



# Interfaith Inspirer

An Interfaith Center for Spiritual Growth News Publication  
VOL. XI, NO. 3 March 2015



## Messages of Spring

By Rev. Annie Kopko

As I begin to write this we are still captive to below-zero tonight, and

about a foot of snow still covers the ground with a blinding shine brought on by freezing rain last Monday.

I can't help myself. Every year at this time I start reading parts of "The Findhorn Garden, about the community in Northern Scotland, whose extraordinarily productive gardens became the talk of the World. I become totally inspired by the messages from Nature Spirits. When we ignore nature, (as I do so often), we are missing out on so much of the richness and the healing our world has to offer us at our most essential and survival levels.

I was thinking about how often we look to Nature for our guidance, for inspiration, without thinking, without much awareness. We have something that gets us up every morning - it is the light of the sun.

Yea, I know, for a lot of us it will be: O, yea, I got to go to work. And we forget how essential the changes of Nature are to life itself, and to our daily lives specifically.

Not today, but by the time you read this, every morning there will

be birds singing their spring mating songs outside your bedroom window. The sun is rising much earlier these days since the Winter Solstice. The vernal Equinox is already almost here.

Another book I love is *Nature-Speak, Signs, Omens, and Messages in Nature*, by Ted Andrews, a lifelong naturalist. He says: "Nature is the most powerful realm of magic and spirituality upon the Earth. It is the source of primal energies and great spirits. It is an initiatory path, and within it are most of life's lessons and most of life's answers: teachings about life, death and rebirth. There are teachings of creativity and survival skills. Within it are doorways to other realms and a myriad of wonders along the way."

As the changes of nature stimulate sprouting and growth in the soil, so too does the increasing light stimulate our human bodies into expression of our life forces. We get new ideas about solving our issues, we work in a more creative way, and we start new projects. But it is fun to pay attention to what is going on around us, for we are one with our natural world.

Nature is not as mysterious as we think. We can enrich our lives by getting out there to reestablish our relationship and strengthen our communication with her. After all, she is our Mother, and her spirit is our one source of life on Earth.

First: be appreciative, and receive that gratitude in your heart. Nature is blessing us every day with air, water, and food, which we must have. Visits into nature heal us, body, mind, and soul, expanding our consciousness, lifting our hearts. We experience our unlimited Spirit; all things are possible.

Second: practice seeing everything with curiosity. Be filled with wonder as you observe the rhythms and relationships of all the parts of Nature: birds, plants, and water, the wind and weather. Open up your senses: sight, smell, hearing, touch. It will teach you much.

Third: take trips into Nature, long ones and tiny ones. Take a deep breath every time you walk out through your door. Notice how the birds are curious about you and what you are doing. They will notice you walking in Nature, especially the gray jays in the deep pine forest. Notice birds calling to get you away from their nest. Animals will notice you, squirrels will chatter at you. Walk quietly.

Other things to do: keep a journal; read nature stories from around the world; talk to the plants and trees (they will talk back). Choose a spot, sit, listen, meditate.

As you get closer to the essence of Nature you come closer to the Divine in your own being. All is part of the Divine, the oneness of Life.



# Ministerial Miscellany

By Dave Bell



Dear Friends,

This last week has been a major opportunity for reflection and gratitude. Last Saturday, March 21<sup>st</sup>, we celebrated our 17<sup>th</sup> Birthday. Thanks to Pat Root, Sue Booker, Diane Gledhill and Marice Clark who led the charge in organizing the celebration. It was a fabulous evening. And, it was the opportunity for me to reflect on how far we have come in seventeen years. The early years saw us growing into an organization that now, after seventeen years, has both a dynamic history and a vision for our future. We used to have to tear down and setup each week, which was a struggle. We now have a space of our own that simply requires turning on the lights and the sound system and plugging the coffee and water. Of course there is still a mountain of work that goes on behind the scenes in order to bring about our Sunday services and weekly activities. We now have a paid staff as well as a legion of volunteers. We have now stabilized our financial situation, and work is underway to create a building fund that will carry us into the future, wherever that takes us. Lindsay Passmore and the marketing team have created an amazing new web site. Today, the new board members are participating in the Board Retreat, with a view toward team building and orientation to the task of helping us create a vision for the future of the Center. I can only say Thank You to Spirit and to all of the hundreds of souls who have contributed to this process. Gratitude seems like a term that is insufficient to express the depths of my feelings. I will simply leave it to you, the reader, to attach what ever superlative modifier of gratitude that works for you.

