A Virtual Table of Faiths
Tuesday, September 23, 2021
6:30 – 7:30pm

In 2020, the world moved online, and while we are all eagerly awaiting the progress that recent medical advances are bringing to fruition, we are still dealing with the real-world consequences of a global pandemic. Because of this the Greater Kansas City Interfaith Council is happy to announce that for the first time in its 32-year history, we are hosting a Virtual Table of Faiths on Thursday, September 23rd from 6:30-7:30 pm, entitled “From the Front Lines: Spirituality in Times of Crisis.”

The focus of Table of Faiths is to be found in people of different faiths sharing their experiences. This year, we will highlight how spirituality has helped us meet life’s challenges, novel and familiar alike. Participants will take a virtual pilgrimage through diverse religious teachings and experiences which have helped us cope, adapt, and support one another in myriad ways.

The Greater Kansas City Interfaith Council is happy to announce that for the first time in its 32-year history, we are hosting a Virtual Table of Faiths on Thursday, September 23rd from 6:30-7:30 pm, entitled “From the Front Lines: Spirituality in Times of Crisis.”

We will honor community members and organizations that have excelled in exemplifying the values espoused by the Council. We will also recognize healthcare chaplains, first responders, and many others who have played such a critical role in our lives over the past many months.

Uniquely for this year, to enhance the experience of our virtual program in a safe and meaningful way, ticketed participants will be provided an event package, which will include an event keepsake, snacks, and items from different faiths specifically designed to augment the digital broadcast.

We are aware that the past year has been filled with numerous events reincarnating as digital presentations, and that for some this is a disappointment. Indeed, it could be easy enough to allow another digital program to fade into the background. However, as we seek to continually know and be known, the work of the Council is continuing in the most responsible way possible, and it will be important to Council directors, advisors, supporters, and well-wishers to help us make this event a success.

Registration is now open for individuals and organizations alike. We are offering numerous opportunities for various forms of partnerships and sponsorships in relation to the event. Visit our website, www.kcinterfaith.org/2021-table-of-faiths for more details and help us spread the word. Supporting Table of Faiths is a key way to support the Greater Kansas City Interfaith Council in living out its mission and vision.

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Imagine the most magnificent and lush flower garden your eyes have ever witnessed. Blooms of every color grace the landscape. Each blossom is breathtaking, but the melding of stunning colors creates the ambience of being in paradise.

The same is true with the many faith traditions that have sprung up since the beginning of time. Each one brings its followers to experience the divine in a unique and meaningful way. Collectively, they form a brilliant tapestry that speaks of the many ways that people through the ages have sought and found God. This mosaic of spiritualities has paved the way allowing the opportunity for seekers to experience a glimpse of the heavenly realm.

The Catholic Church, the faith perspective that I came form, has encouraged interfaith dialogue for decades. Nostra Aetate (In Our Time), the Second Vatican Council’s Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions stands as a landmark in interfaith relations. This document brought new direction and understanding to the Church’s position on the promotion of dialogue and reconciliation with other faith traditions.

Many Church documents have been published since the Second Vatican Council promoting the value of exposing ourselves to diverse faiths. For example, in the apostolic exhortation, Evangelii Nuntiandi, (Evangelization in the Modern World) Pope Paul VI asserts, “The Church respects and esteems these non-Christian religions because they are the living expression of the soul of vast groups of people. They carry within them the echo of thousands of years of searching for God.”

Growing in an understanding of diverse faiths fortifies a sense of unity among people. This pursuit promotes peace and respect among the various cultures of the world contributing to the building up of society at large. Throughout his papacy, Pope Francis has championed interfaith discourse as a means to achieve peace and conflict resolution among cultures. The common thread that connects each of the pope’s many foreign trips has been interfaith dialogue, in particular his outreach to Muslims.

The impetus behind interfaith exploration is not for the sake of conversion. In matter of fact, learning the treasures offered in other cultures has the propensity to strengthen one’s appreciation for their own faith. As a Catholic, I have discovered attendance at Mass to be a far more mystical experience as the result of delving into the spiritual riches offered in other faiths. Learning about the contemplative gems found in other traditions enhances a felt-sense of the divine presence as I engage in my own spiritual practices.

