

Improving the World with New Religions or No Religion

Our country and the world need new religions or no religion. The teachings of Jesus, Buddha, and Krishna show us how to be happy and wise as individuals, but they are not concerned about improving the social, political, and ecological aspects of this world. If we cannot create religions that value bettering this world of time and space, then perhaps we need to become spiritual but not religious. We need religions that see all creation as sacred and interconnected.

The monotheistic religions Judaism, Christianity, and Islam focus on appeasing a personal God, who is believed to be infinitely loving, all-powerful, and all-knowing. They are religions that have a lot of outdated rules and pre-scientific beliefs that were progressively developed from a tribal society about 3,500 years ago.

Conservative Christians believe that Jesus was born of a virgin, that he was the second person in a trinity, that he was literally raised from the dead, and that he will someday return to establish his kingdom on earth after the violent cosmic battle of Armageddon when Satan is bound forever. Many of these theological beliefs were developed by the Church decades, even centuries, after the time that Jesus was said to have lived. Most [Bible scholars](#) who study the Bible scientifically--not just devotionally--do not literally accept these beliefs.

Influenced more by ideas rather than events, Hinduism and Buddhism are more non-historical religions that focus on the Perennial Philosophy that says at the core of our being there is spiritual state of boundless love, joy, and creativity that we can attain through meditation and other spiritual disciplines--after we transcend the ego with all of its self-centeredness, selfishness, and pride. However, in Eastern religions,

the world of time, space, and causation is considered less real, even an illusion, in comparison to this exalted state of oneness--when one discovers the true Self or whatever one might call it. For example, Buddhists say there is no Self, but words or concepts cannot comprehend this mystical state of oneness, which is beyond thinking, beyond subject-object duality.

Yoga and Zen and mindfulness meditation may all be very popular right now, which is mostly a good thing, but where is the focus on responsible citizenship, ecology, and the present state of the world in the lives of these people when they focus so much of their time on their own inner states of consciousness? Yes, it's true, we cannot have outer peace if we don't have inner peace, but if the world is destroyed through a nuclear holocaust, through the stupidity of world leaders, meditation won't be very helpful at that point.

There is much good in the self-help movement. There are elements of truth in the teachings of the Law of Attraction, the New Thought movement, Cognitive Therapy, and Positive Psychology because our habitual thoughts create our character and ultimately our destiny, so it is important that we pay close attention to our daily self-talk and affirm that which can heal our psyche and relationships. However, what might be beneficial for particular individuals may not be good for the community or the planet. For example, some people don't have any qualms about using mind control techniques to accumulate extravagant material wealth. What we must realize instead is that the highest expression of individual achievement is that which promotes the common good.

It is good that there are now an increasing number of seminars, teachers, and books that delve into the subjects of anti-aging, holistic

health, alternative medicine, metaphysics, near-death experiences, and the science of consciousness. But, alas, where are the discussions and concerns in the lives of these people about the fact that our leaders are giving tax breaks to the super rich and cutting programs for the needy? Where are the discussions and concerns that about 54 percent of our nation's discretionary budget each year is spent on the [military](#)?

We are creating our own catastrophic demise if enough people do not awaken--not just spiritually, but politically too. Do people just think "being spiritual" will take care of all the world's social, political, and ecological problems, or do they think that such exorbitant military spending is necessary for our security, or do they just feel helpless and hopeless about changing government?

In the Bible being worldly, or of the world, implies being under the influence of Satan who tempts us to frequently have lustful cravings and false pride in our achievements and possessions. Lustful cravings and false pride are also discouraged in Eastern thought, but they are considered to be Maya, or an illusion, not the true reality. In Eastern thought, the allurements and attractions of the world create attachments which cover or disguise the Absolute Reality, Truth, or Self.

