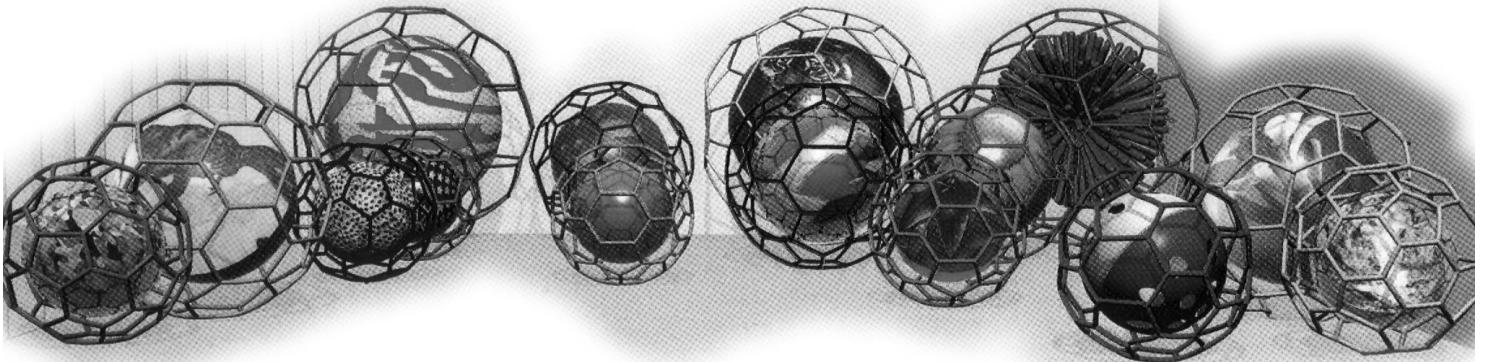


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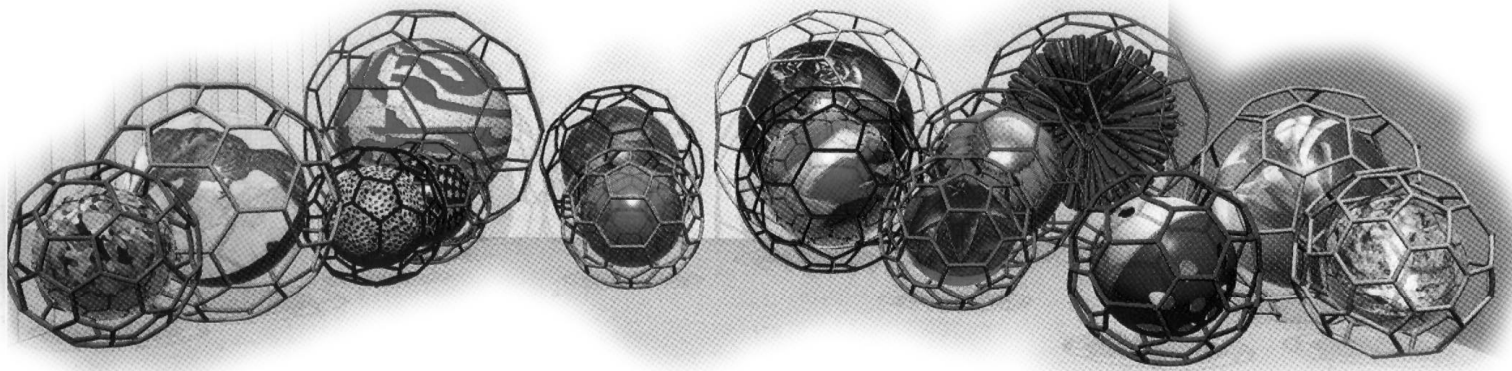
NEW PLANETARY PATTERNS

Nudging the Shift to Its Tipping Point



PATRICK TUTTOFUOCO, Project 01-Brazil, 2003

THE UNIVERSARIUM TRAVELLING FAIR



Nudging the Shift to Its Tipping Point

THE UNIVERSARIUM TRAVELLING FAIR

STAN GIBSON

The scientific revolution of the past hundred years has resulted in nothing less than a new perception of reality. It is a new worldview that is changing the way we look at business, politics, values, health care, education, families, communities, and everyday life. This is a very big change in a very short time. Our grandparents' ways of looking at the world had far more in common with Aristotle's, 2,300 hundred years before them, than with us just four or five decades later. The Universarium Travelling Fair is aimed at accelerating society's grasp of this new worldview and its enormous implications for the future we need to create. The fair is initiated by the Ecologos Institute, a registered Canadian non-governmental organization. Ecologos is a think tank and an action network involving people throughout North America.

