer. The space for conversation closed shut, and we began military operations in Afghanistan and planned for war in Iraq.

*We must use Katrina to truthfully know ourselves as a nation.*

We have another opportunity with Katrina, with perhaps even more at stake this time. If we rely on simple cause and effect answers and focus on who is to blame, if we rely on experts to tell us what went wrong, if we ignore each other—then, I have no hope for the future of America. We must, each of us, keep the conversation going. We must learn from each other. We must be willing to look deeply into who we are, right now, free of rhetoric, free of rationalization, free of narrow definitions of self-interest.

I have often quoted a CEO who stated that the primary act of leadership was "to make sure the organization knows itself." If the organization doesn't know who it is, how can we possibly know what to change? This process holds true at all levels of scale. It works for individuals, companies, and nation states. We can't move forward intelligently, we can't solve anything or change the conditions unless we truly see what's going on.

We must use Katrina to truthfully know ourselves as a nation. We don't have any more time to play hide and seek. We need honest and inclusive inquiry, free of blame, denial and politics. Alas, this is counter-cultural at this time in America. Already, many of us have retreated into our positions, and are using Katrina to

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issues. The image of Nero fiddling while Rome burns comes to mind as we watch the citizens and the non-governmental organizations rise to the challenges on their own.

In future issues of PATTERNS we will explore the growing evidence that significant social change comes from the bottom up and that words like "fighting for Democracy" in the world are hollow without an understanding that it is an aroused opinion, and dedicated enactment among 'We, the People,' that forces our ruling institutions to do the right thing.

I believe that an understanding of how natural living systems work in a circular relationship with how social systems *could* work is crucial to our ability to evolve without the kind of violence we as children were warned against in the childhood poem of *The Calico Cat and the Gingham Dog* who "went out in a pea-green boat" and eventually ate each other up.

As responsible citizens and, indeed, as human beings, it is crucial that we shift from seeing socio-political problems "out there" (and separated from environmental forces) presented to us as masochistic 'infotainment' on television, to recognizing our own individual involvement in creating and solving those problems. As the cartoon character, POGO, said back in the 1960's, "I have seen the enemy and it is us." With the circularity of the Cybernetic perspective we are "called" to become a part of an ethical social systems.

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strengthen our own convictions. I have been shocked by some of the explanations I've heard. I've listened to people who are outraged (as I am), but I've also listened to people who believe that Katrina was an act of God to wipe out a corrupt and evil city. I've heard people speak as Social Darwinists, asserting that the poor are poor because they are inferior and, therefore, not even worthy of compassion. I have been upset by these views, but this mammoth divergence in our beliefs and interpretations is America, right now. Can we acknowledge that this is who we are?

We need to be talking to each other from these stunningly different perspectives. The only way I know how to do this is through conversation. Sitting together in a circle, the ancient form of equality, where everyone has a chance to contribute, where everyone is acknowledged as an expert about something, and where we all commit to listening as best we can.

If we don't come together and listen to each other, we cannot hope to move forward. I believe that America is at a bifurcation point—that moment in a living system's life when it is forced to choose between the future and oblivion. If it continues to live as it has, without noticing what's going on, if it fails to recognize that its environment has changed, that it must adapt, then the system is choosing death. The path of life is one of re-creation—finding the forms and values that make sense in a world that is different than we thought, a world that requires new behaviors from us.

*Can we listen expecting to hear differences,  
rather than listening to find our allies?*

As individuals and communities, we need to realize that we too are at a choice point. We can continue to rage and yell at others across our lines of division. We can continue to concretize our certainty rather than open to curiosity. We can hound politicians for simple solutions to complex issues, even though these only lead to further deterioration and unintended consequences. But we've already worn out these bad behaviors. They lead nowhere, truly.

Can we now commit, each of us, wherever we are, to staying open a little bit longer? Can we commit to talking to people who hold extremely different positions from ours? Can we listen expecting to hear differences, rather than listening to find our allies? Can we realize, truly realize, that without a profound shift in how we live together now, we cannot create a future that serves any of us?

At Berkana, as we've worked with leaders and communities in difficult places, where there are few material resources, we've learned one thing. When you can't plan for a stable future, when you're never going to get the resources you need, when you expect disruption and upheaval, the only capacity we need to develop is our relationships. If our relationships are strong, if we trust each other, if we expect everyone to contribute, if we know we all care and will act on our commitments—then we are well-prepared for the next crisis. We can't know the future, but we do know how to prepare for the future. We can come together to create the quality of relationships that weather any storm.

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*My hope is that your own sense of wonder will compel  
you to continue exploring the world with new eyes.  
We need many pioneers and explorers now.*

Meg Wheatley

## 9/11 and the Sport of God

By Bill Moyers

*Bill Moyers is a broadcast journalist and former host for the PBS program NOW With Bill Moyers. He also serves as president of the Schumann Center for Media and Democracy. This speech can be found at <[www.Commondreams.org](http://www.Commondreams.org)>*

At the Central Baptist Church in Marshall, Texas, where I was baptized in the faith, we believed in a free church in a free state. I still do.

My spiritual forbears did not take kindly to living under theocrats who embraced religious liberty for themselves but denied it to others. "Forced worship stinks in God's nostrils," thundered the dissenter Roger Williams as he was banished from Massachusetts for denying Puritan authority over his conscience. Baptists there were a "pitiful negligible minority" but they were agitators for freedom and therefore denounced as "incendiaries of the commonwealth" for holding to their belief in that great democracy of faith - the priesthood of all believers. For refusing to pay tribute to the state religion they were fined, flogged, and exiled. In 1651 the Baptist Obadiah Holmes was given 30 stripes with a three-corded whip after he violated the law and took forbidden communion with another Baptist in Lynn, Massachusetts. His friends offered to pay his fine for his release but he refused. They offered him strong drink to anesthetize the pain of the flogging. Again he refused. It is the love of liberty, he said, "that must free the soul."

Such revolutionary ideas made the new nation with its Constitution and Bill of Rights "a haven for the cause of conscience." No longer could magistrates order citizens to support churches they did not attend and recite creeds that they did not believe. No longer would "the loathsome combination of church and state" - as Thomas Jefferson described it - be the settled order. Unlike the Old World that had been wracked with religious wars and persecution, the government of America would take no sides in the religious free-for-all that liberty would make possible and politics would make inevitable. The First Amendment neither inculcates religion nor inoculates against it. Americans could be loyal to the Constitution without being hostile to God, or they could pay no heed to God without fear of being mugged by an official God Squad. It has been a remarkable arrangement that guaranteed "soul freedom."

It is at risk now, and the fourth observance of the terrorist attacks of 9/11 is an appropriate time to think about it. Four years ago this week, the poet's prophetic metaphor became real again and "the great dark birds of history" plunged into our lives.

*"Those who believe, Fight in the cause of Allah,  
and Those who reject Faith, Fight in the cause of Evil." (4:76)*

They came in the name of God. They came bent on murder and martyrdom. It was as if they rode to earth on the fierce breath of Allah himself, for the sacred scriptures that had nurtured these murderous young men are steeped in images of a violent and vengeful God who wills life for the faithful and horrific torment for unbelievers.

Yes, the Koran speaks of mercy and compassion and calls for ethical living. But such passages are no match for the ferocity of instruction found there for waging war for God's sake. The scholar Jack Nelson-Pallmeyer carefully traces this trail of holy violence in his important book, *Is Religion Killing Us?* (Trinity Press International, 2003). He highlights many of the verses in the Koran that the Islamic terrorists could have had in their hearts and on their lips four years ago as they moved toward their gruesome rendezvous.

