

The World Network of Religious Futurists



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Note

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Editorial

Welcome to the first issue of the new format Global Visions. We hope to distribute future issues electronically as well as on paper. Subscribers can receive their copies by E-mail simply by sending me a mailing address available to the Internet. They will receive both an ASCII text version and a (colour) Binary file, which can be read by most Desktop Publishing programs. Those without Internet access can also receive Global Visions electronically on 3½ inch floppy disks (sorry, no 5¼ inch disks). Please ask if you want to receive it this way.

I welcome items for publication, both typed on paper and in text files 3½ inch HD or

DD floppy disks (which I will return on request). Future editions will be published on the first day of each astronomical season, namely June 21st, September 23rd, December 22nd and March 21st. Copy deadlines will be the first of May, August, November and February.

Observant readers may notice differences in spelling patterns between articles in future magazines. I am able to spell-check in both North American and British/Australasian patterns. Articles arriving with American spelling will go out with American spelling, the same for British/Australasian spelling. If I can't work out which pattern you're using, you'll get pot luck, depending on your mailing address.

I would like to thank Simon Bell for designing, typesetting, and printing Global Visions. Enjoy the magazine.

Gordon Arthur

Evolutionary Transformation: An Expression of the Spiritual?

by Dr. Stephen G. Ross, M.Ed., M.D., C.C.F.P.

Spirituality is an emergent aspect of consciousness, which provides a unique source of vision and guiding imagery which may be of particular benefit in helping evolutionary competence. An inner holomorphic correlate of our world of rich relationships, spirituality may work as an evolution-

ary "guidance system." Examination of spirituality may prove of unique value in furthering wider systemic health.

Spirituality

Normally when we think of the spiritual, we often mean the non-"real", or at least factors which may not be measurable. We usually point to the soft, feeling aspects which traditionally we have regarded as more ephemeral and of less importance to our Western scientific methodology.

That it may be difficult for us to characterize spirituality may be a reflection of the success of traditional Western science. Resulting in such technological advances and astounding intellectual discoveries, our reliance on this methodology contributes to our difficulty in thinking about spirituality. Western science accentuates differences, tending to separate the observer from the observed, the actor from the consequence, and specific domains of inquiry from the holistic web which sustains us. This way of organizing our knowledge has led us inadvertently to hold hostage other modes of understanding which may deserve further examination. The fact that our Western science and technology has led to such frightful real-world consequences should alert us that further reliance on this methodology, as in the hopes for quick technological fixes, is unlikely to solve the prob-

lems which have occurred as a result of its gaps or oversights.

For these reasons, it is worthwhile examining the possible benefits of a more detailed understanding of spirituality, its possible role in evolutionary transformation, and its application to the systemic problems of our world today.

By spiritual, we mean feelings, constructs which are within the self – intuitions, religio, searching within our roots for better ways of understanding and acting. Specific spiritual concerns include care in definition of our goals, listening more closely, being quiet, aware of the essential ties and uncertainties in all our contacts. Spirituality means being more holistic, beyond our dichotomies and divisions, transcending the paradoxes through higher orders of containment, knowing and feeling that the world is one organic unit. This is in contrast to the religions, one aim of which is often the spread of specific beliefs or gospels as the one and only “truth”.

We cannot live by bread alone. Our basic needs require satisfaction – that is necessary, but not sufficient for our self-expression. When we have all we need of “bread”, what then? In the essence of our being there is a need for sustenance of a different kind. There is a vast spiritual hunger in western society. The quest for spiritual, as opposed to material, success intensified as disillusionment with the gods of consumerism and technology became more endemic in our society.

Spiritual concerns entail the desire to live out of the centre of our being, not to be content to rest on the surface. We are searching within for guidance to transform our world with love, care, and compassion. Our thoughts are modelled by the exceptional rather than the average or the mean. Maslow describes “being” values – referable choices with spiritual aspects providing guidance for our relations, and self-organization (4). These values are a class of knowledge which functions at a meta-level to reshape our ideas and actions with increased order and integrity. This progressive meta-level hierarchy in the organization of knowledge parallels de Chardin’s conception of the progressive evolution of life (1). Spirituality is the key providing the principles for hierarchical organization of both knowledge and life. Living beings, their knowledge and relations, are in a process of continuing self-reference and self-perfection. “Humanity is an unfinished business” (Wojciechowski (5)).

In spirituality, we seek concordance of our goals. Such a convergence of intention goes beyond the individual to unite the self with others.

Personal goals reach out beyond the self. The self becomes an agent acting for the larger whole which requires that individual action. Spiritual feeling further magnifies the ties which unite all humans with other living beings.

Our goals, the “where to”, are illuminated by our ways, the “how to”. Our epistemic posture, our ways of under-

standing, if spiritual, requires a Taoistic attitude - attendant to the feelings and consequences, the soft indicators of our inter-relations. Such feelings provide feedback, allowing us to better change reality, to facilitate developing a world which corresponds to our highest inner convictions.