Each faith tradition offers unique wisdom to a discussion about the spiritual life. In the words of The Chaplaincy Institute, “We honor the term ‘Interfaith’ as a vision and theology that embraces the universal truths in the world’s spiritual traditions and honors the beautiful diversity in human experience, along with our essential unity...” By honoring the diversity in creation and human experience, along with our essential unity, Interfaith practitioners affirm the Divine that is too big to be contained solely within any one religion, word, or context.

Brother Wayne Teasdale, a Catholic monk, introduced the term, “InterSpiritual,” in his 1999 book The Mystic Heart: Discovering a Universal Spirituality in the World’s Religions. This concept transcends specific religious tenets and embraces shared spiritual truths on a deeper level. Many are nourished by the wisdom offered by many faiths or mystical traditions without one religion they call home.

Kurt Johnson, an associate of Teasdale, points out that the concept of interspirituality was not born with Teasdale’s insightful book. Over fifty historical spiritual figures have spoken of this paradigm including the Spanish Catholic priest, Raimon Panikkar, and the American Trappist monk, Thomas Merton.

In her writings, Mirabai Starr, an interspiritual author and professor, highlights the sacred gems of various faith traditions as she leads her audience into a realm where the divine presence is palpable. I find her books and presentations to be extremely moving as she leads us on a path where diverse traditions complement and enhance one another.

The Buddhist scholar, Edward Bastian, eloquently comments on the value of embarking on an interspiritual journey: Just as travelers to foreign lands return to see more clearly their own homelands, our InterSpiritual journeys into other traditions helps us to discern the refined nuances and gems of our own tradition as if for the first time. By travelling awhile in other contemplative traditions, our own meditations become the vehicle for universal wisdom and kinship with people of all traditions. This is equally true for people without a tradition. For these practices awake the divine potential dormant within their hearts and minds.

I hope that your exploration of the riches found in the tapestry of interspirituality will support your contemplative walk and deepen your spiritual practices on this journey.

Kathy Keary is a Spiritual Director with Precious Blood Renewal Center in Liberty, MO. She holds a Master’s degree in Theological Studies and is a graduate of the Atchison Benedictine’s Sophia Center’s Souljourners Program.
The festival of Vesak is one of the most important holidays celebrated by Buddhists all over the world. Known as Vesak in the Theravada Buddhist tradition or Saga Dawa, in the Tibetan Buddhist tradition. It is celebrated on the full moon in the month of Vesakha which occurs during the Spring months in the Western calendar. This year’s festival of Vesak will be on Wednesday, May 26th.

The festival of Vesak commemorates the Buddha’s birth in Lumbini, the enlightenment of the Buddha at Bodhgaya, and the anniversary of the Buddha’s parinirvana (passing away) in Kushinagara. Some Buddhist traditions also commemorate the Buddha’s enlightenment during Bodhi Day. This year’s Bodhi Day is December 8th.

In Tibet, Saga Dawa is known as the month of merits. Tibetan Buddhists believe that during this month, the merits of one’s actions are multiplied. On the 15th day of the month, the merits of one’s actions are exponentially increased. Buddhists from all traditions celebrate Vesak by focussing on performing meritorious actions during the day.

Many Buddhist will go to their local temples to make offerings, such as incense, flowers, food, or money. Buddhist will also attend Dharma teachings or will attend devotional ceremonies focused on the Buddha’s life and his historical deeds. Tibetan Buddhists will often hang traditional prayer flags from balconies or trees. You will also find Buddhist making circumambulations or processions around temples, monasteries, shrines, or other sacred sites.

The festival of Vesak is not just a historical commemoration of the Buddha’s birth, enlightenment, and parinirvana; it is a reminder of the necessity, and of the opportunity, for each person to achieve their own enlightenment. This year with Covid restrictions still in place, you will find many of the celebrations and events online. You can find out more about the Rime Buddhist Center’s Saga Dawa event online by visiting, www.rimecenter.org/events/saga-dawa-duchen-online-puja/.

Buddhist Celebration of Vesak
by Lama Matt Rice

As an introvert, my sense of community isn’t often defined by being around actual people. I often find my greatest sense of belonging through works of art. Art, as a verb, is a way and means of connecting around a piece of work that usually points toward representing where we are disconnected. It has always been a reflection of the human condition, with its beauty, madness and triumph. One of my favorite forms of art are films. Oscar season has always been a time of enjoyment for me annually.

I love acting. I love writing. I love fashion. I love art. Every year, I watch every single nominated film, in every category. Every year, I come across some truly great films that most people have never heard of or will ever bother to see. They have within them epic representations of what it means to live on this planet, in this country.