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When we accept the reality that each one of us is a living system intimately connected within all other living systems including natural, social, political, economic systems (however we conceptually divide the living system we call our Universe), we are demonstrating that we are ethical "human becomings." Seeing ourselves as human beings capable of such change is what social evolution is all about.

In the political sphere of the United States, **Steve Bhaerman, aka Swami Beyondananda**, is asking important questions. Change is not easy, but it is required. Resistance is to be expected. As the Swami has said, "*we cannot expect an entire culture to just turn on a paradigm.*" But at some point, we need to move past the protest and complaining and move the constructive conversation forward. We can't keep pretending the Democrats are worth supporting just because they aren't Republicans. Nothing could be more disempowering. Time for those of us who can see a better world to put up or shut up — and invite the Democratic Party to do the same."

He asks what would happen if we in the United States thought of the Democratic Party leadership as a wayward brother with a life-threatening addiction to gutlessness and powerlessness and recognized that this gutlessness and powerlessness habit is mighty expensive. He calls for an intervention... something like "tough love."

"What if we stopped enabling their powerlessness habit by no longer funding it? *Nobody likes ending a relationship, especially one with such rich history and great nostalgia. But we can't propel ourselves into the 21st century on fumes from the New Deal. It may be time to say "thanks for the memories," and we're moving on.*

"What is being called for is an evolution, and if we want anything to change for the better, we the people must evolve with or without

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the Democratic Party. Should the party fall into line behind the people, then that in and of itself indicates they are ready to lead us into the new millennium. Should they not, we should be prepared to create a Third Force for 2008 with some repercussions for 2006. Just as I once suggested that the Green Party hand out "green stamps" of support for Democrats or other candidates who resonated with their views, for 2006 this Third Force — whether it's the Greens or someone else — can offer endorsements of those who support these new paradigm policies."

So, in this issue of PATTERNS, we will be looking at the word, "*Evolution*," recognizing that from this "Cybernetic" perspective, the word, "*Revolution*," no longer serves our needs. We cannot afford to continue with the "same ole, same ole."

Our lead article by **Margaret Wheatley**, Co-Founder and President Emeritus of the **Berkana Institute**, helps us to see the difference. She writes;

*For many years, I've been interested in seeing the world differently. I've wanted to see beyond the Western, mechanical view of the world and see what else might appear when the lens was changed. I've learned, just as Joel Barker predicted when he introduced us to paradigms years ago, that "problems that are impossible to solve with one paradigm may be easily solved with a different one."*

*I've been applying the lens of living systems theory to organizations and communities. With wonderful colleagues, I've been exploring the question: "How might we organize differently if we understood how Life organizes?" It's been an exploration that has helped me look into old patterns and problems and develop new and hopeful insights and practices. It has also increased my sense of wonder for life, and for the great capacity of the human spirit.*

It is this great capacity of the human spirit that **Bill Moyers** speaks

Terrorists plant time bombs in our heads, hoping to turn each and every imagination into a private hell governed by our fear of them.

They win only if we let them, only if we become like them: vengeful, imperious, intolerant, paranoid. Having lost faith in all else, zealots have nothing left but a holy cause to please a warrior God. They win if we become holy warriors, too; if we kill the innocent as they do; strike first at those who had not struck us; allow our leaders to use the fear of terrorism to make us afraid of the truth; cease to think and reason together, allowing others to tell what's in God's mind. Yes, we are vulnerable to terrorists, but only a shaken faith in ourselves can do us in.

The other side of the story:

Muslims have no monopoly on holy violence. As Jack Nelson-Pallmayer points out, God's violence in the sacred texts of both faiths reflect a deep and troubling pathology "so pervasive, vindictive, and destructive" that it contradicts and subverts the collective weight of other passages that exhort ethical behavior or testify to a loving God.

For days now we have watched those heart-breaking scenes on the Gulf Coast: the steaming, stinking, sweltering wreckage of cities and suburbs; the fleeing refugees; the floating corpses, hungry babies, and old people huddled together in death, the dogs gnawing at their feet; stranded children standing in water reeking of feces and garbage; families scattered; a mother holding her small child and an empty water jug, pleading for someone to fill it; a wife, pushing the body of her dead husband on a wooden plank down a flooded street; desperate people struggling desperately to survive.

Now transport those current scenes from our newspapers and television back to the first Book of the Bible - the Book of Genesis. They bring to life what we rarely imagine so graphically when we read of the great flood that devastated the known world. If you read the Bible as literally true, as fundamentalists do, this flood was ordered by God. "And God said to Noah, 'I have determined to make an end of all flesh... behold, I will destroy them with the earth.'" (6:5-13). "I will bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh in which is the breath of life from under heaven; everything that is on the earth shall die." (6:17-19) Noah and his family are the only humans spared - they were, after all, God's chosen. But for everyone else: "... the waters prevailed so mightily... that all the high mountains...were covered....And all flesh died that moved upon the earth, birds, cattle, beasts...and every man; everything on the dry land in whose nostrils was the breath of life, died...." (7:17-23).

#### *Violence: the sport of God.*

#### *God, the progenitor of shock and awe.*

The flood is merely Act One. Read on: This God first "hardens the heart of Pharaoh" to make sure the Egyptian ruler will not be moved by the plea of Moses to let his people go. Then because Pharaoh's heart is hardened, God turns the Nile into blood so people cannot drink its water and will suffer from thirst. Not satisfied with the results, God sends swarms of locusts and flies to torture them; rains hail and fire and thunder on them destroys the trees and plants of the field until nothing green remains; orders every first-born child to be slaughtered, from the first-born of Pharaoh right on down to "the first-born of the maidservant behind the mill." An equal-murderous God, you might say. The massacre continues until "there is not a house where one was not dead." While the Egyptian families mourn their dead, God orders Moses to loot from their houses all their gold and silver and clothing. Finally, God's thirst for blood is satisfied.

And that's just Act II. As the story unfolds.. One tribe after another falls to God-ordered genocide.. "*And when the Lord your God gives them over to you, and you defeat them; then you must utterly destroy them; you shall make no covenant with them, and show no mercy to them...(and) your eyes shall not pity them.*"

So it is written - in the Holy Bible.

Yes, I know: we can go through the Bible and construct a God more pleasing to the better angels of our nature (as I have done.) Yes, I know: Christians claim the Old Testament God of wrath was supplanted by the Gospel's God of love.

I know these things; all of us know these things. But we also know that the "violence-of-God" tradition remains embedded deep in the DNA of monotheistic faith. We also know that fundamentalists the world over and at home consider the "sacred texts" to be literally God's word on all matters. Inside that logic you cannot read part of the Bible allegorically and the rest of it literally; if you believe in the virgin birth of Jesus, his crucifixion and resurrection, and the depiction of the Great Judgment at the end times you must also believe that God is sadistic, brutal, vengeful, callow, cruel and savage - that God slaughters.

Let's go back to 9/11 four years ago. The ruins were still smoldering when the reverends Pat Robertson and Jerry Falwell went on television to proclaim that the terrorist attacks were God's punishment of a corrupted America. They said the government had adopted the agenda "of the pagans, and the abortionists, and the feminists, and the gays and the lesbians" not to mention the ACLU and People for the American Way. Just as God had sent the Great Flood to wipe out a corrupted world, now - disgusted with a decadent America - "God almighty is lifting his protection from us." Critics said such comments were deranged. But millions of Christian fundamentalists and conservatives didn't think so. They thought Robertson and Falwell were being perfectly consistent with the logic of the Bible as they read it: God withdraws favor from sinful nations - the terrorists were meant to be God's wake-up call: better get right with God. Not many people at the time seemed to notice that Osama bin Laden had also been reading his sacred book closely and literally, and had called on Muslims to resist what he described as a "fierce Judeo-Christian campaign" against Islam, praying to Allah for guidance "to exalt the people who obey Him and humiliate those who disobey Him."