Evolutionary Transformation

Similar issues arise in our consideration of evolutionary transformation. Both methodologically and in the setting of our goals, factors promoting successful evolutionary well-being may be a manifestation of the aspect of consciousness we are describing as spirituality. Jantsch, Laszlo, and many others have begun to illuminate the characteristics required for evolutionary progress. These include an enhanced focus on the dynamics of qualitative change, the importance of self-organization, direction, and emergence. Unity within diversity, seeking emergent synergies, trans-personal sources of intention, being involved both as actors and as those acted upon, subjects and being objectified – all these facilitate evolutionary transformation. They are also congruent with spiritual understanding.

Focusing more specifically on goals, as an agent of evolutionary transformation, our goals require the concordance of the intentions of the other living beings within our ecological web of interaction. Hence successful personal goals become trans-personal. Higher systemic goals emerge

which require the accord and participation of all. Emergence of hierarchies leads to greater unities which contain and provide vital prerequisites for the individual in its world of further self-organization. We are seeking synergies, areas of interactional benefit, the congruence of action to further a more holistic, open, merging order of experiences. "In symbiosis, the advantage of cooperation between two organisms lies in the improved viability of the emergent total system which represents a higher level.... Symbiosis may be understood as the intensification of environmental relations by process links between two or more organisms....

The individual organisms do not lose their identity and yet the symbiotic relationship establishes an autopoietic unit of higher order" (Jantsch (2)).

One is engaged in authentic interaction; alive to mutual feedback; unexpected occurrences developing which could not be predicted based on previous organization and information. Novelty and heterogeneity provide further indicators and perspectives of the whole. The wider the differences, the greater the potential for better understanding and success in our search for further unity. Evolutionary transformation can be characterized by qualitative change, the progressive incorporation of the self within wider and more encompassing wholes. Bootstrapping, proceeding by leaps, entering hypercyclic dynamic changes – all these characteristics describe self-transcendence – the further incorporation of one's

self in more complete, more complex evolutionary form. Jantsch described this well. "Self-transcendence means reaching out beyond the boundaries of one's own existence. When a system, in its self-organization, reaches beyond the boundaries of its identity, it becomes creative. In the self-organization paradigm, evolution is the result of self-transcendence at all levels. Symmetry breaks unfurl space and time for the unfolding of self-organizing system dynamics.... At each threshold of self-transcendence a new dimension of freedom is called into play for the shaping of the future. Complexity unfolds in time and mirrors experience lived in the past as well as the creative reaching-out into the future. Evolution is basically open. It determines its own dynamics and direction. This dynamics unfolds in a systemic web which, in particular, is characterized by the co-evolution of macro- and microsystems. By way of this dynamic interconnectedness, evolution also determines its own meaning" (Jantsch (2)).

Evolutionary transformation involves searching, working with others to go beyond our own present limitations. We are aiming to transcend the structural impediments in both our ways of thinking and our social structures. We are forced as members of an ecological system to develop consistency in our mutual goals to improve our collective well-being.

Today, human existence is tied more to the health and well-being of the global bio-

systems than to where we happen to live on this planet. Our forced globalization – being subject to a collective fate – drives all human beings, no matter where, to enormous challenge. Our knowledge of the evolutionary challenges of human and bio-survival unleashes untold advantages and opportunities for social and cultural renewal. Together with the re-awakening of individual responsibility, our globalization is providing us with a sense of what we together share. We are not alone. We are part of a greater unity.

In evolutionary changes, living beings are engaged together in discovery, intentionally seeking a sharing of experience. This is a seeking of the self-definition by the process of interacting living beings, or the evolutionary process itself, that constitutes the voyage of life. These intentions must be based on holistic principles of understanding. With challenges, we increasingly seek ways of qualitative change transcending present conflicts and difficulties. A harmonic of intention for life and for growth (as described by Maslow with his concept of self-actualization) emerges in living beings (as described by Whitehead with his conception of actualization). This collective evolutionary thrust acts as a source of direction for us individually. We are grounded, as is our knowledge and wisdom, in this way.

In each living being the local and unique individual finds a rightful place within its habitat of supportive relations. These ties generate synergy

which bind together, through contact, the whole manifold of layers of identity. For the individual human being these ties range from the cellular, through organic levels, to include the family, community, and finally global spheres. Within our knowledge systems we discover the ideal forms which condition our particular expressions. Together with the contacts of specific situations an interactional presence arises which, in its harmonics, links the individual and his or her knowledge systems with the larger systems which contain them. Further synergies of intention emerge as we discover the compatibilities of our goals with our ways. Progress, far from simply the accumulation of goods and money, is conceived as both the evolution of specific ends concordant with guiding images of well-being, together with improving the ways we interact to respect the phenomenological realization and experience of all beings. Our means and our ends contribute to each other.

