

Introducing the “1000Communities²” Proposal (“1000CommunitiesSquared”)

--On November, 17, 2007 the United Nations Development Programme released the “UN Human Development Report 2007/2008 Fighting Climate Change: Human Solidarity in a Divided World”, which included, in the summary, the following statement:

“Avoiding the unprecedented threats posed by dangerous climate change will require an unparalleled collective exercise in international cooperation.”¹

--On January 17, 2008, the website of the Post Carbon Institute’s “Relocalization Network” featured a “News Posting” which was a press release for a new book by Lester Brown titled “Plan B 3.0: Mobilizing to Save Civilization”. The “Introduction” to that book includes the following passage:

Implementing Plan B means undertaking several actions simultaneously, including... cutting carbon dioxide emissions 80% by 2020, largely through a mobilization to raise energy efficiency and harness renewable sources of energy. Not only is the scale of this save-our-civilization plan ambitious, so is the speed with which it must be implemented. We must move at wartime speed, restructuring the world energy economy at a pace reminiscent of the restructuring of the U.S. industrial economy in 1942 following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor.

--On April 10, 2008, an editorial titled “The World Food Crises” in the “Opinion” section of The New York Times (online) included the following statement:

“Last week, the president of the World Bank, Robert Zoellick, warned that 33 nations are at risk of social unrest because of the rising prices of food. ‘For countries where food comprises from half to three-quarters of consumption, there is no margin for survival,’ he said.”³

--On July 17, 2008, former vice president (U.S.) and Nobel Prize recipient (2007) Al Gore made a speech which included the following passages:

“The leading experts predict that we have less than 10 years to make dramatic changes in our global warming pollution lest we lose our ability to ever recover from this environmental crisis.”

“Today I challenge our nation to commit to producing 100 percent of our electricity from renewable energy and truly clean carbon-free sources within 10 years.”

[For “Notes and Source References” related to the above quotations, see p. 34)

More and more people, in more and more parts of the world, are coming to the conclusion that we—collectively—have a need for problem solving on a scale most of us have never seen before. This particular issue of The IPCR Journal/Newsletter (Summer, 2008) highlights a recently completed proposal by this writer titled “1000Communities²”. “1000Communities²” (“1000CommunitiesSquared”) advocates for Community Visioning Initiatives, “Community Teaching and Learning Centers” with ongoing workshops, and “sister community” relationships, as a way of generating an exponential increase in our collective capacity to overcome the challenges of our times.

Letter From the Editor

More and more people, in more and more parts of the world, are coming to the conclusion that we—collectively—have a need for problem solving on a scale most of us have never seen before. This writer is the founder and outreach coordinator for The Interfaith Peacebuilding and Community Revitalization (IPCR) Initiative. The Mission Statement for The IPCR Initiative is included in this issue on p. 32. This particular issue of The IPCR Journal/Newsletter (Summer, 2008) introduces a recently completed proposal (by this writer) titled “1000Communities²”[accessible for free at The IPCR Initiative website (at www.ipcri.net)]. This issue includes:

- 1) one of the three outreach messages currently being used to share the “1000Communities²” proposal with people who might be able to make good use of it
- 2) the section of the “1000Communities²” proposal titled “15 Suggestions for Preliminary Survey Questions” (A well-developed set of survey questions, administered to 150 key leaders from a variety of fields of activity in a community, would do much to bring to the fore the need for, and the potential of, Community Visioning Initiatives at the local community level
- 3) Appendix 6 from the “1000Communities²” proposal. Appendix 6 is titled “Integrating Spiritual Wisdom into the Everyday Circumstances of Community Life”. [This writer believes that there is a profound and critical need for an exponential increase in compassion for our fellow human beings. *And yet... an exponential increase in compassion for our fellow human beings is, currently, not widely recognized as an essential and critical element of most comprehensive responses to the challenges of our times.* This writer hopes that he can contribute something to bringing this need to the forefront of more and more responses to the challenges of our times.]
- 4) a reprint of the contents of the “Workshops” section of The IPCR website (at www.ipcri.net).

There is much that can be done to generate goodwill and promote peace that has not been done. There is much that needs to be done.

Stefan Pasti, Editor
The IPCR Journal/Newsletter
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The IPCR Journal/Newsletter

“... bringing to the fore what is often hidden....”

The “1000Communities²” Proposal— A Multiplier Effect of a Positive Nature

Introduction—Much Potential, Many Challenges

At no other time in the course of history has so many people had access to so much in the way of time-tested guidelines, inspiring role models, and service-oriented initiatives.

We should be able to actualize this potential into acceptable standards of living for a very high percentage of the people on this planet, and do so in a way that creates economic stability, maintains ecological sustainability, and demonstrates a high level of compassion for our fellow human beings.

And yet there are many difficult challenges ahead. Consider the following quotations:

[See p. 8 for “Notes and Source References” related to this section. Additional Note: The “1000Communities²” proposal includes over 150 quotations and excerpts, which are provided to refer readers to relevant sources for further research.]

a) *From the “UN Human Development Report 2007/2008 Fighting Climate Change: Human Solidarity in a Divided World”*

“Avoiding the unprecedented threats posed by dangerous climate change will require an unparalleled collective exercise in international cooperation.”¹

b) *From the “World Report on Violence and Health” (World Health Organization Geneva 2002)*

“The global drugs trade and the global arms trade are integral to violence in both developing and industrialized countries. Even modest progress on either front will contribute to reducing the amount and degree of violence suffered by millions of people. To date, however—and despite their high profile in the world arena—no solutions seem to be in sight for these problems.”²

c) *From an editorial titled “The World Food Crises” in the “Opinion” section of The New York Times (online)(April 10, 2008).*

“Last week, the president of the World Bank, Robert Zoellick, warned that 33 nations are at risk of social unrest because of the rising prices of food. ‘For countries where food comprises from half to three-quarters of consumption, there is no margin for survival,’ he said.”³

There now exists a need for problem solving on a scale most of us have never known before.

We are in need of innovative and imaginative solutions. One suggestion which could assist in bringing to light many solutions is a 161 page proposal by this writer titled “1000Communities²”. “1000Communities²” (“1000CommunitiesSquared”) advocates for Community Visioning Initiatives, “Community Teaching and Learning Centers” with ongoing workshops, and “sister community” relationships, as a way of generating an exponential increase in our collective capacity to overcome the challenges of our times. [Note: The “1000Communities²” proposal is accessible in pdf format for free at the website of The Interfaith Peacebuilding and Community Revitalization (IPCR) Initiative, at www.ipcri.net. (This writer is the founder and outreach coordinator for The IPCR Initiative.)]

About Community Visioning Initiatives and “Community Teaching and Learning Centers”

Many of us will be familiar with the problem solving strategy of identifying problems and brainstorming solutions. Well organized efforts to identify problems and brainstorm solutions are a universally recognized approach to problem solving which is commonly used in family, community, business, and government settings in every part of the world. In its most basic format, a Community Visioning Initiative is simply a more comprehensive variation of the above mentioned approach to problem solving. The more comprehensive Community Visioning Initiatives require steering committees, preliminary surveys or assessments, workshops, task forces, collaboration between many organizations, government agencies, businesses, and educational institutions—and seek to build up consensus in the community for specific goals and action plans by encouraging a high level of participation by all residents.

Equally important to the “1000Communities²” proposal is the concept of “Community Teaching and Learning Centers” (a concept created by the “Teachers Without Borders” organization). So that readers may fully appreciate the importance of this concept, please consider the following: on the homepage of the website of The Interfaith Peacebuilding and Community Revitalization (IPCR) Initiative, there is reference to a “Ten Point Assessment of the Most Difficult Challenges of Our Times”. Such an assessment indicates there is a need for problem solving which approaches fully utilizing all the knowledge, tools, and resources accessible to them for the highest good possible in every area of capacity building (physical, ecological, medical, spiritual, educational, social, economic, technical, political, etc.).