Every week, every day, perhaps every hour, our experience is telling us

we cannot continue to do things the way we always have. Feelings of doubt underlie our most routine activities—traveling to work, eating a meal, earning a living, or playing a part in the political process. Every time we open a newspaper or turn on a television, the same problems appear, unresolved—terrorism and warfare, threats to the environment, disparity between haves and have-nots. What's worse, we seem powerless to solve them. Like the Indian birth rate that accelerated on the heels of the most massive sterilization campaign in history, our corrective 'fixes' too often result in unexpected consequences.

As Albert Einstein noted, this happens because we try to "solve problems with the same mentality that created them." If our old mentality gave rise to the problems that confront us today, we can move beyond those problems only by shifting to a new mentality. A collec-

tive mentality, a worldview, gets spun deep within each society. This worldview shapes the beliefs and norms of that society regarding many different aspects of life—its scientific understanding of how the world functions, its assumptions about what makes life meaningful, how we should relate to each other, what is ethical, what isn't, how we organize ourselves politically and economically. So intrinsic is this worldview to society that few are aware of it. Nevertheless, like a room of mirrors reflecting only itself, this worldview generates repeated patterns of behaviour, always with their own ingrained set of problems.

Life obliges us to make minor adjustments to our collective worldview all the time. Every so often, however, minor adjustments are not enough. The input we receive challenges our entire worldview. The resulting leap of consciousness frees us from our old beliefs and perspectives,

so a truly inventive resolving of our problems can begin. This is what happened when the scientific revolution of the seventeenth century spurred just such a leap. It ushered in a new collective worldview called the Enlightenment, paving the way for democracy, modern medicine, and industrialized economies.

Now a more recent scientific revolution is spurring a similar leap. The twentieth-century revolution in quantum mechanics, relativity, astrophysics, microbiology, complexity theory and systems thinking is turning our old worldview inside out. In the aftermath, an emerging new perception of reality reveals itself in a profound rebalancing within society. It is rebalancing the sway of the genders by countering entrenched patriarchy; rebalancing the relationship between humans and nature; reconciling hard science with the aesthetic and spiritual domains; reinventing economies at all levels, and redistributing access to opportunity.

But we are in the middle of this leap. So it shows up for us as frequent puzzling moments, when our old way of understanding something no longer works. Just as scientists recognize an emerging paradigm by tracking anomalies in their old paradigm, these frequent intrusions are evidence of a new worldview asserting itself. When this new consciousness eventually becomes everyday reality, we will have a new vantage point for tackling our most threatening challenges.

But can we simply wait for this to happen? The Newtonian revolution took 200 years to become society's common sense. Will our most threatening problems wait that long? How long will the 'iron curtain' between haves and have-nots hold, when the richest 250 people on earth have more assets than the entire poorest half of the world's population? 250 versus 3 billion. And breakneck climate change has already displaced more people than the unprecedented number of political refugees in our world. These and other instabilities are lurking beneath the surface ready to strike us—out of the blue. Many believe we cannot wait. Delay makes the outcome precarious. Time is running out.

So, here we are mid-leap. A new worldview vies to replace an old one. Back and forth it goes like an invisible tug-of-war, like evolution straining to install a new "operating system" at the species level.

Unlike previous paradigm shifts, this time the effects of human ingenuity are powerful enough to interfere with the course of evolution itself. For better or worse, humans are now partners with the vast geo-evolutionary forces. As a result, our conscious involvement is needed in this great partnership in order to midwife the birthing of a new worldview, to nudge the shift to its tipping point.

EMBRACING THE GREAT PARTNERSHIP

Direct frontal assaults on problems as complex as ours result in unintended consequences rather than solutions. By comparison, science's new understanding of complex systems shows how "meaningful disturbances" trigger multiple feedback loops that give rise to a new order. This is what the Universarium Travelling Fair is intended to be—a meaningful disturbance that moves and sets up for several weeks in region after region. Its three dynamic themes get hundreds of thousands of visitors right inside the new worldview in three important ways:

First, *inspiration*—the Universarium geodesic dome employs spellbinding, twenty-first century story-telling technologies to immerse visitors in science's fourteen-billion-year epic of the universe from Big Bang to Big Brain.