It may be helpful to think of a fusion of goals, the mutual reinforcing of intention amongst all living beings, humans together with humans, humanity together with nature. Synergies of intention emerge as we act as agents for further successful unfolding of evolution, realizing the holism, our similarities and our sharing together in mutual participation. This is vital for the evolutionary health of the "invironment" which contains us. "It is because of the mind and the interiority of the life of the intellect that the environment is

also an INvironment" (Wojciechowski (6)). Humans, as the only ones capable of great cultural and social transformation, have become the agents of biospheric evolution. The challenges of globalization are forcing each individual to not only discover synergies in their world of real contacts, but to also develop individually and collectively a requisite evolutionary understanding. We are forced to transcend the frivolities of that knowledge that divides us or accentuates the differences we may apparently manifest.

Individually, we have succeeded in beginning to understand evolutionary guidance. Humans can begin to manifest greater holistic understanding, an inner wisdom that acts with a concern for the field of contact. Collectively we can socially and culturally assimilate this knowledge with more effective norms. Our knowledge systems can match the unfoldings of the world. As we develop more adequate internal representations, we can test and discover by interaction and feedback. Then we can begin to pace, to actually drive the interactional system, to achieve more successful evolutionary competence. Finally, we can lead by intentional direction of systemic transformation. Our visions and goals, deliberately expressed, as agents of evolutionary unfolding provide evolutionary guidance.

Matching involves an engagement, a going back and forth from inner models to outer events. It involves the development of congruity be-

tween our wisdom, our models of understanding, and their expression.

In summary, our spiritual development, with a focus on the inner aspect of existence, challenges us to go beyond the structural limitations in our individual ways of thinking and our cultural expressions. Spiritual ways of thinking provide opportunities for re-aligning our social relations, enabling us to develop new ways forward which enhance our evolutionary unfolding. Increased consideration of these spiritual goals may hold great promise for the evolutionary challenges ahead.

Perhaps further study of both the spiritual images humans have developed and the principles of evolutionary transformation may bring forth great wisdom in guidance of our globalization. Laszlo describes this well: "Ideals and positive visions are important not because they can be immediately and fully attained, but because they can set standards by which we can direct our steps. But where shall we find such positive ideals? Fortunately it is not necessary to adopt untried ideals when those that form part of our cultural heritage still have a latent power to motivate actions and influence decisions. The great ideals of the world religions, and the ethics and worldviews of more recent times, embody perennial values, independent of the historical period in which they first appeared. These ideals could and should be reaffirmed, and divorced from the often questionable

political practices which were associated with them.”

“There is, for example, the Christian vision of universal brotherhood, governed by man’s love for a God of all men and for his fellow human beings. There is Judaism’s historical vision of an elected people in whom all the families of the earth are to be blessed. Islam has a universal vision of an ultimate community of God, man, nature, and society. The essential goal of the Baha’i Faith is to achieve a vision that is world-embracing and could lead to the unity of mankind and the establishment of a world civilization based on peace and justice. Hinduism envisions matter as the outward manifestation of spirit, and urges attunement to cosmic harmony through the varied paths of yoga. Buddhism, too, perceives all reality as interdependent, and teaches man to achieve union with it through rejection of the drives and desires of a separate ego. Confucianism finds supreme harmony in disciplined and ordered human relationships, and Taoism finds such harmony in nature and naturalness. The African tribal religions conceive of a great community of the living and the dead, to which each person belongs unless he wilfully creates imbalances between the seen and unseen forces in and around himself” (Laszlo (3)).

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(3) E. Laszlo, “The Inner Limits of Mankind”, 1989, London: Oneworld Publications, pp. 65-66.

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(5) Jerzy A. Wojciechowski, “Externalization of Knowledge and the Humanization of Man,” in *The Real and the Imaginary*, ed. Jean E. Charon, Paragon House, New York NY, 1987, pp. 97-113.

(6) Jerzy A. Wojciechowski, “Invironment” in *Canadian Association for the Club of Rome Newsletter*, Series 3, Nr. 2, July 1991. Ottawa.

In the Shadow of a Bank Part One

by Iain Gibson

It was a matter of power. All the money in the world didn’t matter, that had been proven time and time again. It was what you did with the power that money could, sometimes, buy.

At that exact moment in time Harry Gelder felt like the most powerful man on Earth. No, even more powerful than that – he felt like a god.

As the glass elevator moved up the side of the towering building which housed the main headquarters of the First Solar Bank, Harry looked out and watched as he rose above all the other buildings around him. The bank was the tallest building in London, a dark

sliver of glass impaling the heart of the city.