This writer does not see how such a “full utilization” can be approached without an increase in local community points of entry which provide ongoing, affordable, and neighborhood-friendly workshops. He also believes that coordinating such workshops with a Community Visioning Initiative can produce a positive effect of an exponential nature. The need for innovative and imaginative solutions is urgent. Many communities around the world already need positive results of an exponential nature—and many more communities may soon need positive results of an exponential nature. Thus, it would seem practical to experiment along these lines.

Expanding the concept of “Community Teaching and Learning Centers”

In this “1000Communities²” proposal, the concept of “Community Teaching and Learning Centers” created by the “Teachers Without Borders” organization is expanded so that such local community points of entry function as

- a) information centers, resource centers, and clearinghouses (on how residents can deliberately channel their time, energy, and money into the creation of “ways of earning a living” which are directly related to resolving high priority challenges)
- b) locations for workshops on topics suggested by the “Preliminary Survey” (for more about “Preliminary Surveys” see p. 9), and as determined by the “Community Teaching and Learning Center” Coordinator
- c) practice sites for the development of “teacher-leaders”
- d) community centers for meetings, both planned and informal
- e) locations for “Community Journals” (which are collections of formal and informal input which may be contributed to or accessed at all times)
- f) locations for “Final Version” Document submission (“voting”) as part of Steps 5, 6, 7, 9, and 10 of the 15 Step Outline (for an example of “voting”, see “Step 5” on p. 28-29 of the “1000Communities²” proposal)
- g) locations for “Summary of Community Visioning Initiative Process to Date” Notebooks, for latecomers, and as an information resource for media
- h) central locations for listings of employment opportunities
- i) as a special form of community education, which can respond quickly (by changing the emphasis of workshop content) to new urgencies as they arise

Three Propositions—and “Job Fairs”

The “1000Communities²” proposal also advocates three propositions which are especially relevant when considering the value of local community points of entry information clearinghouses, and ongoing workshops....

- a) There are countless numbers of “things people can do in the everyday circumstances of their lives” which will contribute to peacebuilding, community revitalization, and ecological sustainability efforts, in their own communities and regions—and in other parts of the world.

b) People can, one by one, decide to deliberately focus the way they spend their time, energy, and money so that their actions have positive repercussions on many or all of the action plans which emerge from Community Visioning Initiatives.

c) The result can be that there are countless ‘ways to earn a living’ which contribute to the peacebuilding, community revitalization, and ecological sustainability efforts necessary to overcome the challenges of our times.

Furthermore, Community Visioning Initiatives can include “Job Fairs” in the final phases of the process, which summarize the knowledge accumulated during the Visioning process.

Here are some excerpts from “Step 12: Summary Presentations and Job Fairs” of the “15 Step” outline (see p. 22-42) provided in the “1000Communities²” proposal:

“Job Fairs will provide a forum for organizations and businesses working in solution oriented fields of activity to describe employment opportunities and future prospects, to discover local talent, to hire qualified prospects, and to build knowledge bases and skill sets for the future.” (from p. 39)

“Special Commentary: By now, there will have been sufficient public discourse for those people with understanding about high level shifts in investment portfolios to have learned something about what directions future shifts will be leaning towards. The job fairs which come at the end of the Community Visioning Initiative process provide opportunities for all key stakeholders in the community (businesses, organizations, institutions, government, etc.) to demonstrate their upgraded awareness—and their interest in the welfare of the community—by offering and facilitating new employment opportunities... and thus helping with a just transition from patterns of investment which in only limited ways represent solutions to prioritized challenges to patterns of investment which *in many ways* represent solutions to prioritized challenges.” (from p. 39)

“[Note: As mentioned on p. 125, one aspect of this just transition can be that people who do deliberately focus their investments of time, energy, and money towards solutions identified by the Community Visioning Initiative being carried out in their community may receive, as encouragement, local currency. *And then such local currency can, in its turn, be redeemed in ways which will be particularly helpful to people transitioning from less solution-oriented employment to more solution-oriented employment.*.]” (from p. 39)

It is possible.... and yet....

This message is offered as one way of demonstrating that it is possible for communities of people to deliberately create countless “ways to earn a living” which contribute to the peacebuilding, community revitalization, and ecological sustainability efforts necessary to overcome the challenges of our times.

And yet... consider the following:

This writer believes that there is a profound and critical need for an exponential increase in compassion for our fellow human beings. This profound and critical need is especially urgent when viewed as only a part of the challenges listed in “Ten Point Assessment...” accessible on the homepage of The IPCR Initiative website.

And yet... an exponential increase in compassion for our fellow human beings is, currently, not widely recognized as an essential and critical element of truly comprehensive response to the challenges of our times.

As a way of emphasizing the need for an exponential increase in compassion for our fellow human beings, the “1000Communities²” proposal makes a special point of encouraging communities (with the resources to do so) to enter into “sister community” relationships with communities in other countries where there has been well documented calls for assistance with basic human needs. [Why? This writer understands that it is often very difficult for people in one country to understand the indirect effects of their investments of time, energy, and money—even if those indirect effects are unquestionably beneficial. *If we are to “fully realize the repercussions of our actions on our neighbours”—and on people in others parts of the world—it seems that it would be most helpful for whole communities of people to have direct contact with a whole communities of people in another part of the world, for an extended period of time. In the context of this “1000Communities²” proposal, the “sister community” relationship would provide a way for residents of a community with sufficient resources to do so to be in direct contact with residents of a community where there has been well documented calls for assistance with basic human needs.*

If even a few....

Everyone is involved when it comes to determining the markets that supply the ways of earning a living.

In 1984, the non-profit organization Chattanooga Venture [Chattanooga, Tennessee (USA)] organized a Community Visioning Initiative (“Vision 2000”) that attracted more than 1,700

participants, and produced 40 community goals—which resulted in the implementation of 223 projects and programs, the creation of 1,300 permanent jobs, and a total financial investment of 793 million dollars.⁴

If even a few of the kind of Community Visioning Initiatives described in the “1000Communities²” proposal generated results similar to those achieved by the Chattanooga, Tennessee (USA) Visioning Initiative, people in all parts of the world—keenly attuned when it comes to resolving challenges which require urgent solutions at all levels of society— *could be* inspired to carry out similar Community Visioning Initiatives. And if many communities carried out similar initiatives, and also achieved significant results, our collective capacity to resolve the challenges of our times *would surely* begin to accumulate at an accelerating rate.

Hopefully—by encouraging as much formal and informal meetings with other people in the local neighborhoods for discussion, information sharing, mutual support and encouragement, fellowship and friendship—a combination of Community Visioning Initiatives, “Community Teaching and Learning Centers” and “sister community” relationships can contribute much to the building of “close-knit” communities of people... communities with a healthy appreciation for each others strengths, a well-developed capacity to resolve even the most difficult challenges—and communities which demonstrate a high level of compassion for their fellow human beings.