Mother Nature has been a little parsimonious in doling out gorgeous Spring weather so far. I spent half the day yesterday working outside in the snow squalls. I can only assume that this is just a great send-off for my return to Florida on Monday. I expect that my departure will open the way for a real Spring to arrive soon. See you in May.

On Sunday, May 3, Scott Kalechstein Grace will return for a Sunday message, music and an afternoon workshop on Manifesting. I hope you will plan to attend. Advance tickets are available on our website. Scott would like to stay with one of us for Saturday and Sunday evening. If you are able to provide housing, please let me know.

Blessings,

*David*

*Community  
Member  
of the  
Month*



**Bountiful Beth**

By Jeannie Adwani

Hello, and let's welcome the lovely Beth Rockwell for being our Community Member of the Month.

Beth is a relatively new member to our community. Though she appears shy and rests in the background of things, she just jumped right in to our community experience at the Center and gives of herself fully. Thanks Beth!

She volunteers for almost everything (brave soul). She helps with our frequent celebrations that need the expertise of decorative artistry that she also gives to our Sunday altar. She has also helped to set up for various musical concerts we have. She cleans up after potlucks. Gotta love that! She joined our Caring Committee that assist, particularly our own members, who need a little extra help when life throws a curveball.

She provided food for the baby shower, which, when the baby's early arrival interfered with that party, quickly was converted to lunch for the Caring Committee!

We are so glad she joined our community and clearly she has found a place to share her heart and spirit with us.

Thank you, Beth, for sharing yourself so freely with us. May you find all the support and love from us that feeds your soul.

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## MY DAILY PRAYER

By Bob Hopkins

### TRANSITION TO A STABLE PRAYER LIFE

Once I left Catholicism, I went through a period of agnosticism. Needless to say, there were no prayers said during those years of doubt. It took a serious conversation with a friend to help me to see that I had allowed my profound relationship with the Catholicism of my youth to blind me to the fact that God was bigger than any particular religion. The expression she used was that I had thrown out the baby with the bathwater, when I questioned my belief in God because I had severed my relationship with Catholicism. So it was that in the fall of 1980, I began to forge a new relationship with the God of my own understanding. My friend introduced me to a minister who appeared on television. I found his Hour of Power to be inspiring, but a two-dimensional religious experience was just not enough. Together, with my friend we tried a Lutheran church, which had been the church of her youth. However, it was too much like Catholicism to suit me. I was not happy until I found the Unity Church of Practical Christianity. I liked the emphasis on meditation. I liked the idea of God a force for Good and the emphasis in Unity on God as being the only spiritual force in the universe. I had never been that fond of the fear of the devil that most Christian churches seemed to inspire.

I liked the prayers and songs and philosophy that I found in Unity church. My friend liked the church as well and we attended Unity together and even encouraged her roommate to attend with us. It was in her home that I attempted to assemble a preamble to a prayer of my own design. It fascinates me now to think that it was not a prayer in and of itself – but simply an introduction to one:

O Wonderful Creator of the Universe,  
Who was manifest in Jesus Christ and  
whose Spirit spreads and reigns throughout  
the world.

I believe I thought of this as an introduc-

tion to a blessing for the food at one festive occasion or another. I came over the years to use it privately and rarely shared it with others. If more than 10 people read this article, that will more than double the number of people who have heard this prayer introduction. Little did I realize that the prayer introduction would provide the framework from which my daily prayer would be formulated.

I have written in a previous article how I was inspired by Alhousseynou Ba to observe Ramadan for the first time in 2013. What grew out of that decision was a commitment to begin to pray 5 times per day in keeping with the tradition of Islam. I continue in that practice today. I would like to comment on how those 5 times per day are structured and what my version of that prayer has become in my next installment of this series on prayer.

\*\*\*\*\*

### April Thanks

Special thanks this month to the  
decorators of the altar table:

Week 1 Beth Rockwell  
Week 2 Tommie Parker  
Week 3 Youth Group  
Week 4 Marice Clark  
Week 5 Pat Root

Rev. Annie Kopko recently took  
on the task of coordinating this ef-  
fort, which is much appreciated.

