

Generative Love Healing and Wholeness

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Abstract

This article is part of a larger work in progress on the explicit and implicit *Images of God* in the life, talks and writings of Dom Bede Griffiths. Here, the author focuses on Griffiths' notion of God as out-pouring, generative love. It focuses on Griffiths' insistence that love is relationship leading to the depth of the Godhead as communion in love. It also outlines his views on human healing and restoration to wholeness, sensuality, sexuality, integration and unity. The paper was originally presented at the 2007 Conference of *The Association of Practical Theology in Oceania* [Editor]

Introduction to the Theme

With the image of God as 'out-pouring generative love' I examine how meditative-contemplative experience and insight in the Vedic and Christian traditions find lines of coherence in Griffiths' life and teaching. One can describe a process of growth that derives from insight into multiplicity and unity on the horizon of infinity.

The paper describes the interstitial space symbolised by *samdhya*, the meeting of the lights. It is dawn the silent time of promise, and sunset the silent time of recollection of what has been.

Between life and death, good and bad, light and dark it is the healing space. It is appropriate to begin with the *Gayatri Mantra* translated as an invitation to meditate on the glorious splendour of that divine giver of life that this One may illuminate our minds:

*Om bhur bhuva svah
Tat savitur varenyam
Bhargo devasya dhimahi
Dhiyo yo nah prachodayat.*

The healing space is represented in this article by the Eucharist, ashrams, the heart of contemplative prayer, cosmic religions, a Sufi safe-house, the 'realised human being' and my

garden, with mention of the journey which is a progressive development. Healing here is more in terms of an inner reality and movement into wholeness.

I found a particular point that is inspiring in the Vedic, 'Tat tvam asi' which Griffiths translates as 'Thou art that' and Panikkar differently as 'That art Thou'. Griffiths' emphasises the experience of union; 'Thou art that', leading to 'Aham Brahman', 'I am Brahman' still has to avoid an interpretation of complete simple identification. For Panikkar these words which are spoken to the disciple Svetaketu (ultimately symbolic of humanity) show Atman, Braman, 'That' as the subject in the demonstrative and therefore the deep meaning is that Svetaketu is a 'Thou'. Everyone is – you are - the 'Thou' of God's 'I'.¹

Griffiths gives as 'the supreme example of Christian *gnosis*' St Paul's Letter to the Ephesians:

I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth takes its name. I pray that according to the riches of his glory, he may grant that you be strengthened in your inner being with power through his Spirit, and that Christ may dwell in your hearts in faith, as you are being rooted and grounded in love. I pray that you may have the power to comprehend with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. (Eph. 4:9 NRSV)

With this Christ the *pleroma* of God, Griffiths compares both the Tibetan *dzogchen* teaching where the Buddha nature is realized - that 'Primordial State' of realisation of everything 'contained in perfect wholeness, fullness and bliss', and the Hindu tradition of *Satcitananda*, (being, consciousness, bliss). This is the divine knowledge, in Buddhism, *prajna*, in *Upanisadic* terms, *jnana*, in Greek, *gnosis*. In *dzogchen* there is no sense of leaving the world behind so-to-speak. All aspects are 'integrated in the supreme wisdom...the being of nature

round you, the being of your body, of your psyche and all its capacities...all gathered into unity in the one supreme reality'. Like contemplation in Christian tradition, realisation of the Supreme Reality in *dzogchen* comes as a grace. It is this way too in forms of Hinduism.² This experience of 'the one supreme reality' also introduces into the soul detachment and equanimity, the 'holy indifference' of St Ignatius Loyola.³



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Both *dzogchen* and Christian contemplation convey the experience of 'presence'. At the end of his life Griffiths kept this 'presence of God' that he experienced in meditation, with him throughout the activities of the day with the assistance of 'the Jesus prayer'.⁴ He describes this as the emergence of love in the depths of one's being, a presence which is love, a presence which heals.⁵

As *Sannyasi*, Bede Griffiths' took the name Dayananda – the Bliss of Compassion. The universal call to contemplation encompasses the potential to heal the divisions of the world and the resultant suffering for which he was profoundly concerned. We can extend his image influenced as it is by Eastern religious forms by demonstrating how deeply eucharistic it is.

Outpouring Generative-Love and Healing

Griffiths points out how the Incarnation signifies a restoration of absolute unity. '(T)he Word descends into the depth of the material universe raising up the whole order of nature and

initiating that process of ascent through the worlds of sense, imagination and intellect by which we are led back to God.’⁶ The union of the whole person is completed through grace. In the ‘mystery of the economy of grace’, all of humankind is united through Christ in one Body, to form the City of God.⁷ Describing the integration of sensual and spiritual, (which he understands also in Paulian terms – the integration of the body/*soma*, soul or mind/ *psychikos*/ and spiritual/*pneuma*), Griffiths quotes Julian of Norwich:

God is nearer to us than our own soul, for he is the ground in whom our soul standeth, and he is the mean that keepeth the substance and the sensuality together so that they shall never dispart... And anent our substance and our sensuality they may rightly be called our soul, and that is because of the oneing that they have in God... For in the time that God knitted to him our body in the maiden’s womb, he took our sensual soul, in which oneing he was perfect man. For Christ having knit in him every man that shall be saved is perfect Man.⁸