With meditation, we can learn to stop identifying with or detach from these allurements and attractions that ultimately create suffering or dissatisfaction with life. In Eastern philosophy evil exists not because of Satan, but because of misguided choices in this life or a previous lifetime. The central teaching in yoga philosophy is that our true nature is divine, but we are unaware of this divinity because we falsely identify with our body, mind, and the objects of the world.

In Buddhism, contrary to popular belief, the suppression of all desires is not encouraged. Desires (for food, sex, peace, and knowledge, for example) are part of life. However, when those desires are tainted by craving and grasping, that is when they cause suffering. Moreover, people swayed by the dominant culture in our society are enticed by a materialistic worldview and lifestyle that do not create genuine happiness or peace in the world.

Jesus taught that we should renounce worldliness. Jesus said his kingdom is not of this world, and that the kingdom of heaven is within you. Yoga's transpersonal psychology can lead us to an expanded consciousness when the firm identity that we struggled so long to build up is dismantled piece by piece. But though these teachings may be important for our spiritual growth, they do not focus on improving the world or building better communities, and that is how our new religions must be different.

Mohandas Gandhi was a Hindu. Martin Luther King, Jr. was a Baptist, and Dorothy Day was a Catholic, yet they integrated their religions with compassionate political action. The earth is being devastated, and we have a responsibility to be wise stewards of it. If peace on earth can become our highest priority, it will become a reality.

We can garner meaning from paradoxical spiritual principles such as "to gain freedom in the world, we have to renounce our attachments to the world," and "we must deny ourselves in order to find ourselves." The emphasis on compassion and sacrifice is found in all the major world religions. Thus, we can take the best from all the major world religions, but in our new religions we must fully understand history and science; we must make sustainable plans for future generations; we must deeply

care about the people who will live here in this world when we are gone.

Therefore, we need religions that are also political, and political parties that are also spiritual. The definition of spirituality must include the healing of self, society, the world, and the earth. It is better to be spiritual and not religious than to be religious without being spiritual. By taxing churches, instead of allowing them to be tax-exempt, it will give them the freedom to become political in an explicit way. The spiritual and political are inseparable. Our religious and spiritual beliefs affect our politics and vice versa. The goods and services we choose to buy or not buy have political implications, and they are a reflection of our spiritual values. Readers are encouraged to watch (parts 1 & 2) of the documentary ["Money, Happiness, and Eternal Life--Greed."](#)

When we, at moments, can transcend the ego and renounce the world, we don't get extremely angry and upset when things don't work out according to our preferences, or when others don't do as we think they should. Whenever we can see ourselves as we really are objectively, without judgment, we can gain insight. We can begin to love all, including ourselves, with a sense of calm detachment. We can do our best without being attached to how the results turn out because we know the source of our joy always comes from within, not based on external outcomes. In the law of love, the more we give the more we have. When we help others, we not only make the world a better place, but we help ourselves as a byproduct.

We need healthy egos to function in the world, but when we grow up and become mature adults, we need fewer ego defense mechanisms because we are no longer trying to protect a narrowly-defined self image. As we grow, our identity can become inclusive of the needs of

other people and other sentient beings all over the world. As we make spiraling circles up the mountain of life, our view becomes more encompassing, our understanding becomes more comprehensive, as we near the top.

Both the cause-effect world of time and space and that of the timeless, mystical state of oneness are real and important. A foretaste of the mystical state may seem like directly experiencing the eternal love of God, but no one knows if it is really God being experienced because many things in this world we cannot know with absolute certainty. It may be that God or the Supreme Absolute is only as good and holy as our conceptions of it can be. It is a comforting thought to think that this world may be a school and we are all on a heroic journey to return back to the Source, which we in our essence are part of. It may be that each of us is an important piece of the puzzle of life, and we give our unique gifts when we become self-actualized.

In contemplation we can think deeply and honestly about our current lives in relationship to the world. We can ask ourselves, how do I feel, and what are my true intentions or motivations in this moment, and how can I make the world better? When we are in the silence and stillness of meditation, we take a temporary break from our normal, habitual, sequential thinking process. Contemplation and meditation are equally important.