### *The terrorists were meant to be God's wake-up call*

Suddenly we were immersed in the pathology of a "holy war" as defined by fundamentalists on both sides. You could see this pathology play out in General William Boykin. A professional soldier, General Boykin had taken up with a small group called the Faith Force Multiplier whose members apply military principles to evangelism with a manifesto summoning warriors "to the spiritual warfare for souls." After Boykin had led Americans in a battle against a Somalian warlord he announced: "I know my God was bigger than his. I knew that my God was a real God and his God was an idol." Now Boykin was going about evangelical revivals preaching that America was in a holy war as "a Christian nation" battling Satan and that America's Muslim adversaries will be defeated "only if we come against them in the name of Jesus." For such an hour, America surely needed a godly leader. So General Boykin explained how it was that the candidate who had lost the election in 2000 nonetheless wound up in the White House. President Bush, he said, "was not elected by a majority of the voters - he was appointed by God." Not surprising, instead of being reprimanded for evangelizing while in uniform, General Boykin is now the Deputy Undersecretary of Defense for Intelligence. (Just as it isn't surprising that despite his public call for the assassination of a foreign head of state, Pat Robertson's Operation Blessing was one of the first groups to receive taxpayer funds from the President's Faith-Based Initiative for "relief work" on the Gulf Coast.)

We can't wiggle out of this, people. Alvin Hawkins states it frankly: "This is a problem we can't walk away from." We're talking about a powerful religious constituency that claims the right to tell us what's on God's mind and to decide the laws of the land according to their interpretation of biblical revelation and to enforce those laws on the nation as a whole. For the Bible is not just the foundational text of their faith; it has become the foundational text for a political movement.

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to in his address at the **Union Theological Seminary** in New York where he and his wife were honored for their work. (p.3)

Moyers helps us look into old patterns and problems. He reminds us that;

*Terrorists plant time bombs in our heads, hoping to turn each and every imagination into a private hell governed by our fear of them.*

*They win only if we let them, only if we become like them: vengeful, imperious, intolerant, paranoid. Having lost faith in all else, zealots have nothing left but a holy cause to please a warrior God. They win if we become holy warriors, too; if we kill the innocent as they do; strike first at those who had not struck us; allow our leaders to use the fear of terrorism to make us afraid of the truth; cease to think and reason together, allowing others to tell what's in God's mind. Yes, we are vulnerable to terrorists, but only a shaken faith in ourselves can do us in.*

There is a circularity in the evolution of the "mature" love that Moyers sees as necessary if we are not to remain merely sentimental in our loving. What IS evolutionary is that "we have to take that love where the action is."

**Joanna Macy** continues the conversation speaking of the three dimensions of the **Great Turning** she sees in the heart of the world. This recognition of a deep evolutionary movement "*provides a good conceptual framework for seeing the opportunities present now and guidance for the way ahead.*" She sees this tidal change of spirit, though not featured in the news, sweeping in on us in countless ways. (p. 10) We agree, and our preparation for "new PATTERNS" which will appear in this coming new year will explore evidence of this global change of spirit\_\_what we like to call the true globalization of our planet Earth.

In his regular column, **HB Gellatt** explores the connections among change, learning and sustainability. He writes; "*Change and learning are*

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*two sides of the same coin. Change is one of the biggest causes of learning and learning causes change. Change and learning are basic requirements if we expect to create a sustainable future. Creativity, of course, is also required and creativity and change are also closely related. Change often requires a creative response and creativity often causes creative change."*

He continues; *We need to learn to be as capable of change as the environment. If the world around us is changing and we stay the same, we are certainly "out of sync."*

In cybernetic understanding we speak of **Ross Ashby's Law of Requisite Variety** which says something we intuitively know. We must respond with as much craziness without going crazy in a world that is getting crazier all the time. It helps to understand that if we are feeling crazy it's not just us. It's the way nature works. Just change the word "crazy" to "creative."

It makes sense ..... think about it.

In the last issue of PATTERNS we printed a report on the **European Masters Programme in Performer Studies** titled **E-MAPS**. We wish to correct a mistake in our editorial and in the attribution of the article to **Victor Jacono**. In a message from him he wrote; *While the Emaps team would like to show its gratitude for the interest you've taken in their work, I have however to point out that there must have been some misunderstanding regarding the authorship of that article. The Emaps material I've forwarded you was not written by myself but by Dr John J Schranz, who is co-founder of the Emaps programme. I don't really know what could have led to such misunderstanding but I surely would have never claimed the authorship of a piece of work that is not mine.*

We accept responsibility for our mistake and sincerely apologize for any discomfort it has caused. We also wish to correct any implication in our Editorial that **Groups for Human Encounter** is connected with the **University of Malta** therefore implying that Mr. Jacono is a performer at the University of Malta.

True, people of faith have always tried to bring their interpretation of the Bible to bear on American laws and morals - this very seminary is part of that tradition; it's the American way, encouraged and protected by the First Amendment. But what is unique today is that the radical religious right has succeeded in taking over one of America's great political parties - the country is not yet a theocracy but the Republican Party is - and they are driving American politics, using God as a battering ram on almost every issue: crime and punishment, foreign policy, health care, taxation, energy, regulation, social services and so on.

What's also unique is the intensity, organization, and anger they have brought to the public square. Listen to their preachers, evangelists, and homegrown ayatollahs: Their viral intolerance - their loathing of other people's beliefs, of America's secular and liberal values, of an independent press, of the courts, of reason, science and the search for objective knowledge - has become an unprecedented sectarian crusade for state power. They use the language of faith to demonize political opponents, mislead and misinform voters, censor writers and artists, ostracize dissenters, and marginalize the poor. These are the foot soldiers in a political holy war financed by wealthy economic interests and guided by savvy partisan operatives who know that couching political ambition in religious rhetoric can ignite the passion of followers as ferociously as when Constantine painted the Sign of Christ (the "Christograph") on the shields of his soldiers and on the banners of his legions and routed his rivals in Rome.

*"Reclaiming the teaching of our Christian heritage among America's youth is paramount to a sense of national destiny that God has invested into this nation."*

Let's take a brief detour to Ohio and I'll show you what I am talking about. In recent weeks a movement called the Ohio Restoration Project has been launched to identify and train thousands of "Patriot Pastors" to get out the conservative religious vote next year. According to press reports, the leader of the movement - the senior pastor of a large church in suburban Columbus - casts the 2006 elections as an apocalyptic clash between "the forces of righteousness and the hordes of hell." The fear and loathing in his message is palpable: He denounces public schools that won't teach creationism, require teachers to read the Bible in class, or allow children to pray. He rails against the "secular jihadists" who have "hijacked" America and prevent school kids from learning that Hitler was "an avid evolutionist." He links abortion to children who murder their parents. He blasts the "pagan left" for trying to redefine marriage. He declares that "homosexual rights" will bring "a flood of demonic oppression." On his church website you read that "Reclaiming the teaching of our Christian heritage among America's youth is paramount to a sense of national destiny that God has invested into this nation."