Eucharist, Life-giving symbol of Love

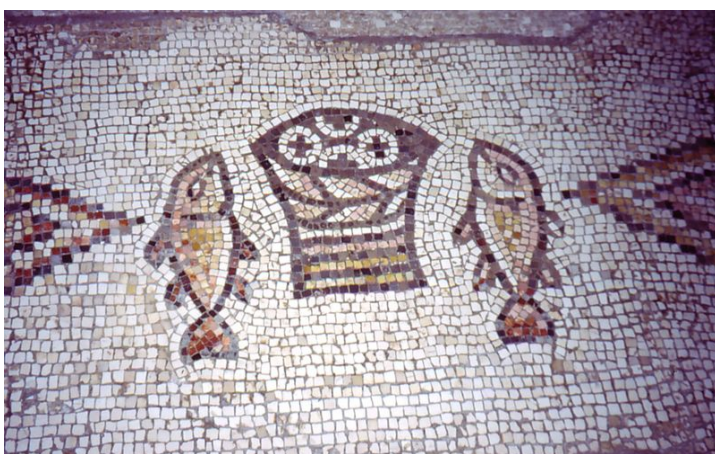


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The Mass is ‘very central’ in Griffiths’ religious experience.⁹

The Eucharist is pivotal in Christian tradition for the restoration of all things in God, for the experience of reintegration and personal and universal health and

wholeness. It is the risen Christ to whom we are united. In communion we are drawn up as the body of Christ¹⁰ into the life of the Trinity.¹¹ In Aquinas’ terms, the reality, *res*, is present under the sign, the *sacramentum*, of bread and wine. Celebration of Eucharist takes us ‘into the depth of the Godhead and to that (divine) communion of love’.¹²

At the same time, ‘the whole of creation is a symbol of God, a sign in which the Divine Reality has manifested itself...each individual form (within the infinite multiplicity of forms) has its own value.’ To explain that the ‘whole mystery of God is present’ in each particular image, Griffiths quotes William Blake:

To see the world in a grain of sand
And heaven in a wild flower,
To hold infinity in the palm of the hand,
And eternity in an hour.

This has a direct bearing on the way Eucharist was celebrated at Shantivanam for which more detail is later included.

The efficacy of the Eucharist, Griffiths says depends on our own conscious receptivity to what is taking place – the transformation of the whole person....with a continual growth and strengthening of the spiritual body present in each one.¹³ Consciousness, ‘present in matter from the very beginning’, is evolving as a ‘world process’ so that we can speak of different levels of consciousness which have an organising principle.¹⁴ This transformation of matter ‘by Spirit...into a spiritual reality’¹⁵ is movement into unity which is a healing of divisions. Not only is a human being a microcosm of the universe, but ‘all of the energies in the universe are interrelated and interdependent’¹⁶. As we are transformed in the Eucharist, gradually being built into the mystical body of Christ, so too the whole of creation is undergoing transformation.¹⁷ This is a movement towards the Eschaton, the final end of ‘all world processes’ when ‘everybody is taken up into the Spiritual’ or into the state of ‘*satcitananda*’.

What we perceive as ‘a gradual emergence’ in time and space is however a manifestation of the reality which is ‘the ultimate state NOW’. To enter through the Eucharist into the death and resurrection of Jesus, into his sacrifice, is ‘the way ... humanity is set free from ...sin...all these

energies which hold us back...'.so that 'we are opened up to the divine life and the divine consciousness and we enter into the divine bliss.' This is 'the one Christ embracing the whole of redeemed humanity in himself, making all one in him in this total wholeness'.¹⁸

Shantivanam - Model of a Healing Place

To assist such depth of understanding, Griffiths introduced to Shantivanam, Forest of Peace, Indian rituals and chants, and readings from the treasures of divine wisdom of different religious traditions. There is the sacred *Om*. This is a mantra deep at the heart of reality, the primordial word, embracing all things. Prayed and sung at the beginning and end of all prayer, its significance is essentially sacramental. At the start of Mass,¹⁹ there is the 'beautiful' *arati*, when 'the offering of light in the dark heart of the temple' is then taken out and shared round to the worshippers. Worshippers report the experience as one of psychological and spiritual healing.²⁰ With out-stretched hands they receive the light and warmth bringing it close in a symbolic gesture to their minds, receiving as it were, the divine love and illumination. At the Preparation of the Gifts, there is a ritual which acknowledges the interdependency of the whole universe; eight flowers signifying the eight points of the compass/universe, are brought and the priest takes one at a time, touches it to his heart and places it with the offerings. There is also the offering of the four elements with the bread and wine, water, earth, air and fire to represent the cosmic sacrifice.

For Western visitors to the Ashram,²¹ differences included simplicity of general attire, style and surroundings and the intimacy of the gatherings. The village people who felt a sense of

ownership towards the ashram attended regularly. All together this was for many people conducive to the experience of intimate fellowship and God's loving presence.