As the elevator came to rest on the top floor, he surveyed the city as it spread out before him, lowered in supplication to his mighty works. He felt as if all he had to do was raise a finger to destroy it all, and in a very real sense his power was such that was almost all he needed to do. The financial empire which he had created could topple governments, ruin economies, set nations at each other’s throats. To raze the city would be child’s play in comparison. With the computer implants which were distributed throughout his body, all he needed to do was say the word and the computers would carry out the work for him.

The elevator door opened upon Harry’s executive suite, the entire floor converted as an office-come-lounge. He could wallow in luxury, relaxing completely, while still having full contact with the running of his empire. Communication technology could have made it possible for him to conduct his business from a retreat out in the country, far from the crowded city centre, but Harry preferred working from here with the world at his feet.

Sprawling out on the large sofa in the middle of the room, Harry ordered his computers to supply him with a multi-screen display. They complied within an instant of receiving his sub-vocalised command from the tiny transmitter implanted near his larynx. Each of the twelve monitors was showing a different view from within the building, chosen from hundreds of cameras according to

criteria which the computer had recorded as being those which were of interest to Harry.

His eyes flickered across the view-screens until they alighted on something which seemed to be of interest. He ordered the computer to display all cameras relevant to that location and was rewarded by twelve images of it all from different angles and ranges.

A customer was banging on the Plexiglas which separated him from the clerk, his mouth noiselessly flapping open and shut. Harry turned on the sound.

"Just give me five more days," the man was shouting. "You'll get your money."

The clerk shook his head slowly from side to side.

"I'm sorry, Mr. Littleman, but the terms of your loan state quite clearly that midday today was the final date for repayment, and as it is now," the clerk looked at this watch, "five minutes past twelve, your house belongs to this bank."

Littleman snarled and resumed his attack on the Plexiglas with a surprising ferocity. The clerk involuntarily jumped back from the window. He had only been working in the bank for a month and the violent outbursts of dissatisfied customers still startled him. Other employees were immune to such behaviour, having grown used to it. Owen was just new enough to still worry that one of the customers might actually manage to break through the shielding.

"I won't let you take it from me," Littleman shouted through the small slot under

the window. "I'll kill anyone who tries to get in."

As the customer stormed out of the bank, Harry switched his main monitor to a close-up of the clerk.

"Request personal information," he told the computer.

The information displayed itself in a neat box, superimposed over the bottom left-hand corner of the monitor screen. It read:

Owen Sedgwick: Trainee Fiscal Controller. Account Number: QDYHR45785451 54OP

On another of Harry's monitors, the contents of Owen Sedgwick's personnel file spilled open, moving slightly faster than the speed at which a normal human could register all the information. Harry picked up the information at a subliminal level and his implants translated it into a form his conscious brain could understand.

Sedgwick had been with the company for just over two months. Harry nodded to himself, the corners of his mouth turning up slightly. He should have been there long enough for the indoctrination to take hold.

As Sedgwick tapped in the repossession order into his desk terminal, Harry silently congratulated himself. It took a while for the new staff to overcome feelings of guilt about foreclosing on loans and repossessing collateral. At first even the long term staff had been hesitant, often bending the rules to give the customers a few more days. Harry had soon put an end to that by improving the induction courses,

conditioning the staff not to react with some out-dated sense of moral responsibility. Now their only responsibility was to the bank.

Harry studied the repossession order as it came through on one of his screens and then switched the main monitor to one of the cameras of the mobile unit which would be dealing with the repossession. He also ordered the computer to display a digital countdown of the estimated time of arrival of Mr. Littleman. A small digital display appeared in the upper right-hand corner, counting off the seconds. The mobile unit had approximately ten minutes before Littleman would be on his front doorstep, turning the key in the lock.

With five minutes to go, the mobile unit had parked itself in Mr. Littleman's drive. Almost as soon as the van had stopped, two of the four strong team of repo-agents were out of the van and running up to the door.

Harry zoomed in on the activity. The lock was a modern electronic card-lock, which made things easier for the repo-agents. One of them pulled out an electronic lock-picker from his tool bag and fitted it onto the lock. Almost instantly the bolts in the door sprang open and the second agent was inside. The first remained at the door, reconfiguring the lock's code so that Mr. Littleman's card would be ineffective.

In the meantime, one of the two remaining agents in the van joined the man inside the house. Harry focused one of the mobile unit's other cameras on the front windows of

the house. The first agent inside was fixing plexi-shields up at the windows to prevent them from being broken open.

As soon as he had finished with the lock, the agent at the door was inside and had closed the door. That left only the van driver outside. He secured the vehicle and then pulled out of the drive and parked across the street where he could safely observe. The van was unmarked, a precaution taken after too many mobile units had been attacked by furious ex-customers.