Second, *vision*—The Front Lines theme area takes visitors to the cutting edges of what lies ahead. There they see specific pieces of the future being created through applications of the new worldview called biomimicry and ecodesign.

Third, *participation*—The Shift into Action theme area gets people directly involved in a process that continues long after the fair, a process to renew their own region as a cultural, economic, and political reflection of the emerging worldview.

INSPIRATION—THE GREATEST STORY EVER TOLD

The creation myths of our respective cultures are stories of how the universe came about, and why we humans are part of it. Myths have molded our societies throughout the ages. Now, the twentieth-century scientific revolution has given us a brand new creation story. Based in empirical science and with no special status conferred on any race, sex or class, this modern epic of the evolution of the universe is accessible by all cultures and all peoples. It gives voice to the

new worldview, and is an inspirational starting point for embracing conscious participation in the co-evolutionary partnership of our time.

Imagine the digital artistry of the Universarium dome, immersing you in 360-degree visual projection with stereo sound, along with the smells, motion and temperature variations, to wrap you in a beautiful evocation of Big Bang's trillion-degree riot of sheer energy. Picture yourself swept along in a billowing wave of creativity, flowing onward in a series of vast eras—from quarks, to nucleons, to atoms, to molecules, to the creation of stars and galaxies, to organic molecules and the mysterious pageant of cellular life. You see the unfolding procession of plant and animal evolution, through to world-dominating reptiles, then giving way to mammals with brain stems, until 14 billion years later, the journey cuts its contemporary edge: human consciousness itself.

The new worldview is already bubbling within us. It needs to be drawn more and more into our conscious life to help tackle the problems that confound us. The Universarium dome is a magical space where the most modern expressions of art, science, and technology resonate science's new understanding of the universe. The worldview it conveys catapults audiences of 250 at a time past their daily preoccupations into a whole-body, whole-soul encounter with the astounding journey of the universe so far. Beyond that it challenges them with the pivotal responsibility we humans have, now as co-evolutionary partners, to carry that journey forward on behalf of future generations.

VISION—FRONT LINES OF THE FUTURE

The new worldview challenges us to redesign society according to different values. It leads us to build a society that is economically viable, ecologically sustainable, equitable, and inclusive. Sustainable communities that embody these values do not have to be invented from scratch. Nature's ecosystems give us the models we can follow.

First, we need to become *ecoliterate*, to understand the repeated patterns and principles of organization that ecosystems have evolved to sustain the web of life for three billion years. Our very survival depends on it.

Second, we need to apply ecoliteracy as *ecodesign*, employing its principles in the

redesign of economic enterprises, social institutions, products, and processes, so they embody the wisdom of nature's ecosystems.

The stumbling block is that we have no picture, no practical vision, of where ecodesign can take us. Even so, front lines do exist where this vision can be found—where ecodesign is already shaping important pieces of the future as reflections of the new worldview. The Front Lines theme area takes visitors to 14 of these cutting edges. At each Front Line, visitors plunge into fun activities, artistic expression, games, hands-on exhibits, role-playing and challenge exercises. The visitors find intriguing implications and outcomes...until their imagination shifts: "Aha! So this is what the future can be, and here is my place in it."

Collectively, the 14 Front Lines piece together a compelling vision of a just and sustainable future. At the Materials Revolution Front Line, for example, visitors enter a world where scientists copy the way spiders spin silk. Without heat or toxic chemicals, spiders spin silk that is, ounce-for-ounce, five times stronger than steel. Imagine a multipurpose fabricating material with zero pollution in its manufacture, use, or disposal. The imagination shifts. Few of us have a detailed picture of a new economy or how livelihoods will be made. But we do know that past introductions of new materials like iron, steel, and plastic ushered in viable new economies. Visitors leave this Front Line grasping what a leading material scientist is saying: "We are on the brink of a materials revolution on a par with the Industrial Revolution."

Another example is the New Industries Front Line. Here we find eco-clusters of industries that produce no net waste, because the waste of each individual enterprise is used as raw material by other industries in the cluster. This then unfolds into a picture of Natural Capitalism.

At another front line, "living" buildings and "living" machines energize a vision of future ecocities and how they will function.

At another, the Internet leverages new patterns of participatory democracy.

At the New Energy Front Line, mimicking photosynthesis leads to an abundance of clean, renewable energy. Splitting water molecules causes a revolution in public and private transportation.