The Simple life as a Means of Transcendence

Transformative experience in the Eucharist as in other forms of prayer, and also in self-less service of others,²² is consummate on transcendence of the ego. Griffiths believed Shantivanam to be a destination for visitors that afforded an experience of the asceticism of simple life lived in community.

To 'go beyond' the ego, the *ahamkara* or 'I-maker' that is 'the basis of the 'personality' the external self which works through senses and reason', enables a realisation of communion with one another and all creation.²³ It is a means of overcoming the fear and anger prevalent in society in our times.²⁴ Griffiths hoped that the simplicity of life at Shantivanam Ashram, the purpose of which is 'to create a centre where (right) values can be lived', could be replicated in other small communities throughout the world. He found support in Karl Rahner in his emphasis that every human being has the capacity for self-transcendence.²⁵ For Griffiths the task is 'precisely to allow the tradition to grow, and to be open to all the new insights which are offered to us'²⁶. It is for this reason that an ashram and similar small communities can be 'a leaven, inconspicuous, feeble, but essential...called to bear witness to the mystery of Christ, hidden in the heart.'²⁷

He understands the calling of the core monastic group in the ashram is to 'awaken' others to 'this mystery' at the heart of the Silence.²⁸ The special characteristic of the ashram that allows a

unique freedom for this kind of witness is its non-judicial status. Griffiths differentiates it from a religious community, in that it does not belong to the hierarchical or sacramental church but is rather ‘a community called to transcend the sacramental order...An ashram is a lay community of men and women, married or single, centred on prayer and meditation.’ It follows the example of Jesus in John’s Gospel who says, ‘I have no authority of myself’.²⁹

In the ascetical simplicity of Shantivanam Ashram Griffiths is in search of a ‘more balanced



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spirituality’, neither ‘rejecting the world nor indulging the senses’...a ‘middle path’ as the ways of Buddha and Benedict and of St Anthony of the Desert.³⁰

So there was no heavy labour for visitors to Shantivanam.³¹

The local village people were paid to work there. The manual activity for the day expected of visitors was a very simple procedure that involved a group focus on preparation of vegetables for meals.

A Universal Capacity for Transcendence

Griffiths admits that the capacity of every human being for self-transcendence, is expressed in the love of beauty, in art, poetry, literature, architecture and so on. At Shantivanam, (as also at Kurisumala), the surroundings are beautified by flowering plants. Bougainvillia falls in magnificent cascades at Kurisumala, a backdrop to well tended, luscious roses and dahlias; at Shantivanam, tall palms cast a fretted shade on the broad swaying banana leaves and cool cement

paths which connect living quarters, dining hall, recreation spaces and library to the central chapel.

Outspokenly critical of modern architecture divorced from natural surroundings, Griffiths considered it ugly and soul-destroying.³² At Shantivanam, great care was taken to ensure the buildings harmonised with the natural surroundings. The disintegration or damage that occurs subconsciously through incessant contact with bleak, harsh and discordant surroundings can often only be recognised when there is a refreshing experience of the reverse.

Consequently, he was also very critical of the expansion of cities, not only Calcutta, with its population then of 30 million people, but similar great centres in the West. He believed Schumacher's³³ vision in the seventies to be the ideal - small centres which most constructively employed people's different abilities without introducing deleterious modern stratagems based on profit and progress. He notes that while Schumacher's proposed system of 'Intermediate Technology' is particularly meaningful for developing countries it is also highly significant for all nations in terms of humane working conditions.

Significantly Schumacher, who was Economic Advisor of the National Coal Board in England, wrote that '...clear-eyed objectivity...cannot be achieved and prudence³⁴ cannot be perfected except by an attitude of "silent contemplation" of reality, during which the egocentric interests of man are at least temporarily silenced.'³⁵

Return to the Feminine

In the return to the subject, Griffiths recognised a new openness towards the feminine principle. It is this principle in particular towards which he gravitated in his journey to ‘find the other half of (his) soul’ and that he considered would provide the necessary balance for the world overall. He insisted it was vital for the church if it was to continue to be the embodiment of Christ’s saving mission.³⁶

Griffiths speaks of the challenge for the Church today to move ‘from being western to being a Church for the world.’³⁷ In India, it is not to Christ but ‘Christianity, or as they sometimes say ‘Churchianity’ they object.’ In post-Colonial India Christianity is identified with material power.³⁸ A Church for the world would represent an other power, the gift of the Holy Spirit who comes through Jesus from the Father as communion, that is, forming community centred on *koinonia*. Jesus’ communication of the Holy Spirit is ‘the essence of the (eternal) church’ (as distinct from the historical institution). In his concern to transcend divisions and to achieve unity³⁹ Griffiths advises a return to the patriarchates of the early church in communion with a Rome which would be ‘a point of reference’.⁴⁰

The Holy Spirit both in Vedic terms and in Christian earlier traditional language forms is feminine gender while the final avenue to contemplation is appropriately the intuitive mind, the *yin*. Even though the *yin* and the *yang* of Taoist wisdom, *prakriti* and *purusa* of Vedic tradition, and the intuitive and rational mind or right and left brain, as understood in the West are complementary principles, there are developmental stages when one or other is paramount. Today, Griffiths insists an emphasis on the feminine is vital. The sense seems to be that it is in

particular the feminine principle, a deep receptivity, that comes into play for integration, that can achieve a balance within diversity.⁴¹