One of the prominent allies of the Ohio Restoration Project is a popular televangelist in Columbus who heads a \$40 million-a-year ministry that is accessible worldwide via 1,400 TV stations and cable affiliates. Although he describes himself as neither Republican nor Democrat but a "Christocrat" - a gladiator for God marching against "the very hordes of hell in our society" - he nonetheless has been spotted with so many Republican politicians in Washington and elsewhere that he has been publicly described as a "spiritual advisor" to the party. The journalist Marley Greiner has been following his ministry for the organization, FreePress. She writes that because he considers the separation of church and state to be "a lie perpetrated on Americans - especially believers in Jesus Christ" - he identifies himself as a "wall builder" and "wall buster." As a wall builder he will "restore Godly presence in government and culture; as a wall buster he will tear down the church-state wall." He sees the Christian church as a sleeping giant that has the ability and the anointing from God to transform America. The giant is stirring. At a rally in July he proclaimed to a packed house: "Let the Revolution begin!" And the congregation roared back: "Let the Revolution begin!"

(The Revolution's first goal, by the way, is to elect as governor next year the current Republican secretary of state who oversaw the election process in 2004, the year when a surge in Christian voters narrowly carried George Bush to victory. As General Boykin suggested of President Bush's anointment, this fellow has acknowledged that "God wanted him as secretary of state during 2004" because it was such a critical election. Now he is criss-crossing Ohio meeting with Patriot Pastors and their congregations proclaiming that "America is at its best when God is at its center.") [For the complete stories from which this information has been extracted, see: "An evening with Rod Parsley, by Marley Greiner, FreePress, July 20, 2005; Patriot Pastors," Marilyn Warfield, Cleveland Jewish News, July 29, 2005; "Ohio televangelist has plenty of influence, but he wants more", Ted Wendling, Religion News Service, Chicago Tribune, July 1, 2005; "Shaping Politics from the pulpits," Susan Page, USA Today, Aug. 3, 2005; "Religion and Politics Should Be Mixed Says Ohio Secretary of State," WTOL-TV Toledo, October 29, 2004].

The **Ohio Restoration Project** is spreading. In one month alone last year in the president's home state of Texas, a single Baptist preacher added 2000 "Patriot Pastors" to the rolls. On his website he now encourages pastors to "speak out on the great moral issues of our day...to restore and reclaim America for Christ."

Alas, these "great moral issues" do not include building a moral economy. The Christian Right trumpets charity (as in Faith Based Initiatives) but is silent on social and economic justice. Inequality in America has reached scandalous proportions: a few weeks ago the government acknowledged that while incomes are growing smartly for the first time in years, the primary winners are the top earners - people who receive stocks, bonuses, and other income in addition to wages. The nearly 80 percent of Americans who rely mostly on hourly wages barely maintained their purchasing power. Even as Hurricane Katrina was hitting the Gulf Coast, giving us a stark reminder of how poverty can shove poor people into the abyss, the U.S. Census Bureau reported that last year one million people were added to 36 million already living in poverty. And since 1999 the income of the poorest one fifth of Americans has dropped almost nine percent.

*None of these harsh realities of ordinary life seem to bother the radical religious right. To the contrary, in the pursuit of political power they have cut a deal with America's richest class and their partisan allies in a law-of-the-jungle strategy to "starve" the government of resources needed for vital social services that benefit everyone while championing more and more spending by rich corporations and larger tax cuts for the rich.*

How else to explain the vacuum in their "great moral issues" of the plight of millions of Americans without adequate health care? Of the gross corruption of politics by campaign contributions that skew government policies toward the wealthy at the expense of ordinary taxpayers? (On the very day that oil and gas prices reached a record high the president signed off on huge taxpayer subsidies for energy conglomerates already bloated with windfall profits plucked from the pockets of average Americans filling up at gas tanks across the country; yet the next Sunday you could pass a hundred church signboards with no mention of a sermon on crony capitalism.)

This silence on economic and political morality is deafening but revealing. The radicals on the Christian right are now the dominant force in America's governing party. Without them the government would not be in the hands of people who don't believe in government. They are culpable in upholding a system of class and race in which, as we saw last week, the rich escape and the poor are left behind. And they are crusading for a government "of, by, and for the people" in favor of one based on Biblical authority.

This is the crux of the matter: To these fundamentalist radicals there is only one legitimate religion and only one particular brand of that religion that is right; all others who call on God are immoral or wrong. Behind their malicious attacks on the courts ("vermin in black robes," as one of their talk show allies recently put it,) is a fierce longing to hold judges accountable for interpreting the Constitution

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## Change Learning and Sustainability

by HB Gellatt

In her editorial Barbara says that "change is not easy, but it is required." I would like to add to that and make change the theme of this column. My addition is to remind us that change is also inevitable and that change itself has changed. Today change is more rapid, more complex, more turbulent, and more unpredictable; it is unlike any encountered before. The change we are experiencing today is so different it requires a transformation in the way we see and do things.

Change and learning are two sides of the same coin. Change is one of the biggest causes of learning and learning causes change. Change and learning are basic requirements if we expect to create a sustainable future. Creativity, of course, is also required and creativity and change are also closely related. Change often requires a creative response and creativity often causes creative change.

So if change is not easy, and is required, inevitable, rapidly changing and happening all around us, we need to learn to be as capable of change as the environment. If the world around us is changing and we stay the same, we are certainly "out of sync." And worse yet, as the old Chinese proverb tells us, "*If we do not change our direction, we are quite certain to end up where we are heading.*" Where we are heading is not toward a sustainable future.

Never before in the history of our planet has a tribe, a culture, an organization, a nation or a group of individuals had the power to destroy our future. Today through our growing network of global institutions and technologies the power to destroy is everywhere. The best way to view this, in my opinion, is to remember that the world is still made up of living systems, and a living

(continued on next page) 7.

system is capable of continuously recreating itself. In other words, we have the ability to change ourselves, to learn, to recreate ourselves and create a sustainable future for everyone.

***The way we see the problem  
IS the problem***

Here is where our understanding of living systems is valuable. The problem is not "out there," it is "in here." The way we see the problem IS the problem. It seems to me that we are looking for solutions to the world's problems in all the wrong places. The cause and solution to our problems haven't been identified because they lie right behind our eyes. That is usually the last place we look. Although we realize the world is not heading toward a positive future, we don't see that it is our collective minds that determine its direction. We collectively possess the potential for creating a desirable future for everyone right behind our eyes, if we believe it and accept personal responsibility. As human living systems we are capable of rethinking the way we see things. Others have made the same point:

*"It is going to be our minds (cultural evolution) not our genes (biological evolution) that creates or destroys our positive future,"*

*Peter Russell*

*"The human mind is the source, and properly directed, the solution to all our problems."*

*The Dalai Lama*

The change we are experiencing today is so different and so potentially threatening to our future that it requires a transformation in our way of seeing - which happens in our "mind's eye" because our mind has an eye of its own.

To be capable of changing the way we see things and to redirect the direction we are heading, ***"We must continually learn to unlearn much that we have learned, and learn to learn what we have not been***

according to standards of biblical revelation as fundamentalists define it. To get those judges they needed a party beholden to them. So the Grand Old Party - the GOP - has become God's Own Party, its ranks made up of God's Own People "marching as to war."