Notes and Source References

1. From the “UN Human Development Report 2007/2008 *Fighting Climate Change: Human Solidarity in a Divided World*” Director and Lead Author: Kevin Watkins Published for the United Nations Development Program Released November 27, 2007 In “Summary” of Complete Report (See http://hdr.undp.org/en/media/hdr_20072008_summary_english.pdf for free download) On p. 19, in section “Avoiding Dangerous Climate Change: Strategies for Mitigation” paragraph 1 (Confirmed June 1, 2008)
2. From the “World Report on Violence and Health” (World Health Organization Geneva 2002) in Chapter 9 “The Way Forward: Recommendations for Action” p. 254 (at <http://whqlibdoc.who.int/hq/2002/9241545615.pdf>) (Confirmed June 11, 2008)
3. From an editorial titled “The World Food Crises” in the “Opinion” section of The New York Times (online). Published April 10, 2008 (at <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/04/10/opinion/10thu1.html>) (see paragraph 3) (Confirmed June 13, 2008)
4. The statistics are from “Revision 2000: Take Charge Again”, a brochure this writer received from Chattanooga Venture. These statistics are also accessible in a detailed overview of Chattanooga community revitalization efforts titled “Chattanooga: The Sustainable City”, at the website for the James MacGregor Burns Academy of Leadership at <http://www.academy.umd.edu/Resources/AcademyPublicationsPDF/BoundaryCrossers-CaseStudies/Ch3-Chattanooga/Chattanooga.pdf> (see Chpt. 3, p. 7) (Confirmed June 15, 2008)

15 Suggestions for Preliminary Survey Questions

(Section 9 from the “1000Communities²” proposal, see p. 47-59)
(with some alterations to account for the difference in context)

A. Introduction

1. The “1000Communities²” proposal includes a “15 Step Outline for a ‘1000Communities², Version of a Community” (see Section 6). Step 3 of that 15 step outline suggests creating a “Preliminary Survey”, and sending such a survey to 150 key leaders who represent a variety of fields of activity in the community. Responses and summarized results from “Preliminary Surveys” will provide:

- a) evidence from local leaders of the need for a re-assessment of current priorities
- b) examples of local leaders stepping up in support of Community Visioning Initiatives
- c) starting points for public discourse about the importance of the Community Visioning Initiatives
- d) starting points for “Community Teaching and Learning Center” workshop content
- e) starting points for some participants as they develop “Final Version” decisions (“votes”) on challenges, solutions, and action plans
- f) an aid to mobilizing a high level of interest in the Community Visioning Initiative, and a high level of citizen participation
- g) an initial sense of support or non-support for the “sister community” element (an action plan which is advocated by the “1000Communities²” proposal; see Section 5 in the proposal, p. 17-21)

2. In this Section, this writer offers 15 example questions for such a “Preliminary Survey”. While this writer does acknowledge that he has no formal experience in questionnaire construction, he also understands that there are many critical challenges which need to be resolved in the near future—and he feels that communities can be much more organized, and do much more to resolve these challenges. He also feels that if questions that need to be asked *are asked* as part of the “Preliminary Survey” associated with a Community Visioning Initiative, the results can make a significant contribution to the Visioning process.

3. The questions included in this Section may not prove to be the questions which are asked by many communities applying the concept of “Preliminary Surveys” and Community Visioning Initiatives; but hopefully these questions will help people to appreciate the importance of a “Preliminary Survey”—and to (therefore) work hard at creating useful questions. Readers of this proposal who have any specific suggestions they would like to make on the subject of “Preliminary Survey” questions, are encouraged to contact this writer, using the contact information at the website of The IPCR Initiative (www.ipcri.net), or the information on p. 31.

B. 15 Example Questions

1. *Home Territory*

Please name one—or two—communities/towns/cities/regional areas which you would identify as your “home territory” [i.e. where you have the most significant personal reasons for making your home, and living many years of your life... (even if you are not currently living there)]. Please list your 5 most significant personal reasons for identifying your “home territory”—and rank them as most significant, next most significant, etc., using 1 as most significant, 2 as next most significant, and so on.

2. *Most Difficult Challenges, Most Valuable Resources*

- a) What are the most difficult challenges of our times?
- b) Do we have the resources necessary to overcome the challenges of our times?
- c) If your answer to Question #2 is yes, please describe the resources you believe will contribute the most to helping us—collectively—overcome these difficult challenges.
- d) If your answer to Question #2 is no, please offer any and all sincere, constructive, relevant, and practical suggestions for what we—collectively—can do to inspire, encourage, and/or create the resources you believe *would be necessary* to overcome these difficult challenges.

3. *Arriving at Working Definitions of “Right Livelihood”*

Consider what ways of earning a living you would identify as “right livelihood.”

Now imagine a local community resource guide relating to employment, apprenticeships, training, and volunteer opportunities associated with “right livelihood.”

And further: imagine a committee commissioned to produce such a “right livelihood” resource guide.... And the individuals who make up the committee commissioned to produce such a resource guide....

- a) What background (qualifications, experiences, etc.) would you like such individuals to have?
- b) What local institutions would you consider most appropriate to commission such a resource guide, and oversee its production?

4. *Identifying the Most Important Elements of Community Life and Cultural Traditions*

In the best of times, even the most profound challenges can be overcome; for in the best of times, _____ is/are nurtured, supported, and sustained by family, teachers, mentors, elders, and the everyday influences of community life and cultural traditions.

Please “brainstorm” on the subject of what would best fill in the blank in the above statement. Then choose 5-10 items from the “brainstormed list”, and rank them according to most important, and next most important, using 1 as most important, 2 as next most important, and so on.

5. *Engines of Economic Stability*

Many people seem to be worried that “the economy” will collapse if some form of “voluntary simplicity” philosophy becomes more and more accepted... and yet many of the challenges of our times have chronic elements (consider the “Ten Point Assessment” accessible on the homepage of The IPCR Initiative, at www.ipcri.net), suggesting that it may require decades, generations, or even centuries to overcome such challenges. (There will be work to do....)

a) Please name as many engines of economic stability and methods of economic conversion as you can which you believe would result in communities that

minimize resource requirements
maintain ecological sustainability
demonstrate a high level of compassion for fellow human beings

and which represent what a significant majority of community residents surveyed would describe as a high quality of life.

b) Please check the box below which best corresponds to your view of the following statement:

“It is possible to create, support, and sustain communities which can minimize resource requirements, maintain ecological sustainability, demonstrate a high level of compassion for fellow human beings— and which represent what a significant majority of community residents surveyed would describe as a high quality of life.”

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I believe it-- and there is much evidence to support it	I believe it-- and there is sufficient evidence to support it	I would like to believe it, but there isn't enough evidence to support it	It is difficult to believe it, with the way things are going now	I don't believe it— there is no evidence to support it

6. *Global Drugs Trade, Global Arms Trade—and Solutions?*

Consider the following excerpt from the “World Report of Violence and Health: Summary (Recommendations for Action)” (by WHO):

“The global drugs trade and the global arms trade are integral to violence in both developing and industrialized countries. Even modest progress on either front will contribute to reducing the amount and degree of violence suffered by millions of people. To date, however—and despite their high profile in the world arena—no solutions seem to be in sight for these problems.”¹ (for “Notes and Source References” related to this section, see p. 22)

a) Do you believe “no solutions seem to be in sight for these problems?” Why or why not?

b) *Please check the box (or boxes) which best corresponds to the way you view of the following statement.*

How much daily contact with the treasured wisdom of religious, spiritual, and moral traditions do you feel people in general would need before we would see noticeable progress on the above two problems (drug trade and arms trade)?

				X	Y
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
more than is likely to happen	a profound increase from current levels	a lot more	a little more	additional solutions will be essential to make noticeable progress	have different view—or different understanding of our present circumstances

c) If you checked boxes X and/or Y, please describe below any solutions to the above two problems (drugs trade and arms trade) which you feel would be helpful contributions to making noticeable progress on resolving these problems.

7. *Proactive Measures to Encourage Constructive Activity during Community Visioning Initiatives*

Organizers of Community Visioning Initiatives should be aware that there may be people in the community who—regardless of the difficulties and urgencies associated with resolving multiple

crises—choose to focus their attention of trying to make money by preying of people’s fears, manipulating people’s trust, and/or encouraging people to abandon hope in higher aspirations, and indulge in unhealthy, or immoral behavior. Such behavior is clearly counterproductive to the building of caring communities; it can be very dangerous for community morale, and it can become a crippling obstacle in times of crises. Responsible people will take sufficient preventative measures to proactively encourage a high percentage of constructive thinking and constructive action in their community.