Response to the Universal Call to Contemplation



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While Christians pray to Jesus, the divine reality is ‘known to others under different names and forms’.⁴² Contemplative prayer, opening the mind and heart to God demands self-surrender.⁴³ This is

the self-surrender which is a death, a reflection of Jesus’ surrender in death and which leads to the kind of freedom from the law that is preached by St Paul. Giving up the ego or separated self is a movement into unconditional love, the life of the Spirit where mercy is the supreme authority.⁴⁴ It is ‘simply surrender in love...(with)...Jesus (as) the model for us all’ but ‘it is open to everybody...in all religions and ...outside all religions.’⁴⁵ As the inner spirit of the eternal church this is the ideal to constantly strive for. It is also ‘the hope of the future of the world’.⁴⁶

A way of life ‘that is ‘open to all, married or single, men and women, even children’ is the Benedictine ideal which Griffiths proposes as the means to happiness and peace in the world. It is a vision which ‘integrates normal human life, human companionship, work, service and prayer in a whole’. The Benedictine religious vows, which aim to set a person free from self-centredness, can be applied to ordinary life: the vow of poverty is intended for freedom from desire of possessions; the vow of chastity from the desire of the senses; the vow of obedience

from the desire to be a separate self; the vow of conversion – a turning to God in the heart; the vow of stability – a stabilising of the attitude of the mind. These are the means for transcendence of the ego and the way to contemplation.⁴⁷

This is the way the world is being called that would signal a new stage of consciousness, another step in universal maturation of humankind, a further movement into wholeness.

On the same grounds Shantivanam which was a mixed community where all were welcome was almost the model he preferred; ‘almost’ because the sisters had actually to live in their monastery across the road. One elderly Benedictine Sister who had lived most of her religious life there, confided a sense of deprivation in that female visitors on the other hand, could share in the communal living.⁴⁸ Coming to terms with the body, the senses and sexuality is also part of the way of contemplation.

The Place of the Body

The *Vedas*, *Upanisads* and *Bhagavad Gita*, have just as strong a patriarchal basis as Christianity in the West. Traditionally this is expressed in extreme practices of asceticism which deny the body and matter generally. In contrast, ancient cultures which were wholly agrarian, or which understood the earth as Mother, like the aboriginal, were matriarchal. Griffiths understands the integration of these two different approaches as vital for the future of the world.

He abandoned the Yogic method which despises the body and material world as purely *maya*, for the tantric ritual which he understands as deriving from an ancient Shamanism. ‘It emerges in

the third century as a correct(ive)'....⁴⁹ He describes a particular form of tantric yoga, *kundalini*, as being a positive means of transforming bodily energies, in contrast to repression or suppression⁵⁰. The energies are enabled to 'flow' through centres of energy or *chakras* so that the person achieves integration with life generally; it is a harmonising power. Controlled breathing and a chosen mantra are part of the exercise. Griffiths describes how the kind of energy which can thereby be channelled is powerful. As no one is fully integrated this can be dangerous and so it is best and safest to work with a guide or guru to avoid negative results. Similarly, he suggests channelling the energy downwards through focus on the presence of Christ with a suitable mantra, from the highest *chakra* at the crown of the head, to the lowest and then rising back up through them. This provides spiritual control.

Griffiths' own experience supported his belief that most people suffered from either sexual repression or suppression which makes it 'a terribly negative force'. This is an obstacle to surrender to God in life. One's sexuality has to be faced 'either alone or with the help of a psychological counsellor...then all attempts at conscious suppression can cease and surrender to God becomes possible.' It is most important to realise 'that sexual energy itself ...is essentially pure and holy'. The surrender of the ego, or the separated self, is consequent on such self-acceptance and only then can there be union with the divine.⁵¹

Generally Griffiths was 'very suspicious' of ascetical practices. He argues that only in certain exceptional cases do such strongly ascetical practices lead to experience of God in contemplation. For most people, however, he considers it is 'disastrous'. 'The total human being

... is to enter into the life of the Spirit' and the words of St Paul, 'Your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit', underline this belief.⁵²

Griffiths seems to apply a certain simplification to questions of sexuality which he sees are, as all things, subject to a higher order. His article, 'On Homosexual Love'⁵³ begins with the assertion, that homosexual love is 'just as normal and natural as love between people of the opposite sex'. It is depth of communion in love which people ultimately long for. He quotes the Christian friendship of the 12th century English Cistercian monk, Aelred of Rivelaux for whom very deep fraternal love was 'fulfilment of (his) love of God'. He warns against 'spiritualising the gospel'. As love involves the whole of our being, body, soul and spirit, 'there is an element of sex in all human love', something that demands acceptance and respect rather than shame. On the one hand, it can be quite degrading if the sexual instinct dominates the relationship; on the other, 'a spiritual love without any basis in sex would be inhuman'. In fact, Griffiths regards this last as 'one of the greatest dangers in the spiritual life'. Integration of the whole person depends on the emotions being 'guided by the spirit and opened to the presence of the Holy Spirit'.