Pat Root Volunteer Coordinator



### Mark your calendars!

## CAFE 704 CONCERT SERIES Saturdays

April 11: Lisa Pappas/  
Michael Weiss  
May 9: Shekinah & Friends

## PEACE GENERATOR April 17

### MISCELLANEOUS EVENTS:

Every Tuesday  
7:00 p.m.—8:30 p.m.  
Reiki Share with  
Malcolm Shaffner

UPCOMING  
24-Hour Peace Generator  
May 15,16


### Volunteer Opportunities

Food Gatherers  
April 25  
10-12

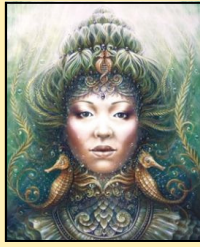
Alpha House Breakfast  
May 9



pixtastock.com - 13467622

<div>The Service begins at 10:45 a.m.</div>	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3	4
<b><i>The speaker and topic of the service are in bold/italic</i></b> <b>R</b> indicates the reader <b>M</b> indicates the meditator <b>MU</b> indicates the musician.	<div>Board meeting this month is on April 12</div>	<div>The newsletter submission deadline is April 19</div>	<b><i>Pat Root</i></b> <b><i>Rob Russell</i></b>			8:30 a.m. AA  7:30 p.m. Drum and Dance Jam
	5	6	7	8	9	10
<b><i>Rev. Annie Kopko/Easter Revisited</i></b> <b>R:</b> TBA <b>M:</b> TBA <b>MU:</b> Lisa Pappas and Michael Weiss  <b>Easter Potluck</b>	6:45 p.m. ACIM  7 p.m. Great Balanced View Video Meeting	10:30 a.m. The Power of Now Discussion Group 5:30 p.m. Community Gathering 7—8:30 p.m. Reiki		Noon—1:30 p.m. ACIM		8:30 a.m. AA  8 p.m. Café 704
	12	13	14	15	16	17
<b><i>Rev. Dawn Swartz: Our Mother God</i></b> <b>R:</b> Craig H. <b>M:</b> Laurel and Alaura <b>MU:</b> Laurel Emrys and Friends  <b>Board meeting</b> <b><i>Tom Headrick</i></b>	6:45 p.m. ACIM  7 p.m. Great Balanced View Video Meeting	10:30 a.m. The Power of Now Discussion Group 5:30 p.m. Community Gathering 7—8:30 p.m. Reiki	7-9 p.m. Shamanic Journey	Noon—1:30 p.m. ACIM  6 p.m. Leadership Team meeting  6:30—8:30 p.m. Science of mind	7 p.m. Peace Generator	8:30 a.m. AA  8 p.m. Spiritual Cinema
	19	20	21	22	23	24
<b><i>Lorrie Coburn: How Jesus Performed Miracles</i></b> <b>R:</b> Malcolm S. <b>M:</b> TBA <b>MU:</b> Bob Songer	6:45 p.m. ACIM  7 p.m. Great Balanced View Video Meeting	10:30 a.m. The Power of Now Discussion Group 5:30 p.m. Community Gathering 7—8:30 p.m. Reiki	7:30 p.m. Urantia Book Study	Noon—1:30 p.m. ACIM	7 p.m. Sufi Prayer Service	8:30 a.m. AA
	26	27	28	29	30	
<b><i>Marlon Dunlap/ topic</i></b> <b>R:</b> Bob H. <b>M:</b> Laurel D. <b>MU:</b> Shekinah and Friends  <b>CC meeting</b>	6:45 p.m. ACIM  7 p.m. Great Balanced View Video Meeting	10:30 a.m. The Power of Now Discussion Group 5:30 p.m. Community Gathering 7—8:30 p.m. Reiki		Noon—1:30 p.m. ACIM	<div>Birthdays are indicated in <b><i>bold/italic</i></b> <b><i>Happy Birthday!</i></b></div>	
		Amber Messman				





## Peggy's Profiles

Art by Autumn Skye Morrison

### MATSU Goddess of the Seas

An old legend describes a terrible storm that trapped a ship in the middle of the South China Sea. The passengers were terrified, and even the captain and crew knew they could not save the ship from sinking. Suddenly, a beautiful young woman dressed all in red stood upon the deck. At her command, the sea calmed and the storm faded away. The ship limped into port, the latest vessel to be rescued by the goddess Matsu.

Matsu was a real person, a female shaman who was born on an island off the coast of China in 960 AD. Her parents called her Lin Mo (Silent Child), and soon realized she was very special. Lin Mo began to study Buddhism at age 10; developed a perfect memory; mastered the vast compendium of Chinese healing arts; and taught the people how to prevent illness and injury. She could predict changes in the weather, and knew when it was safe

for sailors and fishermen to go to sea. And when storms raged, she fearlessly stood on the shore in her glowing red dress, and guided the ships home.