And at the New Meanings Front Line, the spirituality of the emerging worldview inspires new forms of social organization responsive to the needs and the promise of all people.

PARTICIPATION—MAKING THE CONNECTION TO ACTION

Shifting to sustainable communities that embody ecoliteracy and ecodesign is no longer a conceptual or technical problem. What remains is to nudge the shift in society's values and political will to the tipping point.

Recently, networks of a new type have been percolating at the local, national, and global levels. These are informal networks that cut across our traditional institutions, webbing together vanguard groups and individuals within all our social, cultural, economic, and political structures.

Vanguard groups within the arts, neighbourhoods, faith communities, and in the corporate world are taking hold of the new worldview. Within the ranks of seniors and youth, in the educational, voluntary, workplace, political, and economic sectors, new networks are rejecting the old worldview's dominant values. Instead, they are promoting an alternate vision based on respect for human dignity, the ethics of sustainability, and the ecological worldview. These networks have become effective public educators and motivators of swift action. More than that, they are evolving into a new kind of civil society—an informal, dynamic network of forward-looking people from every quarter of our communities.

But this new civil society is not yet big enough to tip the public will. Polls, however, show that many more of us are close to embracing the new worldview, and that the intensity of our concern about menacing problems is urging us to the tipping point. But even such intense concern is not being translated into action. Instead, we wrap ourselves in weather- and calamity-resistant cocoons, deluding ourselves that survival is ours by the sleight-of-hand—more and more technology, mixed with a dash of good old "muddling through."

The Shift into Action theme area tackles this disconnect between concern and action head-on. It gets people on side and directly involved in a process to renew their home region, where the fair is visiting.

A Town Hall Meeting runs throughout the fair engaging thousands in creating detailed plans of renewal for the economic, political, and cultural life of their region.

Partnerships for Renewal is a marketplace of people, ideas, and projects where visitors meet the new civil society that is already working locally for a new future. Here, they can sign up for learning programs and innovative local initiatives that need their unique skills.

Many months in advance, a broad cross-section of new civil society members form a regional coalition, to plan and host the fair in their vicinity. Their months of intense work produce one of the fair's most significant outcomes—a robust and unified coalition, honed and ready to spearhead regional renewal, supported by the benefits that the fair delivers. Those benefits include a comprehensive plan of regional renewal reflecting the insights of the community, a big jump in public awareness, and potential for funding renewal initiatives. The Fair creates a willingness of thousands to embrace the great partnership, to embody the new worldview, by renewing the region they call home. ♦

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The YOUTH AS FACILITATIVE LEADERS Road Trip

There is no stopping the incredibly powerful force of today's youth.

CARA NAIMAN, YFL Co-ordinator

Since last May, ICA Canada has been engaged in further development of the Youth As Facilitative Leaders (YFL) Program. The vision of YFL is to create a new leadership paradigm by giving young people the insight, skills and training to achieve both personal empowerment and the ability to work with groups to effect positive social change.

We researched over 150 youth service organizations and conducted needs assessment surveys with over 60 of those organizations. Six of them were selected to partner with us in delivering 2-day workshops to their member youth on ICA's collaborative facilitation methods. Here is a snapshot of what developed....

Markers? Check. Manuals? Check. Stik-Tak? Check. Puzzle pieces? Check. I cross off the items on the list as they're packed into the box – the box I'm about to carry around southern Ontario for a string of workshops on the next stage of the Youth as Facilitative Leaders (YFL) Program.

First stop: University of Waterloo

Jenn and Niki, my fabulous young co-facilitators for the first workshop, help carry all our stuff up to the third floor room. There, 20 people from the Waterloo Public Interest Research Group (WPIRG) and other campus organizations are about to assemble for the first session of our 2-day training. Participants trickle in sleepily on this early Sunday morning, but soon the room is buzzing with activity. Puzzle pieces are flying across the room. People are scrambling under and over tables. There's laughter and chatting, debate and introspection throughout the day.

On the drive home, Niki, Jenn and I can't stop talking about all the events of the day. What happened? What surprised us? What seemed to work well? What didn't? What did we learn? Where could we make changes? We're doing what comes naturally to facilitators: self-evaluating.

As the workshops progress, we continue this process of reflection and make changes along the way. We clarify objectives of the course so that personal expectations can be better linked to the content of the workshop. We add more small group work to simplify activities and encourage further participation. Eventually we introduce a

short discussion on what collaborative facilitation can look like, to get everyone thinking about what that means for them.