From the Camaldolese Monastery in Big Sur California, Fr Bruno Barnhart wrote a detailed response to Griffiths' paper (8/5/91) in which he lists a number of concerns specifically with regard to religious communities in the US today. He sees a major problem in that - 'most of the candidates - or rather inquirers, aspirants are wholly or partly of homosexual inclination'.

Interestingly, he finally arrives at a conclusion much the same as Griffiths. There is a need to consciously integrate sexuality 'as that deepest human energy...an incarnation of the Holy Spirit' in the religious life. 'And this implies the presence of both sexes in a community.' It would also

mean a recognition of ‘the emergence of the feminine’ in our time. ‘What we are speaking of here is the realization of the energy of the human nucleus.’

Because of the importance of such understanding and acceptance of the human condition, Griffiths was diametrically opposed to judgmentalism. Stern rebukes expressed directly or in the style of deep irony were penned to Newspapers and Journals to confront such attitudes, in particular when they surfaced in Church authority.⁵⁴ At Shantivanam, all were made welcome, ‘...please understand that everyone is the image of God. For that reason alone you accept anyone. In spite of the weaknesses of people, we should not disregard anyone.’⁵⁵

Sufi Response to Mental Illness in Turkey

An article on Sufi practice⁵⁶ at this juncture suggests an affirmation that at the core of all religious faith we find commonality. It begins with a passage from the 12th century Sufi mystic Ibn Arabi:

O marvel! A garden in the heart of flames!
 My heart has become bearer of all forms:
 A pasture for gazelles, and an abbey for monks,
 A temple for idols, and Mecca for the pious,
 Tablet for the Torah, and a page of the Quran.
 My religion is that of Love:
 Whatever way Love’s Camel may take,
 That is my path, that’s my destiny.

‘A garden in the heart of flames’ refers to the experience of Paradise in Hell. And it also reminds us of the delusion of our times of equating virtue and health.⁵⁷ Using as illustration the story of a well-known Turkish woman who had suffered for twenty years from schizophrenia, the article on Sufi practice describes *Tasawwuf*⁵⁸ as an ‘obvious point of reference’ for mental health.

The author describes the ‘unfathomable spaces’ that Sufi discourse provides ‘within the fullness of the ruling orders of meaning and power’. This is a discourse of resistance which he terms ‘extimity’, a combination of two terms, ‘exteriority’ and ‘intimacy’. It refers to ‘the existence of the ‘Other’ in the very heart of the ‘Self’. It means that there exists ‘at the very heart of the system...that which is supposed to be most foreign to the system’.

The case history provided to illustrate this truth is that of a Turkish woman Esas Esya. Following a severe break-down Esas was diagnosed with schizophrenia which she called her ‘cocoon’. This description is accepted by Sufi discourse which helped by providing in fact a ‘psychological cocoon’. This was a ‘Sufi House’, one of a kind supposed not to exist since their closure by Ataturk’s repressive project of ‘cultural engineering’. But the Sufi Houses remained as ‘underground orders’ because the signs outside now read, ‘Welcome to the Museum’. After twenty years of illness, exposure to Sufi literature specifically Ibn Arabi, led Esas to the Sufi House ‘a space that altered and healed her shattered multiplicity’.⁵⁹

The point is that the Sufi House is a safe place, a space which ‘has historically come to be known as a place where friend and enemy alike are accepted and sheltered from objective or symbolic aggression’. On account of this, Esas has come to terms with her illness though it still persists and considers herself healed. As my son with schizophrenia once said to me, ‘We have to learn to embrace the shadow.’ In the end perhaps this is the central way to healing and wholeness, ‘to learn to embrace the shadow’.

Stages of Human Development and Wholeness

In his acceptance of the need to integrate every stage or level of human development in order to become a whole or holy person, Griffiths referred to a variety of authorities, Freud and Jung, Ken Wilber, David Bohm and Rupert Sheldrake. Erikson's later work (which was not always well received in America) of stages of growth etched into the continuing process in adult maturation is also comparable with Griffiths' views.

For Erikson, 'the caring, generative person was the developmental pinnacle for each adult'.⁶⁰ In fact, Erikson maintained that so non-generative were the environments of various associated civil systems that '(in) many instances, mainstream standards for adult normalcy were so askew that many of the mentally ill and deviant seemed less abnormal than those who expected such social outliers to conform'. Erikson indicates how the fully mature adult shows 'a generosity of being, a vital interplay with cherished others, and a we-ness instead of asceticism'. Furthermore, 'Some older adults can maintain a sense of wonder and of childlike wisdom'. Erikson describes this mature wisdom as making up the persona of Albert Einstein and also expressed 'by the name and teachings of Lao-Tse, the ancient Chinese sage whose name means old child'.⁶¹

There is a connection with Erikson's assertions and Griffiths' late stage of personal maturity and his teaching on health and wholeness. Pascaline Coff OSB reports Griffiths as saying the last third of his life was best: 'the most wonderful years of my life'.⁶²