Please list at least 5 preventative measures which you believe would proactively encourage a high percentage of constructive thinking and constructive action in their community.

8. *Cultivating Sympathy and Compassion*

Please name 5 people—who you know personally, and/or who you have been influenced by—who have inspired in you the qualities of sympathy for the suffering of others, and willingness to express compassion in ways which might alleviate some of such suffering.

a) What does your local community do—specifically, as a community—to nurture, encourage, support, and inspire-- to cultivate-- such persons, and thus to attract other such people to move into your local community?

9. Curriculum Changes in Local Educational Institutions?

a) Please check the appropriate box—and also offer comments if you wish—to indicate your how you would complete the following statement:

The curriculum in our local and regional educational institutions will _____ for our community to build the knowledge base and skill sets necessary to overcome the challenges of our times.

- | | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| need to | need to | have different view-- | need to | be sufficient |
| be transformed | be modified often | or different way of | be modified some | as it is |
| | | understanding our | | |
| | | present circumstances | | |

Your different view, or different way of understanding our present circumstances: _____

b) Please use the scale below and indicate your level of agreement with the seven different ways of completing the partial sentence below (“Creating the knowledge base...”) by writing the appropriate number next to the seven different choices:

Scale:

- (3) = high level of agreement
- (2) = moderate level of agreement
- (1) = low level of agreement
- (0) = do not agree with the statement

Creating the knowledge base, skill sets, and the compassion for our fellow human beings necessary to resolve the challenges of our times will require

- i) recognizing deficiencies in the knowledge base and skill sets of our communities as they are now (which can be brought to the forefront by Community Visioning Initiatives)
- ii) recognizing deficiencies in compassion for our fellow human beings (which can also be brought to the forefront by Community Visioning Initiatives)
- iii) linking together the concepts of Community Visioning Initiatives, “Community Teaching and Learning Centers”, “teacher-leaders”, ongoing workshops, and “sister community” relationships
- iv) curriculum development “on the fly”
- v) teacher training “on the fly”
- vi) community centers which are neighborhood-friendly, and which provide ongoing workshops which are deliberately affordable
- vii) encouraging as much formal and informal meetings with other people in the local neighborhoods for discussion, information sharing, mutual support and encouragement, fellowship and friendship—so that the result will include the building of a close-knit community of people with a healthy appreciation for each others strengths, and a well-developed capacity to resolve even the most difficult challenges.

Please use the space below for ways of completing the above statement “Creating the knowledge base...” which are not listed above, and which you would have the highest level of agreement with.

10. *A Visioning Exercise on the Subject of Educational Institutions*

Consider the “105 Fields of Activity...” on p. 33—and the associated “article” titled “The Potential for a Wide Range of Workshop Offerings”).

- a) Please describe the kind of educational institution which could provide such a “wide range of workshop offerings”. (What would it look like? What would it be called? Where might it be located? What would be essential as “structures” and “departments” of such an educational institution? What would be an appropriate “land use layout” for such an institution?)
- b) What kind of certification or experience would be required to become an instructor at such an educational institution?
- c) What kind of appropriate technology would be in use to reduce the ecological footprint and the carbon footprint of building construction, food production, and special materials acquisition?
- d) How would such an institution be funded?

11. *Making a Community Visioning Initiative Happen in Your Community*

Consider the elements of preparation, education, funding and organization necessary for a successful “community visioning initiative” in your local community or region.

(Note: Section 3 in the “1000Communities²” proposal provides a summary of the potential of Community Visioning Initiatives; Section 6 provides specific examples of the above mentioned elements.)

- a) Describe 3 steps that are practical and doable which would help make a “community visioning initiative” more likely to happen in your local community or region.
- b) Describe 3 obstacles or difficulties which would make a “community visioning initiative” less likely to happen in your local community or region.

12. For the questions below, please check the box (or boxes) which best correspond(s) to the way you view the following statements:

a) “As a result of the unprecedented opportunities created by the expansion of the Internet, we have now arrived at a very auspicious moment in time... for at no other time in the course of history has so many people had access to so much in the way of time-tested guidelines, inspiring role models, and service-oriented initiatives relevant to peace, prosperity, and happiness for all humanity.”²

- | | | | | |
|---|---|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I believe it-- and there is much evidence to support it | I believe it-- and there is sufficient evidence to support it | I would like to believe it, but there isn't enough evidence to support it | It is difficult to believe it, with the way things are going now | I don't believe it— there is no evidence to support it |

b) “There are countless numbers of ‘things people can do in the everyday circumstances of their lives’ which will contribute to peacebuilding, community revitalization, and ecological sustainability efforts, in their own communities and regions—and in other parts of the world.”³

- | | | | | |
|---|---|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I believe it-- and there is much evidence to support it | I believe it-- and there is sufficient evidence to support it | I would like to believe it, but there isn't enough evidence to support it | It is difficult to believe it, with the way things are going now | I don't believe it— there is no evidence to support it |

c) “Even now, as you are reading this, truly inspiring contributions of genuine goodwill are being generated in a variety of ways—and in a variety of circumstances—by countless numbers of people in communities around the world.”⁴

- | | | | | |
|---|---|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I believe it-- and there is much evidence to support it | I believe it-- and there is sufficient evidence to support it | I would like to believe it, but there isn't enough evidence to support it | It is difficult to believe it, with the way things are going now | I don't believe it— there is no evidence to support it |

d) “Everyone is involved when it comes to determining the markets that supply the ways of making a living.”⁵

- | | | | | |
|---|---|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I believe it-- and there is much evidence to support it | I believe it-- and there is sufficient evidence to support it | I would like to believe it, but there isn't enough evidence to support it | It is difficult to believe it, with the way things are going now | I don't believe it— there is no evidence to support it |

e) “We are at a critical point in the evolution of spiritual understanding.”⁶

- | | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| agree | agree in some ways | have different view-- or different way of understanding our present circumstances | disagree in some ways | disagree |

Your different view, or different way of understanding our present circumstances: _____

f) “There is a profound and critical need for as many people as possible to be exercising as much love, understanding, and forgiveness as possible—in as many ways as possible.”⁷

- | | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| agree | agree in some ways | have different view-- or different way of understanding our present circumstances | disagree in some ways | disagree |

Your different view, or different way of understanding our present circumstances: _____

g) “A certain degree of physical comfort is necessary, but... the satisfaction of one’s physical needs must come at a certain point to a dead stop before it degenerates into physical decadence.”⁸

- | | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| agree | agree in some ways | have different view--
or different way of
understanding our
present circumstances | disagree in
some ways | disagree |

Your different view, or different way of understanding our present circumstances: _____

h) “Most people making efforts to realize their spiritual potential need to live in caring communities (see definition of caring communities on p. 28 of this issue), so that they can find support from association with kindred spirits.”⁹

- | | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| agree | agree in some ways | have different view--
or different way of
understanding our
present circumstances | disagree in
some ways | disagree |

Your different view, or different way of understanding our present circumstances: _____

i) “Overcoming the challenges of our times will require fully utilizing all the knowledge, tools, and resources accessible to us for the highest good possible in every area of capacity building (physical, ecological, medical, spiritual, educational, social, economic, technical, political, etc).”¹⁰

- | | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| agree | agree in some ways | have different view--
or different way of
understanding our
present circumstances | disagree in
some ways | disagree |

Your different view, or different way of understanding our present circumstances: _____

j) “The mariner uses his compass to guide him aright amidst the dark storm clouds and raging waves. When Man is overwhelmed by the dark clouds of despair and the raging confusion of irrepressible desires, he too, has a compass which will point to him the direction he has to take.... That compass is a Society that is dedicated to the propagation of Spiritual Discipline.”¹¹

- | | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| agree | agree in some ways | have different view--
or different way of
understanding our
present circumstances | disagree in
some ways | disagree |

Your different view, or different way of understanding our present circumstances: _____

k) “The most advanced societies are the ones which are successful at integrating spiritual wisdom into the everyday circumstances of community life.”¹²

- | | | | | |
|---|--|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I believe it-- and
there is much evidence
to support it | I believe it-- and
there is sufficient
evidence to
support it | I would like to
believe it, but there
isn't enough evidence
to support it | It is difficult to
believe it, with the
way things are
going now | I don't believe it—
there is no evidence
to support it |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| agree | agree in some ways | have different view--
or different way of
understanding our
present circumstances | disagree in
some ways | disagree |

Your different view, or different way of understanding our present circumstances: _____

13. Please complete the following sentence in as many ways as you believe may help others who will read your responses:

If only there was a way to _____.