Second stop: Métis Nation of Ontario

During the research stage of this project one of our goals was to reach out to as many different youth sectors as possible. Aboriginal groups were an important aspect of this diversity, but we weren't having much success at reaching this community. Only two aboriginal organizations had participated in our survey, so I tried contacting the one in Toronto. No reply. We'd selected five organizations to deliver the YFL workshop to, and had sent thank you letters to all the other youth service groups who did the survey with us. And then I got an e-mail.

"Can you tell me which organizations you're working with?," wrote Carey from the Métis Nation of Ontario. Métis Nation? This was the other aboriginal group we'd spoken to. I called Carey up. Next thing I know, she is moving mountains to get a group of Métis youth together for two days just prior to the big Louis Riel Day celebration in Toronto.

The group is small, and made up largely of youth who haven't done any facilitation or group leadership work. In some cases literacy is a challenge. To learn more about the Métis, I ask everyone to add another piece of information to the usual introduction activity – what does it mean to be Métis? Immediately we learn that one of their key issues is a struggle with identity. We discuss what the group would like to learn about being Métis. The results are a brainstorming of ideas that can be used on their website.

Third stop: Ottawa Youth Services Bureau (YSB)

I enter the sleek new Western Ottawa Community Resource Centre in Kanata where two groups of youth are about to assemble for another YFL workshop. The first group is of high school students from rural areas surrounding Kanata (west of Ottawa). The other consists of older youth from the central YSB in downtown Ottawa. Some of these urban youth are street involved, gay identified, or, in two cases, physically disabled. Jessica, the youth co-ordinator for the Community Resource Centre, helps out as I

set up for the day. How do you think these two groups will work together? I ask. No idea, she says. We laugh with a mixture of excitement and nervousness.

But there is little need for unease. The small groups tackle intense and sensitive topics: drug use, homophobia, crime. The rural students are in the thick of it, ready to receive anything their more street-savvy counterparts are willing to throw at them. I'm interested to see one of the rural students present Christianity as a topic to his urban groupmates. It's a gutsy move on his part.

At the end of the weekend the downtown group from YSB is eager to keep connected with the West Ottawa gang. The participants want to collaborate in delivering HIV/AIDS and anti-homophobia workshops to their high schools.

There are three more workshops: Toronto Youth Cabinet, East Metro Youth Services, and Supporting Our Youth. Each one brings learning and awareness. Each one challenges me in new ways. Each one improves on the content and structure of YFL.

Earlier this summer, I heard a call-in show on the radio about the problem with youth and what to do about it. Many adult callers were quick to blame a variety of social ills on the current state of our youth. I listened carefully, especially to the occasional young person who was brave enough to call and suggest that not all youth are potential criminals. I've started paying closer attention to how youth are dealt with in the media. It's shocking how often youth are labeled as criminals by people who have no idea who was responsible for the crime. But I have a different perspective now.

For the past few months I've had the good fortune to spend time with youth from a wide range of backgrounds: urban and rural, visible and non-visible minorities, upper and lower income families, highly educated and learning disabled. And the message from all these people is clear – there is no stopping their incredibly powerful and positive force. As Pearl S. Buck put it, "The young do not know enough to be prudent, and therefore they attempt the impossible, and achieve it, generation after generation."

Thank you to everyone who has been helping make YFL such a huge success. ❖

The Tyranny of Fear

Our life's work is to get fear out of our lives.

—Thomas Merton

The only thing we have to fear is fear itself.

—Franklin Roosevelt

BRIAN STANFIELD

These are the times of fear. Some fear terrorists; some fear flying. Some people fear getting fat. Many are afraid of going out at night, and some even fear going out by day. We certainly fear Osama bin Laden. And the U.S. election campaign dwelt more on the threat of terror than anything else. As Richard Nixon said, “People react to fear, not love.” It was an understanding that guided Nixon throughout his political career. Perhaps now, in the new “age of terror,” that belief has grown central to all mainstream politics. Even the business world, with its marketers of security services, car alarms, private guards and pepper spray, has taken it to heart. Immense power and money await those who tap into our insecurities, and offer a sense of protection.