This year, I’ve had the pleasure of watching the nominations from the comfort of my home, an introvert’s dream! Plus, the late date of the Oscars this season allows more time to get all the viewing in. I did not expect this year to produce anything that special. For the last few years, I have been underwhelmed, except for a few gems. Much to my delight, 2020 produced some of the best films and acting I’ve ever seen.

This year really belongs to the women From the acting to the writing and groundbreaking directing, I am overwhelmed with the honest, unapologetic and raw creativity alive in the women presented in the nominations. It is refreshing to see such a transformation in representation in just one year. Voices, that are usually kept from the mainstream, are coming out into the light and having a means of expression. This is why I never question the transformative nature of art.

When you are able to see life through the eyes of someone you could never be, the movies become a source of translation for the lives that receive them. We learn new languages of living.

This year, I was able to walk with a daring woman hellbent on avenging the death of her friend in Promising Young Woman. I learned more about the history of the Black Panthers in Judas and the Black Messiah. And once again, I was reminded of the healing power of the American Southwest in Nomadland. Three very different ways of life, attempting to define the results of living in America.

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The movies have always been about teaching me about the lives of others, rather than just entertainment. This year, I can honestly say they are poetry in motion. Stories from the American landscape of humanity are endless. I’m glad to see we are finally tackling the consequences of our country.

Art can help to show and extend images, color and motion to translate the depths of experience. I can only hope the audience is ready to listen this year. It’s been one of the best in American cinema. It can only serve to teach me about the lives of others, rather than just entertainment. This teaching me about the lives of others, the sacred dream for a creation released from bondage to tribalism, hate, wealth, power and patriarchy.

In that row of booths I felt both an awkwardness of unknowing and yet a deeper calling to know and be known so that we might walk this road together.

INTERFAITH VOICES

Rev. Michael L. Stephens
Council Director, Protestant Christianity
Pastor of Southwood United Church of Christ

Before I joined the Interfaith Council, my first encounter with this group came at a Table of Faiths. This was back when all of the booths were in a large hallway outside of the banquet room where dinner would be served. I was in absolute awe when I saw table after table representing a vast array of pathways into the sacred. And all of these people lived and worked and dreamed right here in the Kansas City area!

I rejoiced in the diversity and devotion. I flinched at the recognition that many of these same people had experienced exclusion or rejection in this city we love. The Protestant Christian tradition of my youth that had often claimed to be the only way to salvation or an experience of God, had moved into more open expressions of Protestantism which delight in the many religions of the world that all add to our experience of God and the universal sacred dream for a creation released from bondage to tribalism, hate, wealth, power and patriarchy.

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Susan Nakao
Council At-Large Director, Sukyo Mahikari

My husband, Fujio (Koji) Nakao was serving as a disciple, a full-time staff, and seminar lecturer for Sukyo Mahikari since 1980. We married in 1986 and had the good fortune to serve in Sukyo Mahikari Centers in Cincinnati, Chicago, Detroit, Honolulu, and Orange County, California for the next 15 years. However, in 2002, he was assigned to a large center in Singapore and due to my parents, who were in their senior years and experiencing a few health issues, we decided that our best path was for me to stay here in the U.S. and would do my best to open a center in Kansas.

I returned to my hometown of Fredonia, Kansas to be near my parents and at that time was the only Sukyo Mahikari member in the entire state of Kansas. My life was drastically different than it had been when I was serving each day as an assistant staff member in many centers with attendance ranging from 30 to 60 people a day. I had the sense that I was very alone and after a few months I felt discouraged, but continued to do my best to be of service to God and others as much as possible.

Sometime later, my mother, a faithful subscriber to the Kansas City Star, read an article about the Table of Faiths, which was sponsored by the Greater Kansas City Interfaith Council, and was to be held only a few days later in Kansas City at a large hotel. The theme for the luncheon was “Sacred Art from the World Faiths.” My Ph.D. was in Art Education and my heart was in the sacred achieved through God’s Light and Universal Principals embraced at the heart of interfaith relations.

Though I didn’t have a job or a car at that time, my mother said that if I could register for the Table of Faiths, she would loan me her car and pay my registration for that event. It was a 2.5 hour drive to Kansas City, but I really wanted to attend. I called and talked to the chair of the council and was told to please come and I could register on that day.