Go now to the website of an organization called America 21 (<http://www.america21.us/Home.cfm>). There, on a red, white, and blue home page, you find praise for President Bush's agenda - including his effort to phase out Social Security and protect corporations from law suits by aggrieved citizens. On the same home page is a reminder that "There are 7,177 hours until our next National Election....ENLIST NOW." Now click again and you will read a summons calling Christian pastors "to lead God's people in the turning that can save America from our enemies." Under the headline "Remember - Repent - Return" language reminiscent of Pat Robertson and Jerry Falwell reminds you that "one of the unmistakable lessons [of 9/11] is that America has lost the full measure of God's hedge of protection. When we ask ourselves why, the scriptures remind us that ancient Israel was invaded by its foreign enemy, Babylon, in 586 B.C. ....(and) Jerusalem was destroyed by another invading foreign power in 70 A.D. .... Psalm 106:37 says that these judgments of God ... were because of Israel's idolatry. Israel, the apple of God's eye, was destroyed ... because the people failed... to repent." If America is to avoid a similar fate, the warning continues, we must "remember the legacy of our heritage under God and our covenant with Him and, in the words of II Chronicles 7:14: 'Turn from our wicked ways.'"

Just what does this have to do with the president's political agenda praised on the home page? Well, squint and look at the fine print at the bottom of the site. It reads: *"America21 is a not-for-profit organization whose mission is to educate, engage and mobilize Christians to influence national policy at every level. Founded in 1989 by a multi-denominational group of pastors and businessmen, it is dedicated to being a catalyst for revival and reform of the culture and the government."* (emphasis added).

The corporate, political and religious right converge here, led by a president who, in his own disdain for science, reason and knowledge, is the most powerful fundamentalist in American history.

What are the stakes? In his last book, the late Marvin Harris, a prominent anthropologist of the time, wrote that "the attack against reason and objectivity is fast reaching the proportions of a crusade." To save the American Dream, "we desperately need to reaffirm the principle that it is possible to carry out an analysis of social life which rational human beings will recognize as being true, regardless of whether they happen to be women or men, whites or black, straights or gays, employers or employees, Jews or born-again Christians. The alternative is to stand by helplessly as special interest groups tear the United States apart in the name of their 'separate realities' or to wait until one of them grows strong enough to force its irrational and subjective brand of reality on all the rest."

That was written 25 years ago, just as the radical Christian right was setting out on their long march to political supremacy. The forces he warned against have gained strength ever since and now control much of the United States government and are on the verge of having it all.

It has to be said that their success has come in no small part because of our acquiescence and timidity. Our democratic values are imperiled because too many people of reason are willing to appease irrational people just because they are pious. Republican moderates tried appeasement and survive today only in gulags set aside for them by the Karl Roves, Bill Frist and Tom DeLays. Democrats are divided and paralyzed, afraid that if they take on the organized radical right they will lose what little power they have. Trying to learn to talk about God as Republicans do, they're talking gobbledygook, compromising the strongest thing going for them - the case for a moral economy and the moral argument for the secular checks and balances that have made America "a safe haven for the cause of conscience."

As I look back on the conflicts and clamor of our boisterous past, one lesson about democracy stands above all others: Bullies - political bullies, economic bullies and



religious bullies - cannot be appeased; they have to be opposed with a stubbornness to match their own. This is never easy; these guys don't fight fair; "Robert's Rules of Order" is not one of their holy texts. But freedom on any front - and especially freedom of conscience - never comes to those who rock and wait, hoping someone else will do the heavy lifting. Christian realism requires us to see the world as it is, without illusions, and then take it on. Christian realism also requires love. But not a sentimental, dreamy love. Reinhold Niebuhr, who taught at Union Theological Seminary and wrestled constantly with applying Christian ethics to political life, put it this way: "When we talk about love we have to become mature or we will become sentimental. Basically love means...being responsible, responsibility to our family, toward our civilization, and now by the pressures of history, toward the universe of humankind."

Christian realists aren't afraid to love. But just as the Irishman who came upon a brawl in the street and asked, "Is this a private fight or can anyone get in it?" we have to take that love where the action is. Or the world will remain a theatre of war between fundamentalists.

### **What the # \* ! @ \* ! Do We Know? Ask Dr. Quantum! A User's Guide to Your Universe**

*by Fred Alan Wolf, Ph.D.*

Dr. Wolf teaches that quantum physics is the most useful, immediate, and relevant kind of science you can learn to profoundly affect your day-to-day life. The art of "applied quantum physics" is learning how to harness the power of consciousness as we move through space and time. At the heart of quantum reality lies an astonishing (and scientifically proven) truth: that the very act of observing events in your life can alter their outcome. Therefore, suggests Dr. Wolf, *we can define the fabric of reality at a fundamental level with the choices we make, the things we choose to see or not see, and most importantly, our intentions in each moment.*

Quantum physics is an astounding (and mind-boggling) field of science\_\_but can you actually use it to change your life? The people at <[www.soundstrue.com](http://www.soundstrue.com)> think so and offer 6 CDs featuring 7 1/2 hours of wisdom, lucidity, and humor for \$69.95. We mention this to introduce you to a source of information growing in popularity.

Sounds True is an audio, video and music publishing company that was founded in 1985 by one person in a single room and has grown to a 55-person organization in Louisville, Colorado. It began as a conference recording service, and they continue to record many national conferences every year. Their audio archive represents one of the largest resources of its kind, preserving thousands of important, cutting-edge lectures, each one available directly through their conference division.

The Sounds True mission has been to disseminate spiritual wisdom. They state; *In a sense, we serve as an interfaith university that embraces the world's major spiritual traditions and the arts and humanities, as embodied by the leading authors, teachers, and experts of our times. Through their voices, we offer you the opportunity to pursue a lifetime of learning.*

Over the years, they have recorded the outstanding wisdom teachers of our day, including Clarissa Pinkola Estés, Thich Nhat Hanh, Huston Smith, Julia Cameron, Jack Kornfield, Alice Walker, Ram Dass, Marion Woodman, Jean Shinoda Bolen, Caroline Myss, and hundreds of others.

*"Since 1985, we have served more than 300,000 listeners with this idea in mind: that as we serve them, they can help serve the world."*

*taught." (RD Laing). We have learned a partial worldview and a restricted way of doing. What we have not been taught is that we are responsible for and capable of changing the direction we are heading. We have not been taught a new way of seeing.*

Creating a sustainable future for everyone and for the planet could be put in the category of unrealistic fantasies. But there are many examples of unrealistic fantasies that have come true; putting a man on the moon is just one example. It could be possible if we believe it is. And if we believe it is possible, we are more likely to do something about it. We can start now with ourselves.

*If not now, when? If not us, who?*

Although the term 'sustainable' originally focused on ecological and economic stability it soon took on broader connotations and became a noun — sustainability. It also became part of the terminology of business, politics, and futures thinking. In 1990 the United Nations Brundtland Commission defined sustainability broadly as, *"meeting the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."* The report emphasized that human well-being may depend upon establishing sustainable development as a new global ethic. Earth Ethics provided another definition;

*"The ability to provide a healthy, satisfying and just life for all people on earth, now and for generations to come while enhancing the health of the ecosystems and the ability of other species to survive in their natural environments."*

Here is where change, learning and sustainability come together to help us change direction. We need to "properly direct" our minds, to change the way we see things, to learn a new worldview. We need to create a new ethical, sustainable worldview. Being responsible for change is difficult. But it is necessary if we care. Marvin Weisbord shows how this means asking different questions.

*"I used to ask, what's wrong and  
how can we fix it?"*

*"Now I ask, what's possible and  
who cares?"*

Your future is being created today by you. Our collective sustainable future can be created each day by all of us.

*"You must be the change  
you wish to see in the  
world."*

*Mahatma Gandhi*

It is my belief that the way we see things is our greatest resource for creating a sustainable future. And we can choose the way we see things.

First you have to believe that the future is persuadable, that it can be created. Which means you believe the future is not predetermined and not predictable. Then you must be aware of the way you see things and its consequences.