Terrorism, of course, is important and cannot be ignored. But many countries have dealt with fear before, without letting it take over their political life. In England, Ireland, Palestine or Israel, people have long lived with imminent dangers and threats each day. Yet that fear seldom reduces their engagement in life. A facilitator from Colombia told me that when he left for work in the morning, he never knew if he would make it home, or if his house and family would be there when he did. But he knew he had to face the dangers of his life in a positive, self-confident way, or he would be unable to do anything. You may remember that Franklin Roosevelt said that the only thing we have to fear is fear itself. And that was not just cheap rhetoric. In order to fulfill the potential of North American society we have to overcome fear. But at present, we have a society that seems to treat fear as its watchword and cornerstone.

Of course fear is not always a bad thing; it can be useful and adaptive. We fear bad

dogs and learn to keep our distance. In business or relationships an awareness of risks can be helpful and stimulating. But there is another sort of fear—a more generalized, debilitating anxiety that can creep into every situation. The object of such fear is harder to isolate than “a bad dog.” Yet such fear can be constant and debilitating. It can reign in our minds, reducing in our sphere of action, constraining our sense of freedom. The stress of habitual fear causes various health problems. Worst of all, it may rob us of joy. What can we say about facing fear in a “global age of terror”?

We all have plenty of experience grappling with fear day by day. That is how the human mind is wired. But the sorts of fear we focus on, and how we respond, are highly important. Most of us, alas, are taught by our parents to suspect people who are different. It is protective—a survival skill. But this fear is also the basis of racism, abuse, and terrorism. It was certainly the basis for witch-hunts in the past. Salem’s Reverend Parris attempted to capitalize on that fear when he preached of witches abounding in Salem. He encouraged citizens to point fingers, and label their neighbours as enemy agents for the forces of evil.

When fear grips us, we are paralysed from taking necessary steps forward. The serpentine brain takes over our cerebral processes. It dominates the inventive and creative process of the neo-cortex. It kills action and engagement in society, creativity, and good ideas. It makes us forget our greatness. In the oft-quoted words of Nelson Mandela: “Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness, that most frightens us.” W. Edwards Deming, the

pioneer of total quality management, taught that true quality (happy workers, quality products/services and satisfied customers) can only happen after an organization “drives fear out.” The same applies to a society, a community, or an individual.

What we fear and how much is a fascinating, highly subjective issue. We have dangers from environmental collapse, global epidemics such as AIDS, unemployment, crime, corrupt leaders, terrorist bombs. But what concerns and hopes do we prioritize? We can certainly fear the wrong things because we lack data. For example, in 1980 the Boeing Company published a report entitled *Fear of Flying: Impact on the U.S. Air Travel Industry*. This report surveyed the results of five studies on the fear of flying. It indicated that one of every three adult Americans was either anxious or afraid to fly. Though there was no single explanation to account for all these people, the fears of dying and of heights were dominant themes. To size up this danger the following quote, based on a study by Michael Sivak and Michael Flannagan, compares the actual risks of flying with those of driving a car:

Since 95% of accidents occur during takeoff and landing, risk of flying depends almost entirely on the number of flights involved in the trip. The length of the trip is not significant; a long flight has pretty much the same risk as a short flight. But with a car, the risk of fatality depends upon how many miles are driven.

To make a direct comparison between the risk of fatality driving with the risk of fatality flying, we need to figure out how many miles of driving is equal to the risk of taking one flight. To calculate this, Sivak and Flannagan chose

the safest possible driving, which is driving on an Interstate highway in a rural area. This distance calculates out to 10.8 miles. In other words, the risk of driving about 10.8 miles on a rural Interstate highway is equal to the risk of one domestic flight on a major U.S. airline.

In terms of time, at 55 MPH, 11 minutes 47 seconds of driving equals the risk of taking a flight. Since the average airline trip is 694 miles and takes about an hour and a half, 11 minutes 47 seconds of driving has the same risk of fatality as the average airline flight. But it also means that 11 minutes 47 seconds of driving equals flying eight hours to Europe or flying fourteen hours to the Orient.

*Don't forget that these stats involve rural interstate driving. If flying were compared with driving on urban or suburban roads and streets, a trip of just one to two miles would be equal in risk to one flight. This means the risk you face every two to four minutes of non-interstate driving equals the risk of one flight.**

There are scores of systems and methods for coping with fear. But there is really only one for reducing it: to keep on overcoming fear by taking risks. People who insist on taking bungee jumps, sky diving, or riding in cable cars across deep valleys may have this understanding. Or they may just get a kick out of tempting Providence. I have a friend who uses his holidays to overcome fear. He intentionally picks out adventures that are risky, like balloon flying, abseiling or hang gliding. As he goes on these adventures, he notices the fear disappearing. On each adventure there is less fear to overcome. This is practicing overcoming fear: do what you fear, and the fear disappears.