14. Please complete the following sentence in as many ways as you believe may help others who will read your responses:

The person who will help me the most is the person who will _____.

15. This question focuses on the creation of “accountability indicators”, or ways of measuring whether our efforts to resolve the challenges before us are on the right track or not. This question has two parts. The first part is preceded by a list of goal areas which are offered as appropriate for villages which might be thought of as located in “less developed” areas. The second part is preceded by a list of goal areas which are offered as appropriate for towns and cities which might be thought of as located in “more developed” areas.

Part 1

Below is a list of 10 goal areas which are offered as appropriate for villages which might be thought of as located in “less developed” areas.

- a) A clean and beautiful environment
- b) Adequate provision of clean drinking water
- c) Minimal supplies of clothing
- d) Adequate and balanced nutrition
- e) Simple housing
- f) Basic health care
- g) Basic communication facilities
- h) A minimal supply of energy
- i) Holistic education
- j) Satisfaction of intellectual and cultural needs

Question: Please brainstorm on the subject of what quantifiable benchmark goals or qualitative progress indicators might be used to confirm that efforts being made are on the right track (or signal that efforts being made are on the wrong track).

Part 2

Below is a list of 10 goal areas which are offered as appropriate for towns and cities which might be thought of as located in “more developed” areas.

- a) Poverty Alleviation
 - job creation/retention
 - job training

- b) Economic Development
 - enterprise development
 - producer responsibility
- c) Social Infrastructure and Services
 - education and literacy
 - health
 - food and nutrition
 - public safety
 - crime reduction and prevention
- d) Environmental Regeneration
 - appropriate technology
 - waste reuse and recycling
 - solid waste management and treatment
 - environmental education/consumer awareness
 - resource conservation
- e) Physical Infrastructure and Services
 - energy use and production
 - water
 - transportation/access
 - communication
 - sewage and sanitation
- f) Natural Hazard Management
 - reconstruction capacity
 - contingency planning
- g) Housing
 - affordable housing and shelter
 - homelessness
- h) Land Use and Urban Planning
 - land use regulations
 - land tenure (protection from eminent domain)
 - community based design and planning
- i) Urban Governance
 - legislation
 - information access
- j) Social and Cultural Vitality
 - community cooperation
 - social integration
 - cultural expression
 - conflict resolution

Question: Please brainstorm on the subject of what quantifiable benchmark goals or qualitative progress indicators might be used to confirm that efforts being made are on the right track (or signal that efforts being made are on the wrong track).

Notes and Source References (Section 9)

1. From the “World Report on Violence and Health” (World Health Organization Geneva 2002) in Chapter 9 “The Way Forward: Recommendations for Action” p. 254 (at <http://whqlibdoc.who.int/hq/2002/9241545615.pdf>) (Confirmed June 11, 2008)
2. This writer
3. This writer
4. This writer
5. This writer
6. This writer
7. This writer
8. Mahatma Gandhi from “Gandhi’s Swadeshi: The Economics of Permanence” by Satish Kumar at <http://squat.net/caravan/ICC-en/Krrs-en/ghandi-econ-en.htm> (see Paragraph 13 in section “Principles of Swadeshi”) (Confirmed June 11, 2008)
9. This writer
10. This writer
11. Sri Sathya Sai Baba from *Sathya Sai Speaks* Vol. 8, Chpt. 21, p. 108 Sri Sathya Sai Books and Publications Trust Prasanthi Nilayam India (Note: Vol. 8 contains discourses delivered by Sri Sathya Sai Baba during 1968)
12. This writer

An Excerpt from “Peacebuilding in its Most Compassionate Form”

(by this writer, accessible at www.ipcri.net)

“We are at a critical point in the evolution of spiritual understanding. Fortunately, there is much potential which could be translated into a positive outcome. Another way of saying this is: *at no other time in the course of history have so many people had access to so much along the lines of resources necessary to overcoming the challenges of their times. We have the resources necessary to overcome the challenges of our times.* And whether we know it or not, there are many people who are actively involved in translating the potential energy now accessible to us into positive and constructive initiatives... many people who are *already on* the pathways to resolving many of the challenges in Appendix 1. Unfortunately, there are still many initiatives critical to overcoming the challenges of our times which are not quite “coming through the mist as much as they should be”... too many “frameworks” and infrastructures which have been developed as a reaction to violence, or the threat of violence, and not enough “frameworks” and infrastructures which have been developed along the lines of peacebuilding, reconciliation, community revitalization, and ecological sustainability.” (from p. 10)

The IPCR Journal/Newsletter

“... bringing to the fore what is often hidden...”

Integrating Spiritual Wisdom into the Everyday Circumstances of Community Life
(Appendix 6 from the “1000Communities²” proposal, see p. 151-155)

A. Introduction

1. Appendix 4 provides evidence of a profound and critical need for an exponential increase in compassion for our fellow human beings. This profound and critical need is especially urgent when viewed as only a part of the challenges listed in Appendix 1 [the “Ten Point Assessment” accessible on the homepage of The IPCR Initiative (at www.ipcri.net)].

2. And yet arriving at a full appreciation of the difficulty of our current circumstances is an unpredictable and potentially dangerous proposition, as arriving at such a point *without also having* sufficient faith and wisdom—and access to appropriate resources—could be overwhelming, and could lead to many people losing hope and becoming desperate. After all, consider that in one of the documents which has assisted many people to a fuller awareness of the implications of “peak oil” (the “Hirsch Report”), the suggestion is made that successful risk management of such a profound change in human affairs will require that large scale mitigation activity commence ten years before the actual “peak” occurs.¹

How much more time, might we imagine, will be needed for the profound changes in human affairs necessary to overcome all the challenges described in Appendix 1?

B. “... bringing to the fore what is often hidden....”

1. The challenges of our times are such that it is now critical for us to access the storehouses of wisdom which have accumulated over the many centuries of human experience, and which have been confirmed again and again as essential to individual well-being and social harmony by the saints, sages, spiritual leaders, and sincere practitioners of all faiths and moral “world views”.

2. Even now, as you are reading this, truly inspiring contributions of genuine goodwill are being generated in a variety of ways—and in a variety of circumstances—by countless numbers of people in communities around the world.

3. *And yet...* much of the real treasured wisdom of religious, spiritual, and moral traditions now seems to be hidden—and thus in need of being re-discovered. These “hidden” resources include teachings which inspire and encourage people to

- a) place a high priority on the development of truth, virtue, love, and peace—and live disciplined lives for the purpose of adhering to truth, cultivating virtue and love, and maintaining the pathways to enduring peace

- b) sacrifice personal desires for the greater good of the whole
- c) find contentment and quality of life while consuming less material goods and ecological services
- d) prefer peacebuilding which supports and actualizes mutually beneficial understandings, forgiveness, and reconciliation—*and which abstains from violent conflict resolution*—as a way of bringing cycles of violence to an end
- e) use resources carefully, so that there is surplus available for emergency assistance
- f) support community life and cultural traditions which ‘... bring to the fore what is often hidden: how many good people there are, how many ways there are to do good, and how much happiness comes to those who extend help, as well as to those who receive it.’”