As I drove to the event, I was so excited, thinking that I might meet at least 30 or perhaps even 50 people who were interested in interfaith work and also in sacred art. When I arrived at the registration desk, I was so happy to be included. Picking up my program and other information, I entered the huge meeting room and was astounded to find more than 500 people in attendance. I had participated in several interfaith programs when we had been in Orange County, CA, but there had never been more than 75 people in attendance. I was so surprised to see the number of attendees and instantly felt that there was, indeed, hope for the world. The program was wonderful. I made a few friends, and about one year later moved to Lawrence, KS where I started participating each month in the council meetings.

A couple of years later, I moved to Overland Park, continued in attending the meetings, and was approved as an “At-

Want to learn more about Sukyo Mahikari? This new book offers simple yet profound practices and principles of Sukyo Mahikari that allow people of all faiths to become instruments of divine peace by giving and receiving God’s True Light in an inspired, disciplined practice of pure benevolence.

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large" Director on the council. Five years ago, my husband was assigned to start a Sukyo Mahikari Center in Kansas and we have been serving God together on a small farm between Lawrence and Kansas City since then. We both love being a part of the Greater Kansas City Interfaith Council and feel that this organization has a vital role to play in the future as the Great Divine Plan of God unfolds, passing through this "Period of Creation" in the next few months and years.

Linda Prugh  
Council Director, Vedanta

In the Fall of 2005, when the Greater Kansas City Interfaith Council first thought of having a Table of Faiths luncheon, the council was taking a big chance. It had originally planned just a small luncheon somewhere in the center of the city. We had thought we would invite church leaders from all over the area and maybe they would bring some of their members, and there might be 50 people there. Then a good friend of the Council, Gayle Krigel, came and gave us a pep talk that changed everything. She said that her idea was to promote the event to at least 7,000 citizens all over the metro area, and count on possibly 300 attending.

She said to the council, “Sometimes you just have to believe something is possible and take a chance!” Then she opened her home near the Plaza to us, and for three weekends, two dozen of us stuffed envelopes. That was a nice experience in itself. One day I was working next to a rabbi, and as we stuffed envelopes and visited, he realized that he had played basketball with my husband for many years in the Jewish League.

That first year, the Table of Faiths luncheon venue was the Muehlbach Hotel, downtown, and the attendance was an incredible 650. I remember that at my table there were several faiths represented, which was very gratifying. But the real thrill came when Mayor Kay Barnes presented the council’s first Table of Faiths Award to Dr. Vern Barnet for his leadership in founding the council back in 1989. For 17 years he had worked so hard to bring people of different faiths together, to work for the common purpose of establishing respect among different faiths.

When those 650 people at our luncheon stood, representing at least 15 faiths, and applauded Dr. Barnet, you could feel the electricity! At the close of the program, the children’s choir from St. Monica’s Catholic church came from the back of the hall singing “Peace Begins with Me.” As they moved up to the dais, they held out their little hands and took a number of adults up to the stage with them. Everybody in the room stood, sang, and applauded at the same time. I then remembered Gayle Krigel’s pep talk, and mentally thanked her for encouraging us to move forward, believe something is possible, and take a chance.

Cindy McDavitt  
Council Chair and At-Large Director, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

I am a lifelong member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. My ancestors joined the Church in the first 10 years of the Church’s history. Our members are often referred to as “Mormon,” but more correctly should be called “Latter-day Saints.”

There was a time in the frontier history of the state of Missouri when the Latter-day Saints, including some of my ancestors, were sorely persecuted here in the greater Kansas City area. In fact, in 1838, Governor Lilburn Boggs issued Missouri Executive Order 44, commonly called “the extermination order,” stating that “the Mormons must be treated as enemies, and must be exterminated or driven from the State.”

Our people fled the state and were welcomed as refugees by the citizens of Quincy, IL, who opened their homes and hearts to the hundreds of desperate, homeless families, regardless of their beliefs. After settling just north of there and in less than 10 years building the beautiful city of Nauvoo, Illinois, our prophet, Joseph Smith, and his brother Hyrum, were murdered by a mob. Once again, we were driven out.

Mayor Kay Barnes presents the first Table of Faiths Award to Dr. Vern Barnet.