In moments of silence, or from a mere nonverbal glance of another person, or just being in the presence of a very spiritual person--there can be much healing and insight. It is okay to pray, even if no one may be listening: It can help us express our deepest longing for divine assistance and comfort when it seems there is nothing else we can do. And if concert piano or pipe organ music in a church, for example, can

make us weep when a feeling of love, majesty, and holiness is ignited within us that too can infuse the soul with healing.

Inspired by the book [*Conversations with God*](#), *Book 4: Awaken the Species* by Neale Donald Walsch, Jeff Street, a guest writer for www.Wakeup-world.com wrote a summary of that discussion in an article called “10 Characteristics of Highly Evolved Beings.” The 10 characteristics without the explanations are:

- 1.They deeply understand the unity of all life and live congruently.
- 2.They always tell the truth.
- 3.They always do what they say.
- 4.They always do what works.
- 5.They never kill each other.
- 6.They never damage their environment.
- 7.They share everything with everyone; there is no ownership.
- 8.They work together cooperatively; there is no competition.
- 9.They do not embrace the principles of justice and punishment.
- 10.They do not believe in or experience lack.

(At the bottom of the article, there is a 5-minute video interview of Neale Donald Walsch; Jeff Street has a website called divine-cosmos.net where [this article](#) first appeared.)

In Jeff Street’s article he states, “Highly evolved beings, and the civilizations that they create, embrace principles and ways of being that create highly beneficial outcomes for all.” Neale Donald Walsch’s book may be a very good book to read. However, it appears to be another book that will guide spiritual-but-not-political individuals into making ‘The Shift’ from egotism to a transpersonal state of higher consciousness. Yes, it will be a wonderful day when more people can do this. But my contention is that the transformation of society will not be

complete until we become political activists who change the outer structures of government in very specific ways. We are not going to transform the military-industrial-congressional- complex, the CIA, and the wealthiest one percent merely by generating love in their directions! In another article at my website entitled “Improving the World with Maximum Democracy,” I show specific ways that we can change the government to create an ideal democratic society.

Again it should be emphasized that the truly spiritual-but-not-political individuals are very beneficial to our society. But all of the yogis, swamis, zen masters, and saints will have to become political to be fully self-actualized. They will have to start working to achieve peace on earth and not just the inner peace that passes all understanding. We may not see our ideal vision of peace and justice manifested in the outer world in our lifetimes, but if we find inner peace and share it daily, we are still making the world a better place.

When we look at the starry heavens and ask the perennial questions, the sense of mystery, awe, and wonder that we appreciate is a reminder that there is more that we don't know than what we know. Our current religions have focused on saving souls. Now we need to also focus on building community, saving the world, and restoring ecological balance to the earth.

Roger Copple is 67 years old. He retired in 2010 from teaching general elementary, mostly 3rd grade, and also middle and high school special education in Indianapolis. He is especially interested in political theory, world history, and U.S. foreign policy. After being preoccupied with Christianity, the Bhagavad Gita, Yoga, and Buddhist meditation almost all of his life--Roger now believes that stopping U.S. imperialism is the

most spiritual and ethical thing he can do. He is a vegan for health, ethical, and environmental reasons.

Roger grew up in the subculture of the United Pentecostal Church and remembers going to church four times a week and fearing that he might go to Hell because the Rapture of the Church was imminent, and he was not “saved” with the necessary evidence of “speaking in tongues.” His parents have always voted Republican. Roger’s biological father passed away in 1986, and Roger remembers how his father believed that if JFK had become President, he would compel everyone to become a Roman Catholic. Roger currently lives in the Tampa Bay area, and his fiancée is from Ukraine. Roger is very glad that he began questioning all religious and political authority when he started college. Roger’s website: www.NowSaveTheWorld.com