What can we do—at this particular point in time—in the everyday circumstances of our lives, to bring the best ideas *from* the storehouses of accumulated wisdom now accessible to us and “*through the mist*”, so that our community building processes will be most effective in helping us overcome the challenges of our times?

C. The Interfaith Peacebuilding and Community Revitalization (IPCR) Initiative

1. This writer is the founder and outreach coordinator for The IPCR Initiative.
2. The IPCR Initiative is an effort to apply the accumulated wisdom now accessible to us towards the general goal of integrating spiritual wisdom into the everyday circumstances of community life—and towards the specific goal of generating practical responses to the challenges of our times.
3. The IPCR Initiative is aware of an urgent need to build bridges and increase collaboration between diverse communities of people; both as a response to the implications of global warming, ecological footprint analysis, and the “peaking” of our finite supplies of oil—and to be proactive about individual spiritual formation, interfaith peacebuilding, and the creation of ecologically sustainable communities.
4. The IPCR Initiative understands that the complexity associated with building bridges and increasing collaboration between diverse communities of people, the urgent need for resolutions to a significant number of critical issues in the near future—*and the seemingly chronic nature of many of the challenges of our times*—suggests a need for problem solving on a scale most of us have never known before.

5. Assessments of the challenges of our times such as the one offered in Appendix 1 provide evidence that there is a profound and critical need for human beings—collectively—to be

- a) much more organized and deliberate about “... bringing to the fore what is often hidden: how many good people there are, how many ways there are to do good, and how much happiness comes to those who extend help, as well as to those who receive it.”
- b) much more multifaceted and participation-friendly in our approaches to peacebuilding, community revitalization, and ecological sustainability
- c) much more resourceful in the use of the storehouses of accumulated wisdom and “embodied energy” which are now accessible to us.

6. Specifically, the contributions The IPCR Initiative hopes to make along the lines described by the three goals listed above are as follows:

- a) inspire, encourage, and support the creation of many local community specific and regional specific variations of this “1000Communities²” proposal—so that the Community Visioning Initiatives take place in as many ways and in as many communities as possible
- b) introduce The Eight IPCR Concepts through workshops offered at the local community level
- c) actively develop the concept of “Questionnaires That Help Build Caring Communities”, administer such questionnaires at the community and/or regional level, and then share compilations of the responses (with summary and conclusions)
- d) help to establish, and contribute to, local community points of entry acting as “clearinghouses”, where residents can discover more about the countless number of “things people can do in the everyday circumstances of their lives” which will contribute to peacebuilding, community revitalization, and ecological sustainability in their own communities and regions—and in other parts of the world
- e) identify, develop, and create enough descriptions and examples of the 105 fields of activity

and generate enough regular feature material in categories such as local community and regional good news, workshop and conference listings, committee reports, resource reviews, letters to the editor, “community journal” postings, and links to other useful information and organizations

to justify monthly local community specific publications of an IPCR Journal/Newsletter (or a similar publication with a different name....)

The IPCR Journal/Newsletter

“... bringing to the fore what is often hidden....”

f) combine the resources created by “clearinghouses,” and “community newsletters” to link many associated efforts—such as those in “A List of Related Fields of Activity” (see Appendix 7)—and thus assist with outreach, partnership formation, consensus building and development of service capacity associated with a significant number of peacebuilding, community revitalization, and ecological sustainability efforts, all at the same time.

7. The IPCR Initiative is providing this assistance as a result of believing that any community of people, however small in numbers, who follow through on most or all of the practical assistance described in the seven steps mentioned above, will contribute a “multiplier effect” of a positive nature on *whatever goals are decided on at the local community and regional levels.*

D. Filling in the Blank

1. This writer believes that the “multiplier effect” of a positive nature referred to above will contribute to

a) re-affirming the real treasured wisdom of religious, spiritual, and moral traditions

b) demonstrating the truth of the following propositions

i) There are countless numbers of “things people can do in the everyday circumstances of their lives” which will contribute to peacebuilding, community revitalization, and ecological sustainability efforts, in their own communities and regions—and in other parts of the world.

ii) People can, one by one, decide to deliberately focus the way they spend their time, energy, and money so that their actions have positive repercussions on many or all of the action plans which emerge from Community Visioning Initiatives.

iii) The result can be that there are countless ‘ways to earn a living’ which contribute to the peacebuilding, community revitalization, and ecological sustainability efforts necessary to overcome the challenges of our times.

and thus create many meaningful answers to the challenge of filling in the blank in the following statement:

In the best of times, even the most profound challenges can be overcome; for in the best of times, _____ is/are nurtured, supported, and sustained by family, friends, teachers, mentors, elders, and the everyday influences of community life and cultural traditions.

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“... bringing to the fore what is often hidden...”

E. Ongoing Revitalization of a Communities’ “Moral Compass”

How can local communities arrive at practical definitions of “right livelihood”? What local institutions would be most appropriate as commissioners and overseers of a resource guide to “right livelihood”? How can leaders at the regional and local community level assure residents that they understand the challenges of our times, if they themselves do not participate in the very activities they advocate for overcoming the challenges of our times? How can our communities change “the way things get done” so that more people can live in accordance with their moral convictions? Workshops associated with The IPCR Initiative can identify, discover, create, support, and sustain comprehensive and practical answers to these very relevant questions—and provide a system by which the answers can be re-evaluated and re-stated on an ongoing basis. *Therefore, it may be said that by its very nature The IPCR Initiative includes a built-in and ongoing process for re-evaluating and re-stating the “moral compass” of a community or region.* And it may also be said that such a “moral compass” would incorporate any genuine and sincere contributions from participants associated with any religious, spiritual, or moral tradition without any damage to the genuine and sincere parts of the “framework” which gives meaning to their lives.

F. Our Particular Moment in Time on This Planet Earth *Could Be* the Best of Times

There are many important initiatives which are critical to overcoming the challenges of our times, but which are not quite “coming through the mist as much as they should be.” The IPCR Initiative can be very helpful in exactly these kinds of circumstances, as it encourages and facilitates a “constellation” of initiatives by which the best (*in the view of the participants using these processes*) associated with individual spiritual formation, interfaith peacebuilding, community revitalization, ecological sustainability, etc. can bubble up to the surface, be recognized as priorities, and therefore be brought forward as appropriate recipients of peoples’ time, energy, and money. Many people can realize the wisdom of deliberately focusing the way they spend their time, energy, and money so that their actions have positive repercussions on the fields of activity described by the IPCR Mission Statement goals, and on other related fields of activity (see Appendix 7). As the ancient Chinese proverb says: “Many hands make much work light.”

One of the most persistent ironies in life is that with so many opportunities to provide real assistance to fellow human beings—and with the potential for such assistance to result in happiness “to those who extend help as well as to those who receive it”—there are still many, many people in this world who cannot find a “way to earn a living” providing such assistance. The IPCR Initiative can help to remedy such an unfortunate irony by helping to create “caring communities”, which are defined here as follows:

“Caring communities” are communities with residents who are aware of the depth and range of the challenges of our times, and therefore do their best

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“... bringing to the fore what is often hidden...”

to take actions which will have positive repercussions on the fields of activity described by the IPCR Mission Statement goals (see p. 32), and on other related fields of activity (see p. 33).

The most advanced societies are the ones which are successful at integrating spiritual wisdom into the everyday circumstances of community life.

Our particular moment in time on this Planet Earth *could be* the best of times.