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In 1846-47, we made the long trek to the Salt Lake Valley where the Church was firmly established and is still headquartered today. Over the intervening years, our members slowly began to return to Missouri, and today, over 35,000 Latter-day Saints reside in the greater Kansas City area. It was not until 1976, that Governor Boggs’ executive order was officially rescinded by Governor Christopher Bond.

This really happened – right here in Missouri, and we cannot let this kind of thing happen again. We, each of us, need to eliminate our own prejudices and work to ensure that persecution never happens again to anyone or any group because of their ethnicity, their faith or their life philosophy. We need to be like the people of Quincy who welcomed the outcast refugees and cared for them.

This is the core value of interfaith – caring for our neighbors, helping those in need, learning about and appreciating others’ beliefs, and bringing God’s children together in unity and love. A scripture from my own faith teaches us to become “Of One Heart.” I think about that beautiful concept and pray and yearn for its fulfillment in our own community.

E Pluribus Unum – Out of Many, One

by Saaliha Khan, Bridge Builder

Just, peaceful, joyful, grateful, inclusive, diverse, equitable, pluralistic, empathetic, compassionate, loving, welcoming, accepting, caring, understanding, respectful, connected, open-minded, and genuinely curious about others.

How would you like to envision our country to be for generations to come? The words above include some of the responses from participants who attended an event I organized in partnership with the Interfaith Youth Core (IFYC). This description is aligned with America’s motto of E Pluribus Unum.

Though “Out of many, one” may be the country’s motto, much remains to be actualized to make it a reality. One ought to reflect on how we may become united despite our differences and divisions across lines of color, creed, and class. I believe the answer lies in what Eboo Patel, Founder and President of the IFYC, deems “expanding the circle” – which is what each of us are called to do at this moment, given the COVID-19 pandemic, economic recession, and the racial justice uprising.

Patel urges us to be “radical in our relationships” and become bridge builders to advance the intersectional, interfaith movement for justice in our communities. This is the kind of work I seek to do in the communities I am rooted in. Whether I am based in Los Angeles, Washington DC, or Kansas City, I remain committed to building bridges of mutual respect and understanding among people of different backgrounds. As part of the call to action, I urged the thirty participants who joined us for We Are Each Other’s… A Conversation on Faith and Racial Justice, to translate their own faith and convictions into action by working for peace, equity, and justice in our communities.

Eboo Patel reminds us that our country is not a melting pot; instead, it is a potluck – in which each member has something unique to offer. One of the ways to make E Pluribus Unum – Out of Many, One a reality for our nation today and tomorrow is to work on challenging ourselves to get comfortable with the uncomfortable, expand our circles, build radically compassionate relationships, share our interfaith racial justice stories with one another, and continue to come together to build a more racially just society for all.

Saaliha Khan is a passionate bridge builder who seeks to bring people together to foster transformative change. Since 2010, she has experience in facilitating interfaith dialogue initiatives and community-building programs. Saaliha has worked with non-profit organizations in education, healthcare, and politics to advance racial, economic, and social justice through community organizing and advocacy.

Saaliha is an Angeleno Muslim who resides in the Kansas City area with her husband, where she currently teaches Arabic to high schoolers. She studied Arabic, government, and justice and peace studies at Georgetown University and completed her Master’s in Public Policy & Management at Carnegie Mellon University. You can connect with her on Twitter @SaalihaKhan, and Facebook and Instagram @SaalihaK.
Joshua Paszkiewicz (Dr.) recently hired to serve as the Council’s Executive Director, has manufactured an interesting resume prior to this post. A follower of the Zen Buddhist path he has participated as a priest and spiritual director in that area and served in a variety of religious and sectarian organizations. He has worked as a prayer associate with Unity in their 24 hour telephone prayer ministry, Silent Unity; and as Membership Coordinator and clinical chaplain in healthcare for All Souls Unitarian Universalist Church. He has also been the Faith Relations director for Habitat for Humanity. Josh has also worked developing theological education programs and initiatives that have taken him around the world prior to his work here in Kansas City as a pastoral minister.

We asked Dr. Paszkiewicz a number of questions about his personal history, and his ideas and goals for the council.

Q: What goals do you have for the council and how would you like it to change during your time here?

A: Answer: I think the council should develop a dedicated physical space to serve as a hub for its business and meetings as well as hosting and curating an archive of our religious and interfaith histories. This would serve as an incubator for many interfaith partnerships and may serve our community in new ways of being and working together for the overall benefit of our community. There are many ways for us to “be” together in our digital world and I believe it can be done beyond the dreaming stage.

