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Seasons for Peace and Nonviolence
Omni-local Initiatives
Presented at (Your Center Here) • (Date)

We are the ones we have been waiting for...

SLIDE 1

The New Thought movement is taking leadership in demonstrating that spiritually-guided activism can support concerned and informed citizens in their emerging role as community leaders motivated to become agents of social change. The unique contribution of this new breed of evolutionary leaders is that it feels called not just to formulate, but to **activate here and now**, its renewed commitment to deeply held ethics, values, and principles.

“We are the ones we have been waiting for,” as the Hopi elders say. Many of us have heard that wonderful phrase enough times now that we think we get it. But I have to take time every day to consciously *live in that thought*... take just a moment right now and do that with me...

“We are the ones we have been waiting for.”

We are entering the Age of what Barbara Marx Hubbard’s partner, Sidney Lanier, calls the “Sovereign Human”—the awakened human being who is “radically free and infinitely responsible.”

As individuals like all of us in this room tonight, multiplied in communities everywhere around the world, choose to engage in serious interfaith appreciation, *we will find ourselves in the midst of a more enlightened society because we have insisted on creating it.*

Gandhi pointed out that it is not just the right, but the *responsibility* of the spiritually motivated citizen to actively demonstrate his or her personal responsibility toward a higher level of compassionate dialogue. Because, until our elected leaders understand the fundamental interconnectedness of the global family, there will be no lasting peace in the world.

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<p>From Personal to Global Spirituality</p> <p>SLIDE 2</p>	<p>Teasdale Quote</p> <p>"Humanity stands at a crossroads between horror and hope.</p> <p>In choosing hope, we must seed a new consciousness, a radically fresh approach to life drawing its inspiration from perennial spiritual and moral insights, intuition and experience.</p> <p>We call this new awareness Inter-spiritual, implying not the homogenization of religion, but the recovering of the shared mystic heart beating in the center of the world's deepest spiritual traditions."</p> <p style="text-align: right;">~ Bro. Wayne Teasdale, from <u>The Mystic Heart</u></p>
<p>Breaking the Project of Peace into bite-size parts</p>	<p>Interfaith and Intercultural Understanding is a Big Idea ... Metaphor: Balinese music</p> <p>Beautiful music of Bali generated by a community of people. Each person receives the assignment of only 2 notes that they play through the course of the event ... often throughout the entire night. Each person only knows who they follow. They listen for that person's two notes and when they hear them, they play their two notes. Beyond that simple structure, there is only a director – someone who keeps time and directs the volume of the music. Many elements are brought together to create the whole. What is most interesting is that no one even knows the whole song, AND beautiful music is created with only two notes.</p> <p>What if we, in this community, were to organize our two notes and another two notes and another two notes in such a way that we were able to bring a unified voice to some of the issues facing humanity today? As we commemorate the anniversary of September 11th, one of these issues could be weaving peace among Christians, Muslims, and Jews comprising the family of Abraham.</p>
<p>Omni Local IS Global</p> <p>SLIDE 3</p>	<p>Abraham's footsteps, laid upon the earth some 4,000 years ago, re-inspires us to experience the <i>spirit</i> of Abraham. His values of faith, hospitality, and respect remind us that no matter what divides us, that which unites us is greater still.</p> <p>In response to the query, "Mr. Campbell, the world is falling apart, what can be done?" Joseph Campbell replied, "Go out and meet a stranger. Learn their stories, their culture, their language. Understand their humanity. Make a friend. That will save the world."</p>

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	<p>Might this be the very same answer we are seeking in our own communities all across the planet? The "challenge" in the Middle East is not exclusively confined to the Middle East nor is it impersonally "global." Abraham's three billion descendents are scattered in every community throughout the world. <i>Omni-local IS global.</i></p>
<p>Abraham as a common spiritual ancestor. Is there an opportunity today to heal ancient wounds among Christian, Muslim and Jew through our common connection?</p> <p>SLIDE 4-5-6</p>	<p>SLIDE 4</p> <p>“Walking ‘in Abraham's footsteps’ we learn to value concretely the demands of an authentically faithful attitude... Aware of their own inseparable ties with the ancient people of the Covenant, Christians recognize Abraham as "Father in Faith" par excellence, and they are happy to imitate his example by walking "in his footsteps."</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Pope John Paul II</i></p> <p>SLIDE 5</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>"We quarrel, we agree, we are friendly, we are not friendly, but we have no right to dictate, through irresponsible action or narrow-mindedness, the future of our children and their children's children."</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>King Hussein of Jordan</i></p> <p>SLIDE 6</p> <p><i>“Abraham is like a vast underground aquifer that stretches from Mesopotamia to the Nile, from Jerusalem to Mecca, from Kandahar to Kansas City. He's an ever-present, ever-flowing stream that represents the basic desire all people have to form a union with God."</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Bruce Feiler, Author, <u>Walking the Bible</u></p>
<p>Call to Action</p> <p>What am I willing to give and to give up so my children have a more peaceful future?</p> <p>Omni-local Awareness Campaign</p>	<p>One of the clearest emerging visions in New Thought these days is a comprehensive education and awareness campaign centered on the understanding of, and respect for the different faiths. The Association for Global New Thought, through its Season for Interfaith Intercultural celebration, is stewarding this vision by providing resources for community dialogue and ‘Interfaith Walks’ whereby “omni-local” grassroots teams comprised of people from all faiths and cultures will jointly create events and activities that exemplify new models for</p>