Lin Mo's fame as a healer and Buddhist scholar spread far and wide. Then one day when she was about 28 years old, she realized it was time for her to leave behind the Earthly plane, and that she must go alone. Her grieving family and friends watched her climb a mountain near her home, and saw her carried into the sky by swirling clouds of thick fog. To celebrate her life of service, she was elevated to the list of Buddhist deities and declared to be a goddess by the Chinese government.

Today, millions of seafarers still invoke Matsu when they take a boat out, and thank her when they return safely. Her attributes of wisdom, protection and benevolent magic reflect her life's work. She encourages us to remember the importance of balance in our lives, and to acknowledge troubling issues and resolve them with loving intention. Doing this will help us achieve a healing unity of mind, body and spirit. And when the storms of life become too much for us to cope with, we can call on Matsu and draw strength from her compassionate presence.

## Interfaith Pop

(as recommended by Rob Fagerlund)

### God Is God by Steve Earl

I believe in prophecy  
Some folks see things not everybody can see  
And, once in a while, they pass the secret along to you  
and me

And I believe in miracles.  
Something sacred burning in every bush and tree  
We can all learn to sing the songs the angels sing

Yeah, I believe in God, and God ain't me

I've traveled around the world  
Stood on mighty mountains and gazed across the wilderness

Never seen a line in the sand or a diamond in the dust

And as our fate unfurls  
Every day that passes I'm sure about a little bit less  
Even my money keeps telling me it's God I need to  
trust

And I believe in God, but God ain't us

God, in my little understanding, don't care what name  
I call  
Whether or not I believe doesn't matter at all

I receive the blessings  
That every day on Earth's another chance to get it right  
Let this little light of mine shine and rage against the  
night

Just another lesson  
Maybe someone's watching and wondering what I got  
Maybe this is why I'm here on Earth, and maybe not

But I believe in God, and God is God





Image from [peaceseeds](http://peaceseeds.org)

### Caring Committee Contact List

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### Nature Notes by Rob

#### Spring Springs Into Action!

To a nature-lover, there's probably no more exciting and overwhelming season of change than Spring. Love is in the air – warm temperatures, an abundance of food and increasing warmth and sunlight all fill the days with romance. Birds – and squirrels – can be seen in unabashed courtship. Critters chase and are chased, dance and strut, sing and are sung to. Males squabble over the female that has caught their eye, and territories are surveyed, mapped out, claimed and defended.

The river at Fuller Park has not frozen over all winter because of the faster current. This means the birds have constant access to the plants and animals in the water. Now, with all the snow melting, the current is much stronger. A powerful current makes getting food more challenging. There's nest building to think of, as well, and the security of young ones.

At Gallup Park the river is much wider, so the same amount of water can flow slower, and more peacefully. Ducks and geese find a perfect place for the coming brood. Swans and herons also call it home.

The squirrels are less likely to move, but the waterfowl have pretty much settled in to their new neighbor-

hoods by now.

Migratory birds are returning as well! Robins, ducks, geese, hummingbirds, Red-Winged Blackbirds and Red-Headed Woodpeckers are just a few of the birds that have flown thousands of mile to get here.

While I wisely make no statements here about human gender-roles, in birds they are often in evidence. When you see Canada Geese and other waterfowl grazing – or rather, when grazing Canada Geese and other waterfowl see you, there is usually one male who with stretch his neck up straight and keep an eye on you, and on the safety of the female, who continues eating. This will continue after the chicks are hatched.

This is also a wondrous time of year. Birds are intelligent, resourceful, and clever. Imagine meeting some like that...who was never born. Instead, hatched. Imagine beginning your life within a hard shell, and having to break out to somewhere, and you have no idea where you're going as you do it. That is the beginning of every bird.

Don't miss the birds this Spring. They're probably outside your window right now.



## Fun Easter Facts

<http://www.whsv.com/seasonal/>

1.) For Americans, Easter is the second most important holiday to eat candy, and lots of it! According to the National Confectioner's Association, Americans consumed seven billion pounds of candy on Easter in 2001. So, what's the first most candy-eating occasion of the year? Halloween of course!

2.) Nearly 120 million cards with be sent, exchanged, and given this Easter, which means it holds the fourth spot of the largest card-sending celebration in the U.S.