The council needs to work intentionally and develop new ways as have been revealed in our recent strategic planning process. Our structure and governance processes see us as a “welcoming community” to all faiths and people. This has to be done through knowing and nurturing all the different religious demographics and the landscapes that we face. We are a diverse city and we must be truthful and responsible in the face of it. Also, I think the council needs to simplify our governing documents (rules). We could then use them to provide several, valid levels of faith representation and participation for corporate leadership and very importantly, for lay membership. All of this of course is up to our directors. I am an advisor as are our community advisors.

Q: In your view, how important is interfaith work and what could it mean to the future?

A: The value of interfaith work is hard to define. We, the council, find ourselves witness to a nearly global-wide culture war pitting secularism against fundamentalism. Especially here in the West, secularism has flourished rendering religion all but irrelevant to the many.

We have to oppose discrimination, educate to counter oppression and facilitate communication across boundaries. It is simply encouraging faiths to communicate with each other. I think we eventually will be helping people to expand their views of spiritual experience, values, and symbols. It is important that the religious experience become available to the religious and the non religious alike. The wisdom of the past is a path to the future, a view of the good to overcome the conflict of the present.

Q: If there is one thing you could personally accomplish above all else, what would it be?

A: 7th Grade teacher required us to memorize a poem. It was written anonymously. It reads as follows:

What is success?
To laugh often and much;
To win the respect of intelligent people
and the affection of children;
To earn the appreciation of honest critics
and endure the betrayal of false friends;
To appreciate beauty;
To find the best in others;
To leave the world a bit better, whether
by a healthy child, a garden patch or a
redeemed social condition;
To know even one life has breathed easier
because you have lived; This is to have succeeded.

I have long viewed all of my varied endeavors in life and relationships through the truths outlined in these impactful lines of text. I think about the varied experiences I have had with the council over 10 years, in varied roles, including as Executive Director, I think that poem is as important to our work as it has been in my life. I do want to accomplish those aims and come back to them if we lose our way and aspire to loftier aspirations with or without the right intentions.

Q: What is the most memorable thing that has ever happened to you or experienced in your career?

A: Whenever I’m asked a question like this a number of experiences immediately come to mind, from being ordained in a Buddhist temple just blocks off the Las Vegas strip or, the conversations I have had on flights to and from Vegas were comedic gold, based on my itinerary for a weekend versus those of most every other passenger, to bailing water out of a stalled coconut barge on a river in southern Vietnam to keep myself and two others aloft. I have had on flights to and from Vegas were comedic gold, based on my itinerary for a weekend versus those of most every other passenger, to bailing water out of a stalled coconut barge on a river in southern Vietnam to keep myself and two others aloft.

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elderly nuns afloat and en route to our destination, to serving as a delegate to the first Buddhist Leader’s Conference hosted by the White House in Washington DC. Today, however, the memory that is most outstanding for me pertains to a meeting I was part of, as a member of a small delegation of spiritual scholars with the then first female chairperson of the Bank of India.

To make a long story short, after having spent several months in the thatched roof ashrams of West Bengal, the novelty of being a western mendicant had thoroughly worn off me. I was inspired to create some considerable alarm as the chairperson of the aforementioned bank was offering dandvat pranam (a very reverent form of full-body, ground prostration) to myself and a preeminent guru when I performed the same floor-level prostration back toward her. Strictly speaking this is not something such clergy in India would ever offer their followers, and certainly a male person would not bow in such a manner toward a female. However, I was largely outside of those structures, and had an opportunity to make a point to my colleagues, companions, and onlookers.

This experience was only premeditated on an unconscious level for me, but by the time of its occurrence I had come to realize what was happening. I decided to double down, and allow the cross-cultural experiences and values that were very much alive in me to shine through, clarifying for me and everyone else in that moment exactly what those values were. I cannot in all Buddhist humility say I was proud of myself in that moment but only that my teacher might have nodded approval but not let ME see his approval.

Q: If there was one thing you would like NOT to happen, in the short-term or long-term, what would that be?

A: That society not lose the wisdom that religion has discovered, developed and maintained for so many, many years and for so many people. My prayer is that those things worthy of persisting in our religious or spiritual experience might win out and not fall prey to casual fashion. I would say: we must carefully and wisely engage our present terrain (condition), so as to continue as faithful and adequate stewards the work we have taken up to carry forward.