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<p>SLIDE 7</p>	<p>appreciation, celebration, and reconciliation. Some have already, and will continue to organize walks from churches to mosques to synagogues, as part of their efforts. The local walks are undertaken in a context of deep study and dialogue focused on the complex religious, political, economic and humanitarian issues that underpin the seemingly intractable strife embedded in the region, itself, as well as the social tensions shared by 3 billion adherents of Abrahamic faith worldwide.</p> <p>These days there are many groups dedicated to bringing peace in the Holy Land. The omni-local dimension of the Interfaith Initiative seeks to broaden the conceptual field of this endeavor by affirming not only respect toward other ways of practice and devotion, but also demonstrating the <i>awakening toward oneness</i> bursting through individuals in all faith traditions. Many are familiar with the concept of interfaith relationships; far fewer have been prepared for living in spiritual unity – respecting the unique identity of the different faiths while experiencing a deep sense of the common, ineffable ground beyond all. Our dear friend, the late Brother Wayne Teasdale, was fond of naming this notion, “interspiritual.”</p> <p>Nowhere is this situation more apparent than in the Middle East. The guidelines signaling interspiritual experience are emerging in “real-time” as global citizens awaken to this sense of “mysticism reflected outward” in their own individual being.</p>
<p>What stands to be gained?</p>	<p>An attitude of respect and humility is prerequisite to the vision, values, ground rules, and intentions that guide and govern this process. While it would be premature to say that the purpose of our interfaith activities is conflict resolution, our intention is to come into deeper relationship as a sacred family. As people of faith, we affirm that through prayer, healing, forgiveness, compassion and understanding, the creation of a shared vision is possible. However, we fear that this goal is beyond our reach constrained to the context of politics and militarism.</p>
<p>What questions are we asking?</p> <p>SLIDE 8</p>	<p>The omni-local interfaithfaith dialogue, itself, could provide a foundation from which religious leaders and congregants can address core questions, revealing a new story beneath the conflict that continues to dismantle the respective lands, liberties, and lifestyles of people regardless of their faith.</p> <p><u>The Interreligious Dialogue: Questions of Religious and Cultural Identity</u></p> <p>1) How do those of us whose social and moral choices are</p>

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	<p>based on belief systems that other cultures or religions may not share remain open to different positions without losing our core sense of identity?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2) How can we keep our shared personal values alive in conversations when we are speaking to the fears and attachments of our religious and secular institutions? 3) How can religious institutions and secular leadership interact more productively to reduce violence and promote human rights and economic equity? 4) How can the <i>spiritual</i> wisdom of the great Abrahamic religions be made available to their counterparts, while continuing to be engaged in the legitimate <i>pragmatic</i> concerns of all human beings in the region? 5) What is the role of western and global communities, both within and outside the Abrahamic traditions, in promoting productive views that support reconciliation and healing outside the region with regard to these faith-based issues? 6) How can a higher level of dialogue be encouraged among religious and interreligious organizations, and political and military bodies?
<p>Questions</p> <p>SLIDE 9</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) What factors do we already know, and what are those we can imagine, that can transform the devastating psychological and spiritual aftermaths of wars and violence into reconciliation and forgiveness? 2) How do we become people of peace / of nonviolence? 3) How do we transform the negative within?
<p>How Do We Participate?</p> <p>SLIDE 10</p>	<p>In local communities – walks from Mosques, to Synagogues, to Churches</p> <p>Holding events and conversations on Abraham as a unifying figure</p> <p>Forming sister city relationships with communities along the Path</p>
<p>Prayer</p> <p>SLIDE 11</p>	<p><i>We, Muslims, Christians, and Jews,</i> children of Abraham from around the world, together with friends of other faiths, invite you to hold a heartfelt prayer for the emergence of reconciliation in the Middle East and communities worldwide, following in the footsteps of our common forefather Abraham</p>

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<p>Jimmy Carter</p> <p>SLIDE 12</p>	<p>“It would indeed, be a dramatic demonstration of brotherhood if religious leaders and lay persons could join in retracing the route of their common ancestor, Abraham.”</p>
<p>Conclusion:</p> <p>SLIDE 13</p> <p>“My feet are praying...”</p> <p>SLIDE 14</p>	<p>What is a pilgrimage?</p> <p>The difference between a journey and a pilgrimage is this: on a journey, reaching the goal means success; a pilgrimage is successful only when each step becomes the goal.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">— Brother David Steindl-Rast</p> <p>As pilgrims we leave behind what is already known; we let go of our agendas and expectations and walk forth into the desert attending to the heart as our guide for the journey. This extraordinary opportunity for a silent pilgrimage at the midpoint of the conference offers those who embrace it a turning point, a threshold opening upon inner vistas of possibility. To embody our inspiration we walk in prayer, becoming the prayer itself. And as we walk, the prayer prays us, and changes us—one conscious step at a time. When Rabbi Abraham Heschel walked with Dr. Martin Luther King in Selma he said, “My feet are praying.” In this morning pilgrimage, we will pray with our feet as we open ourselves fully to being instruments of peace in our awakening world.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">– Rabbi Abraham Heschel</p>
<p>Follow-up</p> <p>SLIDE 15</p>	<p>We’ll be passing out contact sheets for those interested in meeting again on this project.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>For more information contact Dr. Barbara E. Fields, Executive Director, Association for Global New Thought (AGNT) at info@agnt.org</p>