I have developed what I call the **Process of Illumination (POI)**, making us aware of the way we see things (illumination as self-understanding) and helping us rethink our way of seeing (illumination as transformative learning).

The self-understanding part of the POI asks questions about the way you see things. Are you aware of it? Where did it come from? What are the positive and negative consequences? Is there a better way of seeing?

The transformative learning part of illumination proposes a better way of seeing, better because it makes you, and others, our greatest resource for creating a sustainable future for everyone and the planet. I will share some of the process in future columns.

HB

*There never was a  
good war  
or a bad peace.*

*Benjamin Franklin*

## 9/11 and the Heart of the World

by Joanna Macy

*Joanna Macy, Ph.D., is an ecophilosopher grounded in Buddhism and living systems theory, who works worldwide with movements for peace, justice and ecology.*

< [www.joannamacy.net](http://www.joannamacy.net) >

When 9/11 riveted our lives, I assumed at first that mine would go on as before. There were immediate gatherings, of course, vigils for peace instead of vengeance, and visits on Fridays to a mosque for solidarity with local Muslims. But soon I wondered how to proceed as I'd planned with a teaching trip to Germany: With my country going to war, dare I travel so far from my family? Dare I presume to teach about deep ecology and justice, as my government bombed civilians in Afghanistan, and my own heart with shame?

I am glad I went. The journey taught me a lot about the **Great Turning**.

I stopped in New York en route. Standing with those most affected by the tragedy, I learned that the grief that united them was not a call for retaliation. I went to pray at Ground Zero, where beyond the barricade the mountain of rubble still burned, then at Union Square, its expanse transformed into one vast altar for the dead, with flowers, candles, models of the Twin Towers, pictures of faces, names, prayers, drawings, scrawled messages. "Our grief is not a cry for war;" and "Do not dishonor the dead by bombing the innocent." I felt as if I'd entered some inner heart of the world, where the greatest loss ignites the deepest wisdom, and horror melts into compassion.

In Germany the next three weeks, giving workshops near Frankfurt and then in Freiburg in the Black Forest, I discovered that this inner heart is truly global. Burdened as I was by a sense of shame over American militarism, I had not expected my country's shock and grief to be so totally, compassionately shared by people half a world away, whose souls still bear the scars of war. The tears that came, as sorrow was spoken, had no nationality, nor did the resolve to walk new paths for a just peace.

As my German colleagues and I worked together, we found, once again, that the Great Turning provides a good conceptual framework for seeing the opportunities present now and guidance for the way ahead. An antidote to panic and paralysis, it lifted our sights, cleared our vision, ignited our energy and will.

*It was particularly helpful to discern the three dimensions of  
the Great Turning, as they continue to unfold even in the present crisis.*

••• The first dimension, resistance to violence stemming from the industrial growth society, was most visible in mass demonstrations against the war. At the time of my workshops in Germany, scores of thousands of marchers in Berlin, Stuttgart, Nuremberg, protested the Schroeder administration's support for the bombing of Afghanistan. Along with quieter vigils for peace in uncounted small towns, these rallies occurred in spite of the media's enthusiastic alignment with President Bush as "the leader of the free world"--with dissenting voices reprimanded, and little if any coverage given to peace sentiments in the U.S. As I had experienced at home, many small acts of friendship and protection were being extended to local Arabs and Muslims; and ordinary folks were finding ways to raise money for deliveries of food and medicines inside Afghanistan, through such agencies as Doctors Without Borders.

••• Creation of alternative structures is the second dimension of the Great Turning: new ways of meeting our needs for food, housing, health, and a safe environment.

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Given Germany's achievements in composting and fossil-free energy, I was not surprised to see the elegant, ubiquitous measures for recycling, and the high blades of windmills turning above the plains of Schleswig Holstein--but still they made my heart sing. In Freiburg, I saw how an old French military base, established after the second World War, has been converted to a lively housing complex for five thousand people, soon to number 7,500. Vauban, as it's named, features single and multiple dwellings with the latest in passive solar and photovoltaic energy, car-free enclaves with fanciful gardens and playgrounds, and toilets that generate gas for cooking. North of there, in central Germany, a young biologist wades through streams counting the endangered freshwater mussel. I learned how his passion for the fate of this lowly creature is contagious: local schools are creating curricula around its preservation (great for teaching everything from math to writing, ecology, social studies); local townspeople and farmers, learning how and why their freshwater supply is disappearing, are taking measures to protect it.

••• The third dimension of the Great Turning is the shift in consciousness that is required for a life-sustaining civilization. Unless deeply grounded in our radical interdependence in the sacred web of life, all our protests, all our new approaches and technologies, will avail us nothing. This tidal change of spirit may not be featured in the news, but it sweeps in on us now in countless ways. I sensed it in the Sufi dance we offered before the Freiburg cathedral and in the faces of the dozens of passersby who joined us. I feel it in the courage of all who are searching their own souls and culture to plumb the roots of terrorism. I see it in *Earthlight*, as it draws from science, cosmology, and faith traditions, to enliven our understanding of our place and our calling.

*Printed by permission from EarthLight Magazine #43, Fall 2001*

*EarthLight is ecumenical and spiritually inclusive in content and published by an independent non-profit organization with links to its Quaker heritage. It was first published in 1988 by the Pacific Yearly Meeting Committee on Unity with Nature (now known as Quaker Earthcare Witness). <www.earthlight.org>*

Please Visit [www.berkana.org](http://www.berkana.org)

**December 7-9, 2005**

*Changing Intelligently: Creating an Enduring Capacity for Change  
London*

*Meg Wheatley and Myron Rogers have developed living systems theory into principles and practices that they have implemented and evolved with a broad range of organisations on all continents. In this workshop, they will offer their lens and approaches for working well with the dynamics of change in organisations. They will explore these dynamics in great detail, apply them to real life issues, and provide experiences that develop the capacity to both see and work intelligently with the complexity of modern organisations.*

**March 11-23, 2006**

*Women's Learning Journey  
South Africa*

*Meg Wheatley and The Berkana Institute invite you to participate in a Learning Journey to South Africa to discover the extraordinary contributions that women leaders are making to the future of southern Africa. We offer this journey to you as an experienced woman leader to support your own strength and resolve as a leader.*

### American Society for Cybernetics

We will be attending the 2005 American Society for Cybernetics Conference held in Washington DC October 27 - 30, 2005, and will be reporting in the next issue of PATTERNS. The theme for the conference will be *The Many Interpretations and Applications of Cybernetics*

Historically, the field of cybernetics has relied on conferences and similar events as the context for bringing together people from diverse disciplines who have similar interests. Cybernetics itself coalesced as a discipline during the 1940's in a series of meetings called the Macy Conferences.

Continuing this tradition, the American Society for Cybernetics has long emphasized the role of regular gatherings in fostering understanding and the exchange of ideas.

ASC sponsors conferences and other occasional events to provide the multidisciplinary field of cybernetics a focal venue for such interactions. Visit the webpage [www.asc-cybernetics.org](http://www.asc-cybernetics.org) which provides a summary overview of ASC's most recent conferences as well as a listing of major cybernetics events dating back to the original Macy conferences in the 1940's.

#### Limericks by Stuart Umpleby

##### *On Legitimate and Illegitimate Questions*

Said Heinz, "There are two kinds of questions;  
To some there are answers in lessons;  
But the questions that count,  
The ones to surmount,  
Are the questions that not yet are questioned."

##### *A Tribute to Von Foerster*

If the world is that which I see,  
And that which I see defines me,  
And for each it's the same,  
Then who is to blame,  
And is this what it means to be free?