It's time to close this essay, but here are a few more thoughts we might remember in the so-called age of terror: *Courage is fear that has said its prayers* (Maya Angelou). *The fear of death follows from the fear of life. A man who lives fully is prepared to die at any time* (Mark Twain). *Fear is not a disease of the body; fear kills the soul* (Gandhi). *Our life's work is to get fear out of our lives* (Thomas Merton). ❖

* "Flying and Driving after the September 11 Attacks," by Michael Sivak and Michael J. Flanagan. *American Scientist*, January-February 2003, pages 6-8.

BOOK REVIEW



David Tacey: *The Spirituality Revolution*

HarperCollinsPublishers, 2003. 240 pages. ISBN: 0732271738

David Tacey's latest book *The Spirituality Revolution* shares many people's experiences of an emerging contemporary spirituality. I love the cover of the book. A powerful waterfall is flowing over and around a person's cupped hands—hands which can be nurtured by the water, but cannot control its flow. A great image for what is happening in the world of spirit in our time.

Tacey starts out clarifying what he means and does not mean by "the spirituality revolution." He describes it as a spontaneous movement in society. It is a new interest in the reality of spirit and in its healing effects on life, health, community and well-being. It rises from a realization that secular society has been running on empty, and has to restore itself at a deep primal source – a source beyond humanity, yet paradoxically at the very core of our experience.

The spirituality revolution is also rising from the heart of our new sciences. This is somewhat ironic, since the old sciences took us away from spirit, toward a basically mechanical view of life. But today new approaches to physics, biology, psychology and ecology have begun to restore dignity to previously discredited spiritual visions of reality.

Tacey describes all these shifts as primarily a people's revolution. In the face of widespread suffering and loss of meaning, local people are rediscovering the sacred in nature, in the body, sexuality and community. The New Age movement is only one wing of this transformation. More broadly it is a new openness to spirit in all its forms and dimensions. And this openness marks its real difference from the fundamentalist call for absolute certainty, religious security and nostalgic traditionalism.

Tacey raises the question of how we access the source from which all belief systems emerge – the life-giving currents that flow beneath our divided world. I like his image of the Todd River, which flows through Alice Springs. Most of the time this river is a dry and sandy bed as far as one can see. But once or twice a year it becomes a raging torrent. When Tacey was a kid in Alice Springs, classmates in his school would all run outside to watch the river flood. There were great cheers from children and adults alike when the wall of water appeared. It was something of a spiritual experience for everyone in that desert land. Tacey's teacher explained that the river never really dried up, but was actually flowing underground all the time.

Perhaps such a flood of the spirit is happening in our time. And as with the Todd River, it is not all beautiful. It is also chaotic and dirty. Old bottles, cans, plastic bottles, condoms and other bits of rubbish all appear in the upsurge. This is what the spirituality revolution is like at this moment. Old rubbish, filled with regressions from the past appears – along with the rich water that will stimulate the future of life. There is lots of spirit, but little form. Perhaps the task of religion today is to begin building bridges, boats, or growing tree roots in a time of flooding.

In part two of his book, Tacey conveys his experience working with young students in spirituality classes at LaTrobe University. These classes of his continue to get larger each year. Students from all spectrums of the spirituality revolution gather there, wrestling with questions of who they are, or what they are seeking in their lives. They struggle with their relationship to the sacred. Many students talk about losing their religion, yet recovering the sacred. But then what?

In the last sections of the book, Tacey explores spiritual authenticity and its implications for a new kind of religious life. He looks at eco-spirituality and the impact it can have on us all as we experience the earth as our sacred home. He ends this book saying, "to call for spirituality is to call for healing and reconnection. It is to admit that we are divided and long to become whole.... We experience not just a human craving for the sacred, but also a sacred craving for the human. To return to a tree metaphor, it is as if mysterious roots are now searching for us."

I recommend this book to those wrestling with the spiritual questions of our time, people looking for the role of present day youth, or those struggling with the relevance of formal religion. Tacey does not supply pat answers for any of these concerns. But he shares many perspectives, raises provocative questions, and faces his own deepest hopes or anxieties for the future of spirituality. ❖ –Jeanette Stanfield

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