As the final seconds ticked away, Harry could see Littleman walking up his driveway. Judging from the way he was moving, his temper had not yet abated. He seemed so wrapped up in his affairs that he failed to notice the plexi-shields attached to the inside of his windows. He didn't notice anything amiss until he tried his card in the door. Only then did he notice what had been done to his house.

Harry watched Littleman's display with a sadistic glee as he tried to break into what had been his own house. A brick thrown against the window succeeded in shattering the glass, but the plexi-shield remained intact.

On a monitor which showed the inside of the van, Harry watched the remaining agent telephoning the police. Within a matter of minutes they had arrived at the house and were bundling Littleman off into a police van. Almost as soon as he was out of the way, the van pulled back into the drive to collect the previously besieged repo-agents.

Harry turned away from the monitors feeling extremely satisfied with himself.

There was only the matter of Owen Sedgwick to deal with. His actions suggested that he had potential. Certainly the conditioning had taken hold quickly, and his personnel file gave every indication that he could go far. Harry gave the computer a command to send out an invitation. It was time for Owen Sedgwick to be initiated into the Mysteries of the Order of Hermes.

The envelope dropped onto the door mat after being thrust through the letter box by the postman. Owen quickly retrieved it before his cat decided to bat it around the floor in vain attempts to kill it.

The letter had the Bank's stamp on the front, which immediately aroused Owen's curiosity. As far as he knew, all employer-employee correspondence was handled through the internal mail. He tore open the top of the envelope and pulled out a gilt-edged card. Discarding the envelope, he read the card.

It was a personal invitation – at least so it said, Owen was sure it had been turned out by the hundreds – from Henry D. Gelder, the Director of the Bank, to an evening reception. Owen sighed. It was sure to be a waste of time. However, he could not afford to turn down the invitation, as to do so could not look good on his record.

The reception was like all those which Owen had previously attended, a buffet table lining the wall of a large room which was filled with talking guests. As he entered the room,

Owen was momentarily the focal point of everyone's attention, as they all turned to look at him, and then they resumed their conversations. Only one person walked over to greet him, Aidan O'Neill, Owen's training supervisor.

"Good to see you, Owen," he warmly welcomed him, offering his hand to be shaken. "Can I get you a drink?"

Owen was slightly taken aback. O'Neill had never spoken to him, except when instructing him on banking procedures, all of which had been done in a cool, aloof manner. Managing to remember his manners, he shook O'Neill's hand.

"If it's no trouble."

"No trouble at all. That's what I'm here for. Now, let me see, a gin and bitter lemon, no ice. Am I right?"

Owen nodded mutely, still slightly shocked. O'Neill disappeared into the crowd, re-emerging moments later with Owen's drink.

"Thanks," Owen said, accepting the drink. "How did you know? – about what I drink, I mean."

"Trade secret," O'Neill winked. "Still, if you stick around you might learn some of our secrets. Apparently the word is that you're one of Mr. Gelder's hot favourites."

"What do you mean?"

"Take a look around you," O'Neill said, sweeping his arm to indicate the entire room. "Do you notice anything about the company you're in?"

Owen looked at the faces of the people around him. Most of them were unfamiliar, although he did recognise some

of the higher-ups in the bank's hierarchy. Slowly it dawned on him that there was no one there at his level that he recognised.

"Am I the only new person here?"

"That's right. You're the first person to receive an invitation out of all the new recruits this year. Apparently Mr. Gelder has taken a personal interest in you."

"Why me?"

"He can obviously spot potential when he sees it. Of course if you're not really interested in rapidly advancing your career then he's probably wasting his time."

Owen looked up from his glass, which he had been contemplating, his eyes lighting up. The magic phrase had been spoken.

"I'm always interested in advancing my career," he cautiously told O'Neill, trying not to sound too excited.

"It means becoming involved with some of the more secretive functions of the bank," O'Neill warned. "Things that you can't discuss with anyone outside of the inner circle. Some things which are legal grey areas."

"Nothing out and out illegal?"

"No, of course not."

"Then I don't foresee any problems there."

O'Neill visibly seemed to relax. His eyes strayed upwards to a corner of wall for an instant. Owen followed his line of sight. A small camera was mounted in the corner, discreetly tucked away so that it would only be seen by someone who was looking for it.

Owen wondered who might be watching through the camera.

The sound of a gong disturbed his train of thought. Every conversation in the room came to an abrupt halt. The figure of the butler, who was responsible for ringing the gong, stood in the doorway.

"Gentlemen, if you could now proceed to the inner chambers."

One-by-one the assembled bank employees shuffled out through the door opposite that by which Owen had entered the room. Owen watched them filing out with an uncertain look on his face.

"What's going on?" he whispered to O'Neill.

"If you want to back out, now's your last chance," O'Neill whispered back. "If you want to back out after you go through those doors, you'll find your career effectively over. You'll be passed over every time a promotion is available. If you resign, you won't find another job; if you don't quit, you'll be given the most degrading jobs until you do."