G. Peacebuilding in its Most Compassionate Form

Peacebuilding in its most compassionate form is not a competitive field of activity. Viewed in this light, the most valuable forms of peacebuilding will nurture, support, and sustain the development of an infinite variety of other forms of peacebuilding, community revitalization, and ecologically sustainability initiatives. The IPCR Initiative is an effort to nurture, support, and sustain peacebuilding in its most compassionate form.

Notes and Source References (relating to Appendix 6)

1. From the “Hirsch Report” [“The Peaking of World Oil Production: Impacts, Mitigation and Risk Management”]—Project Leader: Robert L. Hirsch (SAIC) Commissioned by the Department of Energy, and dated February, 2005] [Accessible at the website of Roscoe Bartlett (R-MD)(USA) at www.bartlett.house.gov/EnergyUpdates/ (Accessed August 24, 2007)] (see Point #3: “Oil Peaking Presents a Unique Challenge”; on p. 64).

An Invitation to a Short Story “The Spirit of the Sacred Hoop” (10 pages)

(First version in Fall 1984; first revision in Spring 2004; second revision in Spring 2006)
by Stefan Pasti, Founder and Outreach Coordinator of The IPCR Initiative

Many years ago there was a tribe of people who were experiencing challenges that were threatening their very existence. During this “time of fear”, a young woman experienced a vision—of a bird, which said to her:

“You must all leave where you are, and travel to a place far away.... You must look for the tree at the center of the sacred hoop. You will know when you have found this tree when you hear birds singing from the branches of a tree and you understand their song.”

The tribe of people eventually begin this “great journey”. Do they find the tree at the center of the sacred hoop? “The Spirit of Sacred Hoop” is a 9 page short story which describes significant events in the history of a tribe of people in ways that recognize intuition and spiritual wisdom as important elements of community and cultural sustainability.

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“... bringing to the fore what is often hidden....”

About IPCR Workshops

[Note: This content is a reproduction of the content in the “Workshops” section of The IPCR website (at www.ipcri.net)]

On the Content and Focus of IPCR Workshops

In general, IPCR workshops will provide an overview of evidence supporting the need for an IPCR Initiative [see the document “An Assessment of the Most Difficult Challenges of Our Times”)], and provide an introduction to some or all of The Eight IPCR Concepts.

The Eight IPCR Concepts are:

“Community Good News Networks,” “Community Faith Mentoring Networks,” “Spiritual Friendships,” “Questionnaires That Help Build Caring Communities,” “Community Visioning Initiatives for Peace,” “Spiritually Responsible Investing,” “Ecological Sustainability,” and “IPCR Journal/Newsletters”

[Note: Here is a link to the pdf document ["Brief Descriptions of The Eight IPCR Concepts"](#). This document can also be accessed in the "All IPCR Documents" section of the IPCR website's homepage.]

Specifically, IPCR workshop discussion can “branch out” using—as starting points—content from “The IPCR Workshop Primer”. Here are some examples of content from “The IPCR Workshop Primer” which can be used as starting points for workshop discussion:

- 1) the 10 goals in “The IPCR Mission Statement”
- 2) the “105 Related Fields of Activity”
- 3) the 4 parts of the “IPCR Vision Statements”
- 4) the “23 Different Ways of Describing The IPCR Initiative”
- 5) the 60 sample questions in the “Building Caring Communities” Questionnaire
- 6) the 79 Inspiring Role Models
- 7) the 75 Service-Oriented Initiatives

In addition to focusing on material provided by the “The IPCR Workshop Primer”, IPCR workshop discussions can also be supplemented by other material at this IPCR website (at www.ipcri.net), by comments contributed to the IPCR Community Journal (at

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/ipcri/>), by material associated with the 105 Related Fields of Activity (see p. 33 of this issue), and by other related material accessible through the Internet, or by personal experience. There is much that can be done to generate goodwill and promote peace that has not yet been done. There is much potential which can be explored in the context of IPCR Workshop discussion.

Encouraging and Facilitating a “Constellation” of Initiatives

There are many important initiatives which are critical to overcoming the challenges of our times, but which are not quite “coming through the mist as much as they should be.” The IPCR Initiative can be very helpful in exactly these kinds of circumstances, as The Eight IPCR Concepts encourage and facilitate a “constellation” of initiatives by which the best (*in the view of the participants using these processes*) associated with individual spiritual formation, interfaith peacebuilding, community revitalization, ecological sustainability, etc. can bubble up to the surface, be recognized as priorities, and therefore be brought forward as appropriate recipients of peoples time, energy, and money. Many people can realize the wisdom of deliberately focusing the way they spend their time, energy, and money so that their actions have positive repercussions on the goals listed in the IPCR Mission Statement, and on many or all of the “105 related fields of activity”. As the ancient Chinese proverb says: “Many hands make much work light.”

Workshops introducing The Eight IPCR Concepts (“Community Good News Networks,” “Community Faith Mentoring Networks,” “Spiritual Friendships,” “Questionnaires That Help Build Caring Communities,” “Community Visioning Initiatives for Peace,” “Spiritually Responsible Investing,” “Ecological Sustainability,” and “IPCR Journal/Newsletters”) can be a starting point for many practical collective efforts, based and sustained at the local community and regional level, and representing contributions towards the goals listed in The IPCR Mission Statement. This writer is confident that applying these concepts—at the local community and regional level—will provide for each of us more and more opportunities to contribute towards such goals, more and more understanding about why we would want to contribute—and more and more opportunities to encourage and support each other in the process.

Location, Cost, Facilitators

Workshops providing an introduction to The IPCR Initiative—and to some or all of The Eight IPCR Concepts (“Community Good News Networks,” “Community Faith Mentoring Networks,” “Spiritual Friendships,” “Questionnaires That Help Build Caring Communities,” “Community Visioning Initiatives for Peace,” “Spiritually Responsible Investing,” “Ecological Sustainability,” and “IPCR Journal/Newsletters”)—are now being offered in the Leesburg, Virginia area.

Facilitation services for IPCR Concept Introduction Workshops are currently offered at a rate of \$75 for a 1 hour workshop, \$100 for a 2 hour workshop, \$150 for a 3 hour workshop, and \$200 for a 4 hour workshop. (Longer workshops will have greater variety in the approach, structure, and content of the workshop experience.) The recommended number of participants for workshops is 5-15 people. [i.e. If there are 5 participants for a 2 hour workshop, the cost would be \$20 for each participant; if there are 15 participants for a 3 hour workshop, the cost would be \$10 for each participant.] Currently, the only person facilitating IPCR Workshops is the founder of the IPCR Initiative, Stefan Pasti. (For more information about Stefan Pasti, see “IPCR Staff” in “About the IPCR Initiative”)

The cost, suggested by The IPCR Initiative, of attending such workshops is deliberately affordable, to emphasize and encourage frequent participation. Participating in IPCR Concept Introduction Workshops at intervals—over a long period of time—will make it possible for participants to come in contact with a valuable variety of input and experiences relating not only to the IPCR concepts, but to many other efforts associated with peacebuilding, community revitalization, and ecological sustainability.

The location of IPCR Workshops will be determined according to demand-- and according to availability of public access community use buildings.

For more information, please contact:

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IPCR Copyright Policy

In light of the urgent need to build bridges and increase collaboration between diverse communities of people, all of the documents, information, resources, etc. created by The IPCR Initiative are viewed as resources which ought to be made as accessible as possible to people who can make good use of them. Therefore, all such documents and information may be reproduced without permission, and distributed in any way the user believes will be consistent with the goals listed in The IPCR Mission Statement. [Please note: Quotes, statistics, and other copyrighted material used in IPCR documents have been appropriately attributed to their copyrighted sources. Readers may thus be assured that The IPCR Initiative encourages and supports the proper referencing of copyrighted material to their copyrighted sources.]