Similarly, Griffiths described his meeting with Elder Gaboo in Australia in 1992, 'as one of the most meaningful connections in his life'.⁶³ Whereas Griffiths spoke of 'the cave of the heart', the Aboriginal elder described a mountain ritual and pointing to his heart said, 'the place of the mountain is here'. Griffiths told Elder Gaboo, 'We are kindred Spirits'.⁶⁴ This meeting with

Aboriginal exponents of a very ancient cosmic religion is expressive of Griffiths' understanding of humanity's journey together towards the Eschaton. Elder Gaboo's reliance on 'the mountain' connects with Gregory of Nyssa's *Life of Moses*, 'The Divine Ascent: the Mountain', which is 'a story of progression and development'.⁶⁵ As one stage is successfully completed the next grows out of it. Creation with humankind as the apex is a journey that exists as an interdependency and humankind shall finally 'arrive' as fullness in the One, only together, in distinction, as a whole.

Conclusion

The Forest of Peace and the Sufi Houses are expressions of the incarnation of the saving Word, that tell a story of a God who is outpouring generative love. Can we hope to replicate this in some measure in our local environments? It has been accomplished to a large extent at Osage Monastic Ashram in America. As regards my own circumstance due to our sons' illnesses, our lives are a little isolated, even enclosed. In an urban environment we have nevertheless worked to make our home a saving space too, a place of prayer, peace, beauty and acceptance.

¹ Raimundo Panikkar, *The Vedic Experience Mantramanjari. An Anthology of the Vedas for Modern Man and Contemporary Celebration*. 4 ed. (Pondicherry: Narendrakrishna Prakashan, 1983).

With reference to the Sanskrit case, parts of speech and word order, *Vedic Experience* 751, 752, Panikkar translates, *tat tvam asi*, as 'that art Thou'. Svetaketu's true identity resides within, is discovered through acknowledgment and identification with the Self, the *atman*. Svetaketu is the 'Thou' of Brahman, the Beloved. This is the key to the mystery of differentiation within the *eka* (the void), 'this tension and polarity within the One, making it really nondual but without breaking its oneness'. (753) As the epitome of the created order, for which the *purusha* stands, Svetaketu/Man/the cosmos, is the third person, *vac* (the primordial word) manifested in the material creation, the bridge between the *atman* and Brahman.

² From the conference, 'Dzochen and Christian Contemplation' given by Bede Griffiths at Asirvanam, November 25th, 1992. The *Svetasvatara Upanisad* proclaims 'through the power of his *tapas* and through the grace of God, the wise Svetasvatara truly proclaimed Brahman'. That is, 'it is through one's own effort, *tapas*, and through the grace of God, that one comes to know Brahman....also in the *Katha Upanisad*, 'Not by much learning, not by the Vedas, not by understanding, is this Atman known. He whom the Atman chooses, he knows the Atman'. Bede Griffiths, *A New Vision of Reality, Western Science, Eastern Mysticism and Christian Faith*, second edition (London: Fount Paperbacks, 1992), 184.

³ Bede Griffiths O.S.B. *River of Compassion* (New York: Amity House, 1987), 32.

⁴ Griffiths in 'In Jesus' Name', *The Tablet*, 1992. (It compares with the experience and teaching of contemplatives such as de Caussade, Laurence of the Annunciation but most especially the anonymous *Cloud of Unknowing* of the late Middle Ages.)

⁵ Interview for *Monos* Vol. 3, No.8, Sep 1991, by Fr Patrick Eastman. In *The Cloud of Unknowing* another mystical work which Griffiths uses as a model the author work of is informed by Dionysius, but differs in respect of his emphasis on love. 'The repose of abiding in God's love' (*The Cloud*, 73) that is grounded in contemplative experience becomes habitual, '...with your attention centered on the blind awareness of your naked being united to God's, you will go about your daily rounds, eating and drinking, sleeping and waking, going and coming, speaking and listening, lying down and rising up, standing and kneeling, running and riding, working and resting...you will be offering to God...the most precious gift you can make...whether active or contemplative.' *The Cloud*, 163.

⁶ 'Imagination, Intuition and Knowledge', Bede Griffiths O.S.B. 1991, RRR 01/95.

⁷ Ibid. '...the spirit is the principle which integrates the whole physical universe and the whole psychological universe and brings them all to unity.' Bede Griffiths in *Cosmic Person Cosmic Lord*.

⁸ Ibid, 9.

⁹ From Griffiths' Australian tour, 1985, in 'Bede Griffith O.S.B. A Tribute', compiled by John Cleary and Stephen Godley. *Compass*, 1993.

¹⁰ Griffiths points out that this entry into the mystery of Christ must involve relationship with others, '...the body of Christ extends to all of humanity'. Taken from 'The Bede Griffiths Sangha Newsletter' Volume 2, Issue 1.