3.) Americans buy more than 700 million MARSHMALLOW PEEPS during the Easter holiday, which makes Peeps the most popular non-chocolate Easter candy.

4.) Besides chocolate, what other candy pops its head around the corner during Easter time? Jelly beans! An astounding 16 billion jelly beans are made exclusively for Easter. That's enough beans to fill a plastic egg the size of a nine story building!

5.) In the early 19th century, the first chocolate eggs were made in Europe. They remain among the most popular treats associated with Easter.

6.) In all, 90 million chocolate Easter bunnies are made for Easter every year. And, when taking a bite into one of those millions of chocolate bunnies, 76% of Ameri-

cans prefer to bite off the ears first, while 5% eat the feet first and 4% eat the tail first.

7.) Like many holidays on the calendar, Easter also has its own catchy tunes or carols. They're not just for Christmas time! One such Easter carol, with its words in Latin, began as Tempus adest floridum, which can be translated as 'Spring has now brought forth the flowers'. Other 'Easter Carols' you might know? 'Here comes Peter Cottontail', 'Easter Parade', and 'The Carnival Song'. Read more about those 'carols' and others here: [Phancy Pages: The History of Easter and the Easter Bunny](#). Or, try writing one on your own this year!

8.) Common Easter symbols include the Cross, Easter Bells, the Easter Lily, and of course, Eggs and Rabbits!

9.) A tradition since 1878, the Easter egg roll on the White House lawn turns the area into a massive playground for children from all over the country. Learn more about the history of the Easter Egg Roll here: [White House Website: History of the White House Easter Egg Roll](#).

10.) In medieval times, a festival of 'egg-throwing' was held in church. The priest would throw a hard-boiled egg to one of the choir boys, and then tossed from one choir boy to the next. When the clock struck 12, whoever held the egg, was the winner and got to keep the egg.



Sunday Celebration Services  
are held at 10:45 a.m. at  
704 Airport Blvd.,  
(off S. State Street) near I 94



### MISSION STATEMENT

*Spiritual seekers joining in community to attract others of like mind, creating an atmosphere and structure to foster and stimulate our individual and collective spiritual growth.*

### CONTRIBUTORS WANTED!

We would love to have your input in the newsletter: spiritual moments, movie/book reviews, exciting announcements, poems, etc.

We try to have the newsletter ready for final editing by the third Sunday of each month. Please send contributions to Heide at [momnyk@tc3net.com](mailto:momnyk@tc3net.com) with "Interfaith submission" in the subject line. If you do not mention Interfaith, your email might get kicked right into the recycle bin by my spam filter.

If you cannot email your contribution, you may give it to Heide on Sunday.

**To receive the online newsletter, go to <http://lists.interfaithspirit.org/listinfo.cgi/interfaithinsp-irer-interfaithinsp-irer.org> to subscribe.**

Want to hear from us throughout the week? Receive or send email through Interfaith Yahoo by going to <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/InterfaithSpirit/>

Namaste from your newsletter team:  
Heide, Esther, Deane and Steve.

#### BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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Sally Searls, member  
Bob Hopkins, member  
Lindsay Passmore, member  
Pat Root, member  
Diane Gledhill, member

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Heide Kaminski and Kellie Love, Youth Education Directors

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# Cafe 704

Saturday, April 11, 2015



Featuring  
*“Home on the Hill”*

**Come Enjoy Rockin’ Roots & Originals by Duo  
Michael Weiss & Lisa Pappas Featuring special  
guests Linda Teaman and Tom Voiles from  
Nutshell and Harmony Bones**

Concert starts at 8 p.m., doors open at 7:30 p.m.  
\$8 suggested donation (or two for \$15)  
But all contributions welcome

*Details at [interfaithspirit.org/cafe704](http://interfaithspirit.org/cafe704)*





# Youthful Spirits



*Hello all!*

Happy Spring to you!!

March was a magnificent month! We learned about generosity and started our yearly Heifer fundraiser. We also learned about humility and understanding. Another fun thing we did was learn about being flexible. Check out the pictures of our experiment that we did.

We have a great month planned for April. We will be discussing determination on Easter Sunday and having our yearly Easter egg hunt. Determination is using your willpower to do something when it isn't easy. You are determined to meet your goals even when it is hard or you are being tested. With determination we make our dreams come true.