Peacebuilding in its Most Compassionate Form

Peacebuilding in its most compassionate form is not a competitive field of activity. Viewed in this light, the most valuable forms of peacebuilding will nurture, support, and sustain the development of an infinite variety of other forms of peacebuilding, community revitalization, and ecologically sustainability initiatives. The IPCR Initiative is an effort to nurture, support, and sustain peacebuilding in its most compassionate form.

The IPCR Mission Statement

The Interfaith Peacebuilding and Community Revitalization (IPCR) Initiative is an effort to facilitate the practical application of the Eight IPCR Concepts (“Community Good News Networks,” “Community Faith Mentoring Networks,” “Spiritual Friendships,” “Questionnaires That Help Build Caring Communities,” “Community Visioning Initiatives for Peace,” “Spiritually Responsible Investing,” “Ecological Sustainability,” and “IPCR Journal/Newsletters”)—at the community and regional level—as a way of contributing to the following goals:

- 1) “... bringing to the fore what is often hidden: how many good people there are, how many ways there are to do good, and how much happiness comes to those who extend help as well as to those who receive it.”
- 2) increasing our collective capacity to encourage and inspire individual spiritual formation—with all the beneficial consequences that follow for individuals, communities, regions, etc.
- 3) building trust among people from different faith communities and cultural traditions
- 4) increasing our capacity to be responsible stewards of our time, energy, and money
- 5) increasing our capacity to access what is necessary for basic human needs and quality of life through principles and practices of ecological sustainability and permaculture, especially in light of the implications of global warming, ecological footprint analysis, and the “peaking” of our finite supplies of oil
- 6) increasing our awareness of the countless number of ‘things people can do in the everyday circumstances of their lives’ which will contribute to peacebuilding, community revitalization, and ecological sustainability efforts, in our own communities and regions—and in other parts of the world
- 7) reducing the incidence of violence—and all the costs associated with war
- 8) increasing emergency assistance to people with basic human needs
- 9) reflecting an understanding of the value of silence
- 10) creating local community and regional publications that provide a format for sharing the good news which would be identified, encouraged, supported, and sustained by contributions to the first 9 goals

A List of Related Fields of Activity

[which are in some way—or which are in many ways—
related to the goals of The IPCR Mission Statement (see p. 32)]

accountability indicators, alleviating hunger, alleviating poverty, alternative gifts, appropriate technology, barter networks, biodynamic agriculture, building civic skills, building community, car-free zones, character education, citizen participation, citizen peacebuilding, co-housing, community banks, community development, community economics, community gardens, community good news networks, community journals, community land trusts, community membership agreements, community revitalization, community revolving loans, community self-awareness, community service work, community supported agriculture, community supported manufacturing, community visioning initiatives, consensus decision making, cottage industries, creative commons, cultural diversity, development assistance, disease control, eco-classifieds, ecological architecture, ecological footprint analysis, ecological tipping points, economic conversion, edible schoolyards, emergency humanitarian aid, emergency medical assistance, energy conservation, energy descent pathways, energy farms, fair trade, faith-based educational institutions, faith mentoring, farmers markets, food co-ops, green living, green politics, green purchasing, green retrofitting, holistic health care, homesteading, identifying problems and solutions, inclusive decision-making processes, individual spiritual formation, inspiring role models, interfaith dialogue, interfaith peacebuilding, intergenerational projects, local community points of entry, local currency, locally based food processing, locally grown organic food, low impact transport systems, medical assistance, meditation, mentoring, neighborhood revitalization, non-profit human service organizations, non-violent conflict resolution, oil depletion protocol, peace studies programs, peak oil, permaculture, positive news, powerdown projects, preventative health care, questionnaire construction, recycling, relocalization, renewable resources, right livelihood, right livelihood employment listings, rural renaissance, socially engaged spirituality, socially responsible investing, solutions journalism, spiritual discipline, spiritual diversity, spiritual friendships, spiritually responsible investing, sustainable health care, vegetarian nutrition, village design, village industries, violence prevention, voluntary simplicity, water conservation, win-win conflict resolution, world population awareness, yoga, zero waste, etc.

The Potential for a Wide Range of Workshop Offerings

The IPCR Initiative is currently offering workshops with the goal of introducing The IPCR Initiative, and The Eight IPCR Concepts—and the goal of making the resources of The IPCR Initiative as accessible as possible, so people can make use of them. There does exist, however—and it is worth emphasizing here in this issue—both the need and the potential for people (including myself) to provide workshops at the local community level on all of the 105 fields of activity listed above, so people can make best use of *resources associated with those concepts*. Such a wide range of workshop offerings would, I believe, be most accessible as workshop offerings from some kind of community center. If there are any readers of this IPCR Journal/Newsletter who would be interested in developing the idea of a community center for such a “wide range of workshop offerings,” please contact me—Stefan Pasti—at stefanpasti@ipcri.net. Thank you.

“The more we realize the repercussions of our actions on our neighbours and strive to act according to the highest we are capable of, the more shall we advance in our spiritual development.” [J.C. Kumarappa in “Why The Village Movement?” Rajchat, Kashi (India) 1960 p. 73]

Everyone is involved when it comes to determining the markets
that supply the “ways of earning a living.” (SP)

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“... bringing to the fore what is often hidden....”

Notes and Source References

(relating to quotations and excerpts on p. 1)

1. From the “UN Human Development Report 2007/2008 *Fighting Climate Change: Human Solidarity in a Divided World*” Director and Lead Author: Kevin Watkins Published for the United Nations Development Program Released November 27, 2007 In “Summary” of Complete Report (See http://hdr.undp.org/en/media/hdr_20072008_summary_english.pdf for free download) On p. 19, in section “Avoiding Dangerous Climate Change: Strategies for Mitigation” paragraph 1 (Confirmed June 1, 2008)
2. From Lester Brown’s “*Plan B 3.0: Mobilizing to Save Civilization*” Published by Earth Policy Institute 2008 (See <http://www.earth-policy.org/Books/PB3/Contents.htm> for free download) From “Introduction”, in section “Plan B—A Plan of Hope” p. 20, paragraphs 1, 2, and 3 (Confirmed June 13, 2008)
3. From an editorial titled “The World Food Crises” in the “Opinion” section of The New York Times (online). Published April 10, 2008 (at <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/04/10/opinion/10thu1.html>) (see paragraph 3) (Confirmed June 13, 2008)
4. From a speech titled “A Generational Challenge to Repower America” by former vice president (U.S.) and Nobel Prize recipient (2007) Al Gore, given on July 17, 2008, and accessible at the website of his organization “We Can Solve It” (see http://www.wecansolveit.org/pages/al_gore_a_generational_challenge_to_repower_america/) (Confirmed July 26, 2008)

About the Writer and Editor of this Issue

Currently, the writer and editor for The IPCR Journal/Newsletter is Stefan Pasti. Mr. Pasti has been actively involved in peacebuilding and community revitalization work for over 20 years—as a writer (project-related correspondence, short novel, short story); an editor (newsletters, quotation collections); an advocate of ecologically sustainable communities; a practitioner of voluntary simplicity; and, more recently, as founder and outreach coordinator for The Interfaith Peacebuilding and Community Revitalization (IPCR) Initiative (www.ipcri.net). Mr. Pasti has been employed in many different settings—door-to-door canvasser for citizen action groups; field worker on organic farms; activity director, companion, and transportation provider for elders with special needs; etc. The most important influence in Mr. Pasti’s life has been, and continues to be, the teachings of Sri Sathya Sai Baba (age 81, with a main residence in Puttaparthi, India). In 1997, Mr. Pasti completed a 301 page arrangement of selected quotations from “Sathya Sai Speaks” (Vol. 1-11, first U.S. editions) (discourses by Sri Sathya Sai Baba from the years 1953-1982).

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