¹¹ Griffiths quotes St Augustine, 'It is you who are laid upon the altar'. Tape 'Modern Physics and the Eucharist'. For Griffiths (as for Panikkar...'The Trinity...may be considered as a junction where the authentic spiritual dimensions of all religions meet'. *The Trinity and the Religious Experience of Man* (New York: Orbis Books, 1973), p42.), the Trinity is 'mirrored in the other great world religions'. The Trinity is also 'the very heart of the Christian faith', and its depth and relevance which has been generally unappreciated can be re-discovered through inter-religious dialogue which will encourage a return to the insights of the mystical theologians of Church tradition who present a 'deeper view' than the abstract Greek concepts cemented in Church dogma. In this, Griffiths points particularly to Maximus the Confessor who teaches from his own contemplative experience, that 'in moving towards God in knowledge and love we are simply returning to our idea in Him...even if we wander...the idea (God) has of each of us remains the same'. Taken from 'A Meditation on the Mystery of the Trinity', Bede Griffiths O.S.B., Cam.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ In response to questioning, Griffiths explains the Hindu concept of different bodies, 'kosas' or 'sheaves'. There are five of them: the *anakosa* or material body, *pranakosa* or vital body, *manakosa* or mental body, *dynyanakosa* or the higher intellect and the *anandakosa* or body of bliss. Ibid.

¹⁴ Similarly, Cambridge biologist Rupert Sheldrake describes an organising 'formal energy' in nature, named 'morphogenetic fields'. Ibid.

¹⁵ The prime example for Griffiths is the Resurrection, when Christ's material body, was first transformed into a 'subtle body' and then at the Ascension finally into the spiritual realm as 'a spiritual energy'.

¹⁶ 'Modern Physics and the Eucharist'.

¹⁷ Dzogchen...(and similar transformation)

¹⁸ Griffiths states this is the best understanding we have of the resurrection and he quotes Augustine: 'at the end there will be one Christ loving him-self'.

¹⁹ One of the three daily times of prayer at Shantivanam. Griffiths regarded the morning and evening prayer as fundamental, 'the two pillars of the day'. In 'The Laughing Man interviews Fr Bede Griffiths' p36, 1984. Pub. The Laughing Man Institute in cooperation with the Dawn Horse Press. CA.

²⁰ 'The Bede Griffiths Sangha Newsletter', Volume 2, Issue 1, in 'A Recent Visit to Shantivanam', by Beata Reynolds, 4.

²¹ Visitors stayed for days or months, some up to a year at Shantivanam.

²² Besides contemplative prayer, Griffiths acknowledged a life lived in self-less service of others' needs as an authentic means of ego-transcendence.

²³ Bede Griffiths in the Forward, *The Inner Christ* by John Main (London: Darton Longman and Todd) 1987.

²⁴ Bede Griffiths, 'Inner Disarmament and the Spiritual Warrior', 20.

²⁵ 'On Poverty and Simplicity, Views of a Post-Industrial Christian Sage, A Dialogue between Father Bede Griffiths and Renee Weber'. *ReVISION* Vol 6.No 2. Fall 1983.

²⁶ Quoted from a letter to Rupert Sheldrake, dated All Soul's Day 1992. With regard to new insights, Griffiths believed that the present challenge was 'to create a theology which would use the findings of modern science and Eastern mysticism...to evolve from that a new theology which would be much more adequate'. In 'A Dialogue between Father Bede Griffiths and Renee Weber'.

²⁷ 'The Ashram as a Way of Transcendence' by Fr Bede Griffiths in *Christian Ashrams – a movement with a future?* by Vandana Mataji ISPCK New Delhi 1993, 30-33.

²⁸ 'The Ashram as a Way of Transcendence' by Fr Bede Griffiths in *Christian Ashrams – a movement with a future?* by Vandana Mataji ISPCK New Delhi 1993, 30-33.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ In 'America and India, the Balancing of Extremes' by Dom Bede Griffiths, *Creation Spirituality* p42, Sep/Oct, 1991. This is a later development for Griffiths in India. Initially, he set out to imitate the details of the lives of the very poorest people. Later, however, he chose to use a desk for writing and a chair for meditation. He sees the excesses of American culture as an extreme reaction to religious negative attitudes towards the world to be found in Christian tradition, especially towards the body and the senses.

³¹ Griffiths understands this as freedom from 'the dominion of the scientific mind, *karmani akarma*', *River*, 74, or 'worklessness in work' that reflects a surrendering up to God who works through us. Ibid., 81.

³² It is now a 'given' that beauty in surroundings facilitate healing. This is obvious in hospital Children's wards, where the dull all-over grey came to be replaced by bright colours, eye-catching mobiles and so on. In regard to mental health, not only can disinterest in personal cleanliness and apparel indicate mental ill-health, but mental-health workers take a keen interest in the quality of the surroundings for those who are recovering from illness.

³³ E.F Shumacher, *Small is Beautiful* (London: Blond & Briggs) 1973.

³⁴ Schumacher is here speaking specifically of one of the four cardinal virtues, *prudentia*. Ibid 249.

³⁵ Ibid.' 249.

³⁶ As an overtly missionary order, the Marists might be said to best exemplify this 'feminine' capacity within the church. Challenged with the task to be 'instruments of God's merciful love in this modern, secular world...to reflect the feminine face of God taking as its inspiration the person of Mary', this order appropriates a special gentleness of being 'hidden and unknown'. In 'Marist Mission' by Gerard Hall SMS, 2007.