We will also talk about the following virtues:

**Gentleness-** Gentleness is moving wisely, touching softly, holding carefully, speaking quietly and thinking kindly.

**Trust-** Trust is having faith in someone or something. It is a positive attitude about life. You are confident that the right thing will happen without trying to con-

trol it or make it happen. Even when difficult things happen, trust helps us to find the gift or lesson in it.

**Trustworthiness-** Trustworthiness is being worthy of trust. People can count on you to do

your best, to keep your word and to follow through on your commitments. You do what you say you will do. Trustworthiness is a key to success in anything you do.

We look forward to an awesome April!

*Love, Light, and  
Laughter  
Heide, Kellie, Tommy, and  
Alex*

Below are before and after pictures of an experiment we did to show flexibility. The colored water in the different containers is flexible through the paper towel "conductor." It basically represents the spirit that connects us all no matter what color we are!



Before



# *The Caring Committee*



*Marilyn,  
Chair*



*Heide,  
Secretary*



*Joyce,  
Treasurer*



*Delyth,  
Liaison*



*Judy*



*Idgie*

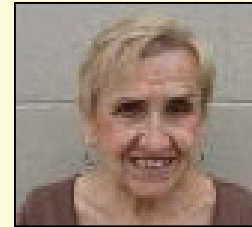


*Malcolm*



*Andy*

*Diane*



*Dana*



*Annie,  
Liaison*



*Tommy,  
Youth Ed rep*



*Chuck*



*Jack*



*Kellie*



*Beth*

*If you have a service to offer,  
please contact [Marilyn](#)*



## Interfaith Caring Committee Survey

We are looking for your participation and support of fellow Interfaith members in crisis in any way that is appropriate for you. If you are called on by a caring committee member to support a particular need, you always have the opportunity to decline if it doesn't work for you at that time. Please fill out this survey as completely as you are able. All gifts, skills, and talents are appreciated. Thank you for taking the time!

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ City/Part of town you live or work in: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ e-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Best way to contact you: \_\_\_\_\_ Best times to contact you: \_\_\_\_\_

Check all areas that you are willing to participate in and specify any limitations...

\_\_\_Driver (Interfaith/appointments) \_\_\_Craft Teaching (type) \_\_\_Counseling (type)

\_\_\_Medical Equipment loan (type) \_\_\_Meal Prep \_\_\_Consulting (type)

\_\_\_Child Care \_\_\_Errands \_\_\_Cleaning \_\_\_Yardwork \_\_\_Snow Shoveling

\_\_\_Healing/energy work \_\_\_Household Donations \_\_\_Clothing Donations

\_\_\_Caregiver Break \_\_\_Send Cards \_\_\_Computer Help \_\_\_Healing Music

\_\_\_Fun Companionship \_\_\_Pet Care \_\_\_Massage \_\_\_Money Donation

\_\_\_Listening \_\_\_Prayers \_\_\_Respite Care \_\_\_Join Caring Committee

Other \_\_\_\_\_

Limitations and additional information:

I currently have need of (be specific):





THE INTER-FAITH ROUND TABLE OF WASHTENAW COUNTY  
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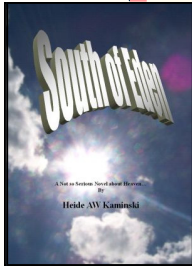
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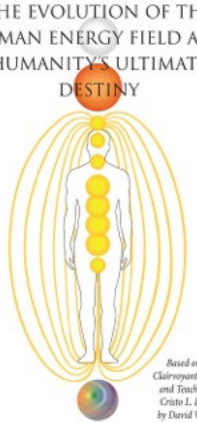
  
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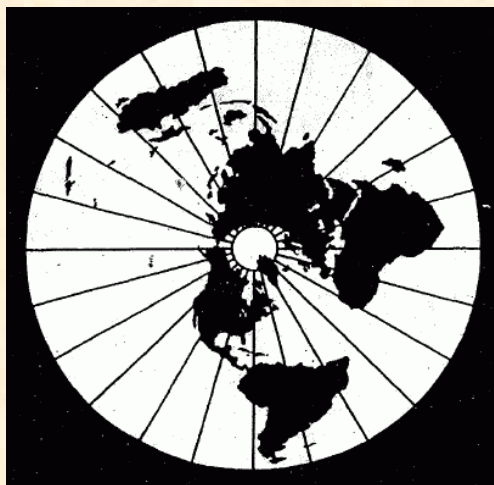
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- Japanese: ピース クロック Korean: 우리의 삶에 평화가 깃들길
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