"I'm not sure I like the sound of that."

"Those are only precautions to ensure that no one betrays the sanctity of the inner circle. As long as you don't reveal what happens in there, then none of that will apply. If, on the other hand, you go through, you'll find that the bank looks very favourably upon you."

"Do you think I should go through?"

O'Neill glanced up at the camera which he knew was monitoring them. It was only a quick glance, but it betrayed

his true thoughts. For a second, just a fleeting moment, Owen could read the fear in those eyes.

"Yes."

O'Neill spoke the last word with determination, suggesting to Owen that the price for not going through with whatever it was that awaited him would be too much to pay. Owen began to tremble slightly, wondering what it was that scared O'Neill so much. Looking into his eyes, Owen could see that O'Neill was willing him to say yes, almost begging him.

"Okay," Owen heard himself saying. "Shall we go in?"

As they walked through the door, Owen began to feel as if he was on the verge of selling his soul to the Devil. Surely nothing else could have provoked such raw terror in O'Neill?

God, Ethics and the Futurists of Tomorrow

by Dr. Richard Kirby

First in a series of articles profiling leaders in the international Religious-Futurist movement, and their achievements in futurist thought

Richard J. Spady, Seattle, USA, and the Forum Foundation: Tomorrow's Citizenship and Democracy Today.

The Futurist world has always had its visionaries, from H. G. Wells onwards, and many of these far-sighted people have been concerned about ethical and moral issues, not just in the future of humanity, but in the study of the future. Olaf Stapledon, author of 'Star

Maker' and 'Last and First Men' in the 1930s, was actually a professional ethicist or moral philosopher. His Ph. D. thesis at the University of Liverpool, after the First World War, was later published as 'A Modern Theory of Ethics' in 1928. Yet this quiet moral theorist became the supreme science fiction writer according to Arthur C. Clarke and Brian W. Aldiss. Stapledon's 1948 talk to the British Interplanetary Society, entitled 'Interplanetary Man?', still makes fascinating reading as it depicts the galactic community of worlds - and their moral-anthropological grounding in ethical, philosophical and religious thought. Like Jacob Bronowski, the scientist famous for his 'Ascent of Man', these thinkers understood that 'Science is the world of what is. Ethics is the world of what ought to be ... (There are people) in love with the aristocracy of the intellect. That is a belief which can only destroy the civilization that we know. If we are anything, we must be a democracy of the intellect. We must not perish by the distance between people and government, between people and power.' (The Ascent of Man (1973), p.435).

Wells, Stapledon and Clarke, like their American counterparts Toffler, Naisbitt and Sagan, were/are deep thinkers about the direction of human life and the evolution of society, culture and civilization. Like many religious or prophetic figures, they were asking a question similar to that posed by today's 'Religious Futurists:

Has Society Reached its Peak of Development, from which Decline is Inevitable, or is Civilization a Political Process Just Beginning?

DICK SPADY of Seattle was the 1993 recipient of the EARL Award, given annually by the World Network of Religious Futurists to the Outstanding Religious Futurist of the Year. He is a moral leader, one of only three people to have won this prestigious award. With the well known futurist and educator Parker Rossman (1992) and the late Professor Earl Brewer (1991, after whom the EARL was named), Dick forms a select group in the Religious Futurists' Hall of Fame. The EARL Award recipients are three religious leaders recognized by their peers as prophetic figures who do not so much foretell as forthtell.

He sits with dignity, his white hair still showing flair and energy. He stands somewhat above average height, sturdy, vigorous, every inch a leader. A committed family man, his sons, his daughters-in-law, his nephew are part of his flourishing business world. His work as a religious futurist has grown out of ordinary living, even if that has been unusually successful. His lack of pretension is an expression of that unassuming, true humility which has always distinguished the true religious leader from the self appointed egoist.

He is a patriarch whose authority is lightly held and profoundly shared, for he builds his life around the thesis that governors lead effectively only

with the consent of the governed.

Dick Spady has an invitation to his futurist colleagues everywhere, but especially in the USA - and most particularly the members of the World Future Society. His rallying cry is 'Tomorrow's Citizenship Today'. He is looking actively to identify the Citizens of Tomorrow and the Businesses of the Future, but he wants to do it today. He believes they exist today. He wants to find, to connect, to nourish, the futurist leaders who are building tomorrow's society today. His favourite topic for futures research is social innovation.

The businesses of tomorrow, 21st century commerce, breakthrough in economics, entrepreneurial thinking for futurism - this is Spady's song. He may be the only Rotarian to have had an active listing in Futures Research. (His classification when he joined was as a Management Consultant.) He is an ardent visionary. He feels we are on the verge of a spiritual breakthrough, helped by fundamental research in social science. A lay leader of the United Methodist Church, he was on the volunteer staff of the Church Council of Greater Seattle from 1971 until 1990. His portfolio was futures research. He defined this not as forecasting, but as the search for ways to influence the sociological and technological future. He was awarded a 'Computer Pioneer' award by UCom of the United Methodist Church. As the twentieth century draws to an end, and the third millennium and twenty-first century ap-

proaches, futurists around the world will be grateful to Richard J. Spady, for he is emerging as a new leader in the field of ethics and the future.