## Fire in the South

by Rebecca Solnit

*If you want to see what democracy could be, look to Latin America. This article appears in the ORION magazine, Sept/Oct. 2005 and is reprinted by permission.*

THE MOST EXHILARATING and the most promising things going on at this particular moment in history have hardly made news in the USA, or bits and pieces have without a summary that says: Latin America is on fire with revolutions that suggest how the world might change, for a change, for the better.

The current fire season began in the spring of 2000 when the people of Cochabamba, Bolivia, kicked out Bechtel Corporation, the San Francisco-based multinational that had privatized their water and raised rates beyond what the poor could afford. Since the victory in Cochabamba, mass mobilizations of Bolivia's largely indigenous population have ousted two presidents and prevented the privatization and sell-off of the country's considerable natural gas resources.

These fires, in Bolivia and beyond, are attempting to burn out neoliberalism: the ideology of unfettered capitalism manifested as deregulation, as privatization of resources and services, as drastically reduced social services, and as dismissal of the value of community, civil society, and the public—as in public lands or public good.

Or, in a nutshell, the opening of a place to unregulated plundering. Neoliberals assert that their activities provide widespread benefits despite massive evidence to the contrary. Or perhaps widespread benefits were never really a serious concern for those who subscribe to this system of spreading environmental degradation, sabotaged rights, and starvation wages.

In December of 2001 there was a splendid conflagration in Argentina,

## Collaborative Human Empowerment and the Necessary Resources

LearningCommunities Digest Number 1430 Bill Ellis <tranet@rangeley.org>

From: William Du Bois <dubois@itotel.com>

Subject: Re: John Watkins wrote:

For a person to become empowered, it's important that they have or acquire the necessary knowledge. But there are other resources needed, aren't there? What would you add to learning? Is finance one of them? Is community one of them? What else?

Yes, financing and community are two important resources.

Let me make a contrast between a **Medical Model** and a **Resource Model**.

In a scientific medical model, we pay experts to fix the problem.

1. They first analyze and assess the problem.
2. They then develop a plan.
3. They do the Treatment to treat the patient (Notice the person is passive and reduced to a consumer. The doers are the experts - the professionals.)
4. Then the experts do the evaluation. Experts get the money and experts do the doing.

*The medical model focuses on the problem.*

*The resource model focuses on the situation*

A Resource Model gives the money mainly to people. It empowers. But it's more than just money. It's inventing viable resources that fit needs and situations.

Head Start is a wonderful example of a resource model. Remember, it originated because research showed that kids who did better in school tended to have a wider variety of toys (and adults who played with them). Each different toy is really an educational experience. You pull the string and the cow goes "moo." The pig goes, "oink."

Head Start was originated to give lower income kids toys (resources) and adult playmates who would give them their attention and play with them.

The money went to buying resources (toys) and paying low wages to adults as playmates.

Contrast that with hiring a psychiatrist for hundreds of dollars an hour. Or even one of the *children-at-risk-programs* that spends most of its money identifying kids at risk and tracking them. The money mostly goes to experts.

Rather than spending the overwhelming majority of our money on scientific analysis identifying the problem, developing a program, treating the problem with experts, having experts track the participants and experts evaluate the program — we could spend our money on resources and co-producers.

I don't want to get into a complicated analysis of Head Start. But suffice it to say, it originates from a very different model than scientific planning.

*We study a situation. We then invent resources.*

The medical model focuses on the problem. It is driven by experts. It makes participants passive consumers (of whatever the experts have designed to treat them.)

The resource model focuses on the situation. It is driven by the people, their needs, their predicaments. The people become active participants in co-producing solutions. The expert then works as a social architect with them to develop resources which address their needs.

If you will, the medical model tries to fix the person. The resource model offers resources people can utilize to fix the problem — or even better yet, live their dreams.

*Emphasis on the positive often makes the negative fall into disuse.*

(what if we would pay volunteers — even in complimentary currency?)

I aspire to be a social architect. Social engineering has gotten a bad name and rightly so. We don't want experts meddling in our lives. But we do need social architects inventing social resources that people can use in their lives.

To invent resources, you must first understand their situation and predicaments. Only then can you help.

I see the proper role of government as inventing social resources. Right now, I would like to get a grant to go around South Dakota and ask, what resources would be helpful to small and medium sized businesses and farmers? The state is trying to ram a version of giant farms down everyone's throat. The alternative is there for the asking, but we need to go ask. The management consulting principle I use is that 'the people doing the work know more about the work than anyone else.' We need to ask what would be helpful? What are your needs?

And we need to listen attentively. People won't give you all the right answers. You need to hear grains of truth separating the chaff from the grain. Rationales are often right and the particular idea wrong. We need to combine insights. One person may have half the solution and another person the other half.

## *new* PATTERNS *Mission Statement*

It is noted in the website of the American Society of Cybernetics that this new century has already presented us with unprecedented challenges. Cybernetics has so much to contribute to a deeper understanding of our humanity and how it is that we may bring forth worlds in the recursions of conversation. We believe that the creativity and vision that has co-inspired the ASC membership for 35 years is needed more than ever. With this in mind we are proposing the following mission statement to guide us in developing the new PATTERNS into an international, trans-disciplinary, interactive publication and forum. We will be employing, inventing, and engaging ways of thinking and seeing the world developed in the fields of Systems Thinking and Cybernetics to aid us in an effort to facilitate multi-layered conversations regarding some of our times most pressing and complex issues. We hope to foster effective communication and creative problem-solving. *We offer this preliminary statement in order to receive our readers' important feedback. New PATTERNS can only begin in the fertile soil of sincere and honest collaboration.*

The mission is to further the understanding of the interconnecting patterns of all systems. The aim is to engage in a mutually beneficial peer-learning process which will further the realization of systemic thinking in the practice of our everyday life. Our goal is to use multiple mediums in order to reach a wide audience from diverse economic, political, social, ethnic, cultural and educational backgrounds.

We believe that every person has the right to a working level of understanding of the basic concepts and the cultural implications of the 'new sciences' in a way that allows him or her to be an active participant in guiding this emerging global society. The awareness of the role of the observer is essential to the understanding of the natural sciences and the arts of the 21st century and to bringing balance in both social and technological systems. The conscious observer plays a role in all social relations particularly in the power of the mass media.

New PATTERNS will not only accept submissions from professionals in a variety of fields, workers, activists, educators and students but will also seek to further our present interest in inter-organizational dialogue. Submissions will be juried by an editorial board. We are developing our website so that anyone may contribute to our online forum which will be an efficient and user-friendly system with human moderators and facilitators.

the nation that was supposed to be neoliberalism's poster child until its economic policies led to a collapse. Then, the proud middle class became poor, the country ran through several presidents in several days, and the people took to the streets, banging pots and pans and shouting, "¡Se vayan todos!";—"All of them [politicians] out!" Since then Argentina has become a brilliant laboratory of social experiments, from the shuttered factories reopened and run by workers' co-operatives to consensus-based neighborhood groups functioning as both salons and soup kitchens. And more recently Nestor Kirchner, who became president in 2003, directly defied the International Monetary Fund, recognizing that its policies are what brought the country to its knees in the first place.

Meanwhile Brazilians, led by the *Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra*, the powerful landless rural workers' movement, chose former steelworker and union organizer Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva as their president in 2002. Though the MST has been bitterly disappointed by Lula's failure to bring about profound land redistribution, his administration has done some noteworthy things, such as leading third-world nations to defy the World Trade Organization in Cancun in September of 2003.