³⁷ *The Tablet* Vol. 240 No. 7640 ISSN: 00398837. Dec. 13, 1986.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ These ideas are strongly supported by one such as Cardinal Walter Kaspar who recognises the need for the church to continually adapt to 'a plurality (not of faith) but of styles, forms of piety, rites, theology....(which)...will increase considerably in the future...a sign of life and inner richness.' 2003 *The Helder Camara Lecture the Future of Christianity*, 'A Meditation on the Church and Contemporary Pluralism in the Post Modern Era'.

⁴⁰ 'The Church', by Father Bede Griffiths. Tape transcription, July 1992, Osage Monastery, Sand Springs, OK.

⁴¹ *Vac*, the Word in Sanscrit is feminine gender and represents 'the total living word'; it represents surrender in divine love, cosmic intelligibility, revelation/*sruti* and the mediation of prayer.

⁴² Dom Bede Griffiths in 'How I Pray', *Profiles in the Spirit*, Summer 1996.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Homily by Bede Griffiths, Osage Monastery, July 1992. Bede Griffiths' Trust.

⁴⁵ Griffiths in aTalk taped by 'The Scientific and Medical Network', Garden Cottage, Newhouse Farm, Northington Down, Alresford, Hants, SO24 9UB.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Bede Griffiths, at Osage Monastery, 8/17/92. Bede Griffiths Trust.

⁴⁸ We met this Sister on a recent visit to Shantivanam.

⁴⁹ 'Tantra and the Mystical Marriage' by Bede Griffiths. Bede Griffiths' Trust.

⁵⁰ Repression is unconscious, whereas suppression is conscious rejection. Ibid.

⁵¹ Letter to Sr Pascaline Coff, Nov 21st, 1990.

⁵² Bede Griffiths, in 'The Silent Guide, An Interview with Father Bede Griffiths', *PARABOLA: The Magazine of Myth and Tradition*. Vol. XI, No I, Spring 1986: 'The Witness'.

⁵³ From the Bede Griffiths' Trust.

⁵⁴ Two examples are proffered: Griffiths' argument for primacy of conscience and the right to dissent with regard to the 'ordinary magisterium' in 'The Case of Fr Curran', *The Tablet*, Sep 20th, 1986; second, Griffiths' article sent to the *National Catholic Reporter* in response to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith's statement on homosexuality 'Some Considerations Concerning the Catholic Response to Legislative Proposals on Non-discrimination of Homosexual Persons' (NCR, July 31). Griffiths' short deeply ironic article ran with the title, 'For those without Sin'.

⁵⁵ Griffiths' words to Fr Christudas in, 'My Experience with My Guruji, Fr Bede' by Fr Christudas O.S.B. Cam. *Ashrama Aikiya Newsletter*. No 28. Special Issue in Memory of Dom Bede Griffiths. Sept. 93.

⁵⁶ 'Intimate Exteriority: Sufi Space as Sanctuary for Injured Subjectivities in Turkey', by Sadeq Rahimi, in *Journal of Religion and Health* (2006) DOI: 10.1007/s10943-006-9073-2.

⁵⁷ See also for interest, article by Charles Taylor in November *Church News* online on this point.

⁵⁸ Sufism.

⁵⁹ There is a point of reference here to the 'commonality' at the basis of all religions considering that Esas was assisted by Sufi guides to understand how her experience of absorption into the fragmentation of multiplicity was but one side of a whole, the other side being simplicity. She learned how 'to live in both worlds simultaneously'. For this reason, 'the madwoman has the privileged possibility of being a bridge between the daily world of reality and a different, exotic reality. Madness is another locus of extimity, another meeting of contradictory significances.' (In 'Intimate Exteriority') Similarly, the pearl 'Net or Necklace of Shiva' represents the same web of complicated relationships and unity in difference as does the Tibetan Dzogchen teaching that the external world and the inner world are 'only two sides of the same fabric'. 'Christian-Buddhist Exchange, Asirvanam Monastery, Bangalore. Talk, 'Communion and Renunciation' by Fr. Bede Griffiths, Asirvanam Monastery, Bangalore. 25/11/1992.

⁶⁰ The images are what the adult is and might become. They are, 'the prejudiced adult, the moral-ethical, spiritual adult, the playing, childlike adult, the historically and culturally relative adult, the insightful adult, and the wise adult.'

⁶¹ Quotations in this paragraph taken from Hoare, Carol Hren. *Erikson on Development in Adulthood : New Insights from the Unpublished Papers*. Cary, NC, USA: Oxford University Press, Incorporated, 2001. p 194 <http://site.ebrary.com/lib/australiancathu/Doc?id=10084777&ppg=211>

⁶² 'More on Dom Bede Griffiths, Wisdom Remains while Radiant Prophet Passes to Further Shore' in 'Dom Bede Griffiths', 113.

⁶³ Meath Conlan, *Bede Griffiths Friend and Gift of the Spirit* (Springfield, Illinois: Templegate, 2006), 98.

⁶⁴ Ibid, 92 – 98.

⁶⁵ http://www.monachos.net/library/Gregory_of_Nyssa:_Luminous_Darkness

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