The death in June 1993 of Earl Brewer, founding father of the religious futures field, president of the World Network of Religious Futurists and stalwart member of the World Future Society, left a vacuum in this field. Earl Brewer cannot be replaced, but Dick Spady's rise to eminence in the field gives hope to those scholars concerned about the moral future of society and civilization. Like Brewer, Spady is a long-standing contributor to the futurist scene and the World Future Society in particular. He has been active in the Society since the early 1970s. At seventy-one years of age, Spady can look back on forty years of success in his businesses in Seattle, where his five 'Dick's Drive-In' Restaurants are local legends. He also has a moral passion for the enhancement of the democratic process all over the world. He drives a sporty car with the license plate FORUM, and this typifies the man. For he is the founder and head of the Forum Foundation.

The Forum Foundation is a non-profit research organization founded in 1970 in Seattle. It grew out of Dick Spady's struggles, along with other members of the Seattle District Board of Laity of The United Methodist Church, to find a way to improve their decision-making. Often they had to make decisions in meetings of two or three hundred people. They had tried the

standard large meeting tools, but none of these methods seemed to satisfy their needs. As a member of that group, Spady, who was Seattle District Lay Leader, was so frustrated by this that he continues, more than twenty-five years later, to perfect a method for easing communication, participation and decision-making. Spady named this method the Fast Forum® technique.

The first prototypes of the Fast Forum® technique emerged between 1965 and 1968. New facets have continued to emerge in the ensuing decades, including the use of computer-assisted models.

The Forum Foundation has been inspired by the work of Dr. Cecil H. Bell, Jr., now Chair of the Department of Management and Organization at the University of Washington's School of Business Administration. Spady and Bell are writing a couple of books on new horizons in Administrative Theory; their goal is to study new ways to encourage democracy in the workplace through increased participation and better communication. The Forum Foundation also benefited from the support of the late Dr. Stuart C. Dodd, Professor-Emeritus of Sociology, and former director of the University of Washington's Public Opinion Laboratory. Dr. Dodd served as a director of the Foundation and strongly influenced its research until his death in 1975. Spady remembers Dodd as a genius, and to honour his legacy he is creating a Stuart C. Dodd Chair in Social Innovation in the Forum Foundation. Spady is also sup-

porting the formation of a Research Centre for the World Network of Religious Futurists: his goal is to bring together all the change-agents in the field of Religion and the Future, a field made academically respectable by the late Professor Earl D. C. Brewer in his courses at Emory University, Atlanta.

The Religious Futurists, like the human race, are on the move - Spady is one of those leading the way. These leaders of thought, who are sometimes also captains of industry (large or small), don't think of religion as primarily concerned with judgment, but with creativity. They see religion itself as a subject with a dynamic future. They see ethics, the world of what ought to be, as an arena for ecstasy, and the moral life as the fulfilment of business, not its enemy. God, they say, is leading everyone - even futurists - into an unknown but wonderful future. To the '3 Ps' of Futurist thought (Probable, Possible, Preferable) they have added a fourth: Prayerful, or Ideal Futures. These thinkers are people who deal in the Ideal; it is their home. They believe God, the sum and source of all ideals, is leading futurists, in every sense, to the ideal future. All we have to do is to look for it, by listening to our highest intuitions and to each other. Ethics is a subject with a great future, even in futurism. It's like a party open to everyone; it's the new forum for innovation. Social innovation is the new field for ethical visions, visions of a civilization which works for everyone. This is the

message of Dick Spady, latest leader of those futurists who harmonize faith with futurist studies.

Values and moral psychology/sociology/philosophy/theology are, it seems, horizons of human endeavour which can be as exciting as the Mars Mission which NASA longs for. Goodness remains the high frontier of humanity. To adapt Henry David Thoreau's conclusion to his famous 'Walden', 'The sun is but a morning star. There is more goodness yet to come.' A new era of partnership between ethics and futurism is beginning. With it may come the civilization of tomorrow, where citizenship and non-divisive spirituality are once again unified. H. G. Wells wrote in 1902, 'All this world is heavy with the promise of greater things, and a day will come, one day in the unending succession of days, when beings who are now latent in our thoughts and hidden in our loins, shall laugh and reach out their hands amidst the stars.'

Richard Kirby is Chief Executive Officer of the World Network of Religious Futurists. With the late Earl D. C. Brewer, he is author of 'The Temples of Tomorrow'.