And the fires keep spreading. As the investigative journalist Greg Palast recently put it, "Ecuador has a new president, and George Bush has someone new to hate." Palast recounted how, in April of 2005, "100,000 angry Ecuadorians, from Indians to accountants, forced the last president to flee the country. They called him 'Sucio Lucio' (Dirty Lucio) Gutierrez, for going along with demands of George Bush and the World Bank to cut government spending on health and education." Former vice-president Alfredo Palacio, who assumed the presidency, shows signs of being more genuinely democratic and concerned with the plight of the poor.

Ecuador has oil, but Venezuela has

more: it supplies 15 percent of the U.S.'s huge oil diet, which has kept the oil barons at the helm of our country both attentive and resentful. Populist strongman **Hugo Chavez**, first elected in 1998, has distributed Venezuela's oil profits more equitably to try to lift more people out of poverty. He has so angered the Bush administration that it helped sponsor a coup against him in 2002—one overturned by people in the streets of Caracas—and blames him for "unrest," as they call it, also known as insurrection, elsewhere across the continent.

And last November, while the world mourned the re-election of Bush, the people of Uruguay elected their first left-wing president and passed a plebiscite forever preventing the privatization of water.

*What is truly exciting about South America is the sense of populist movements and indigenous insurgencies feeling their way through the dark to the idea of what a just society might look like.*

Of course you can trace these radical stirrings back much further, to the administrations of **Salvador Allende** in Chile and **Jacobo Arbenz** in Guatemala, which the United States helped to overthrow in 1973 and 1954 respectively. But those regimes and the movements that sprang up in their defense were squashed again and again, sometimes with U.S. tax dollars and intelligence operations. This time the chances of success seem better, in part because the U.S. has been both weakened and distracted by its misadventures in the Middle East—better even though Chavez is a strongman building up a cult of personality, Lula has compromised too much, and even Kirchner is far from being a revolutionary hero. *After all, it's not really about presidents, but about the people who put them in power, or take them out, and who never surrender the right to determine the fate of their nation.* The anonymous masses of people who have launched these changes are the real heroes, and they are only at the beginning of their power and invention.

This is what is truly exciting about South America: the sense of populist movements and indigenous insurgencies feeling their way through the dark to the idea of what a just society might look like. Or perhaps what is most significant in this incendiary era, this continent on fire, is the passion and the power of the people who fight these battles for water, for justice, for a voice in their society.

In my own society, even our dreams seem to have been privatized. Up here in the north, neoliberal policies have demolished the American dream for many Yankees who can no longer afford education, or decent housing, or who are bankrupted by illness. The great gains brought about by union struggles, the New Deal, and the Great Society have been whittled away steadily since Ronald Reagan was first elected and brought the neoliberal agenda to power with him.

But too many in this Horatio Alger nation fail to see the situation as a political crisis with political solutions that can be realized collectively. Nowhere is this more deeply apparent than in the obsession with home ownership and home

improvement, where the power to live well and change things is confined to the tiny compass of the personal, privatized realm. Our dream has been reduced to a couple of thousand square feet at 6 percent interest, rather than that old sea-to-sea vision of justice and equality, that sense that one's own fate is inseparable from that of one's fellow citizens, or that a whole society or country can be the home you love and work for (which summons up the amusing notion that revolution is remodeling on the grand scale).

What is it that makes Latin Americans so much more politically potent than Yankees? Is it the memory of how horribly things can go wrong, that the doors of even the nicest houses can be bashed in by death squads? Is it fear? After all, the era when much of South America was governed by dictators and when torture, murder, and disappearance were common is not very far in the past. Or is it hope, the hope of cultures where not all dreams have been privatized into the realm of the apolitical, where individual good is still connected to civil society and social justice?

*Our own privatized dreams have been reduced to a couple of thousand square feet at 6 percent interest, rather than that old sea-to-sea vision of justice and equality.*

Poverty, violence, and environmental devastation are still terrible problems for Latin America, but the region is rich in people-power, and the future that power may shape looms on the horizon. As my brother David says, when it comes to the real practice of democracy, the U.S. is an underdeveloped nation that needs help from abroad. Nowhere are the lessons more inspiring than to the south. And we're going to need a lot more people-power in one version of the future, in which we need to stop our own government from once again preventing South America's move toward the kind of democracy we should dream of, and could.

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*Rebecca Solnit lived in Peru when she was two years old and hopes to return to South America soon. She is a regular columnist for Orion Magazine and contributor to OrionOnline.*

*Her latest book is **A Field Guide to Getting Lost**. Viking Books.*

*The Orion Grassroots Network is the fastest-growing network of environmental and community organizations in North America. The Network now actively supports 841 organizations with several new member groups joining each week.*

*Network member organizations are recognized in their communities as leaders in the fields of conservation, restoration, education, democracy, justice, health, and economics. They range from large to small, urban to suburban to rural, and represent nearly every U.S. state, and an increasing number of Canadian provinces and Mexican states. The Network is also now accepting member organizations from other areas of the world.*

*Contact: [www.oriononline.org](http://www.oriononline.org)*

## Is this the New Politics?

*Praxis Peace Institute and Spirit Rock Meditation Center present*

### *"The Soul of Democracy: Integrating Spiritual Vision with Active Citizenship"*

Place: Spirit Rock Meditation Center.  
5000 Sir Francis Drake Blvd., Woodacre, Califom  
Time: October 30, 2005 9:30 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.

For program information, please contact Praxis Peace Institute -  
info@praxispeace.org or phone 707-939-2973.  
Contact: www.spiritrock.org

The purpose of this meeting is to bring together spiritual practice and civic practice in a powerful merging of vision and action. We are taking a bold creative step toward manifesting the cultures of peace, social justice, and environmental integrity we have supported for years. Since both Marin and Sonoma Counties had the highest voter turnout in the nation in 2004 --- nearly 90% --- this is the place where new political visions can emerge and thrive. Combining spiritual practice and wisdom with political understanding and commitment could literally change the world as we know it.

Just as the effects of daily meditation are not as pronounced in a few months as they are over a period of several years, the same is true of civic participation. Lasting change requires long-term commitment and compassion. The type of politics we know now and the vision we hold for their transformation is the alchemical "Great Work" --- the transformation of base lead to gold, of base politics to a Golden Age of spiritual wisdom and informed civic participation. Some of the speakers will be;

**Jack Kornfield**, Clinical Psychologist, founder of Spirit Rock Meditation Center, author and teacher of Buddhist meditation

**Sylvia Boorstein**, Psychotherapist and a founding teacher of Spirit Rock Meditation Center, author of several books.

**Tom Hayden** served in the CA state legislature for 18 years. Known as the "conscience of the senate," Leader of the student, civil rights and anti-war movements of the sixties. Teaches college in Los Angeles and has authored several books.

**Congresswoman Lynn Woolsey** represents the 6th congressional district (Marin & Sonoma Counties), Co-Chair of the Congressional Progressive Caucus. In 2004, Rep. Woolsey won her 7th term with 73% of the vote.

**Matt Gonzalez**, former President of the Board of Supervisors in San Francisco and Green Party candidate for Mayor of San Francisco in 2003. He is now a partner in a public interest law firm in San Francisco.

## *You are invited to join us as a member of the ASCD sponsored* **Systems Thinking and Chaos Theory Network**

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*Although sponsored by the American Society for Cybernetics and the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, the contents of PATTERNS are those of the Editor and ASCD Facilitator, Terry Burik,  
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*Who looks outside,  
Dreams.  
Who looks inside,  
Awakens.*

*Carl Jung*

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