Computer Networks and Christians 1995.

by Ted Bell

For several years a group of Christians in London have been planning for, and trying to implement, a network of Christians connected by com-

puters. This idea was given the name Petronet, after the Apostle Peter, whom Jesus said was to become a fisher of men.

The media have recently been making quite a fuss about the emerging information super-highway. It may not be clear to everyone what it is, and why there is so much interest. It is a vast global network of computers and information, to which many companies sell access. There is already a substantial group of people around the world using international computer networks both for E-mail, (electronic mail) and for access to text-based information sources.

Do you know, for instance, that you can easily send a text-based message to the White House? Whether or not they read it and respond is another matter. You can also ask the Library of Congress for details of almost any book in print. You can obtain information from encyclopaedias and dictionaries, most of which are American, all for the price of a local call. You can also get into discussions with research centres such as CERN or Palo Alto. Caution is advisable when using the networks, as you can get your mail box filled with junk E-mail if you say the wrong things to the wrong people.

There are of course service-provider fees to consider. These depend on the type of service you opt for and who provides it. The faster the service access and the more direct the connection the more it costs. Connections in Britain start from as little as £10

(US\$16) a month to upwards of £10,000 (\$16,000) per year.

Currently there are two main global networks into which anyone can enter. All that is required is a suitable computer, a modem, and access rights, with associated software. CompuServe is probably the best known to the everyday user of computers. It is principally used by computer buffs as a forum for typed discussions - either live, or in the form of a bulletin board of articles to which anyone in the forum can respond. They also provide libraries of information and software. CompuServe can be joined by anyone who can pay the fees and has the right equipment. Users are charged by the hour, and also pay a monthly connection charge. Basic services are free to users in the USA, but there is a communication surcharge for non US users during peak hours.

The Internet is far more serious, and new members can get into difficulty if they don't treat it with some caution. One of the ways people show displeasure on the Internet is by flaming an individual or organisation. This means overloading their mailing address with rubbish, which can create an enormous headache, especially if you cannot determine who you have upset or why. Recently two lawyers in the US thought it would be a good idea to advertise on the Internet. They posted messages offering their wares in as many places as they could, and sure enough they did get a lot of new business. Unfortunately they upset so many people on

the net that their service provider was forced to withdraw their access, because the large volume of hate mail generated caused chaos at both the service provider and the telephone company.

The Internet is used by many professional organisations and individuals. Universities use it to have on-line discussions with other universities, and US government agencies, including the military, make use of it all the time. My own company uses it to pass data to overseas branches, as the cost is effectively just a local call charge. Ideally any potential user would want to pay only a monthly service charge. This allows unlimited usage. There are also, however, start up charges. It must, of course, be said that Telecommunications companies, many of whom charge for local calls, will almost certainly make a handsome profit from telephone usage unless the user can arrange his own tied line. A tied line, unfortunately, can cost a cool £1000 (\$1600) to install, plus large annual rental fees.

The reason that big Telecommunications companies are interested in the global highway is that they can charge people for access, much as they charge for their current telephone networks. Fortunately there are a number of routes onto the global highway. These include direct tied lines, cable network providers and smaller phone companies. They, however, see their main profit base coming not so much from the cables in the street as from service provi-

sion, which is the only way most end-users can get access to the net. At present the current providers offer traffic access to other service providers free and vice versa. If large corporations are to make the profits they would like, they will eventually want to charge for all calls coming into and going out from their service.

Petronet is intended to act as a service provider on the Internet. We hope it will have a permanent tied line. This will allow people all around the world to call us day or night via the Internet and not only send and receive mail but access files, send pictures and drawings and enable live on line discussions. People all over the world are already getting onto networks in large numbers. The cable television providers putting cables in many streets are already able to offer digital telephone equipment (ISDN). The surge of interest in this media is self-evident. Businesses are also waking up to the advantage of real time contact with customers and service industries all around the world. The day will soon come when the developers call their architects via networks for on-line video conferences, calling in the structural and services consultants as the need arises. Companies who don't invest in the beginning will lose out to those who have.

What do we need to get Petronet working today? We need a number of potential users, people with computers and modems who can dial up our service and join the electronic mail revolution. We need

enough finance to provide the initial start up and a year or more line rental. Once we have a number of subscribers their rental of our service will form the funding for future years.

Why should we have a Christian presence on the Internet? At the moment many things that happen on it are at best misguided and at worst positively evil. How do I support these statements? Just look at some of the names involved. Demon (formerly Daemon) UK is one of the largest and cheapest service providers, way ahead of Petronet. My account with the PC User Group was set up by a piece of software called Witchcraft. The Internet provides a number of highly questionable newsgroups, particularly those in the alt.sex.... category. A young person with access to the Internet, bent on a hedonistic life style could surf (browse) the Internet for hours, skipping school, homework and basic human one to one interaction.