

The IPCR Initiative: Executive Summary 2010

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A Brief Introduction

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.

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.

What can we do—at this particular point in time—in the everyday circumstances of our lives, to bring the best ideas *from* the accumulated storehouse of 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?

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.

The IPCR Initiative is an effort to assist fellow human beings in identifying what—from the accumulated storehouse of wisdom now accessible to us—would best answer the above question “What can we do...”—and what—from the accumulated storehouses of wisdom now accessible to us—would best fill in the blank in the above statement.

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August, 2010

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Additional Note: No “Notes and Source References” section this time. The IPCR Initiative encourages and supports the proper referencing of copyrighted material to their copyrighted sources. And in all previous IPCR documents, quotes, statistics, and other copyrighted material used in IPCR documents have been appropriately attributed to their copyrighted sources, and appropriate source references have been provided—as proper acknowledgment and recognition of sources, and so readers can make further explorations on particular subject matter. However, since almost all of the content of this document is excerpts from other IPCR documents, there is no “Notes and Source References” section for this document. If readers would like to see footnotes with supporting evidence for statements made, more complete attribution relating to specific quotes, or more detailed notes and source references for excerpts from other writers or sources, they are encouraged to explore the original IPCR document from which the content of this document was drawn... and it is likely enough that they will find a note or source reference of some kind or other. SP]

I. A Longer Introduction

We live in a complex world. There are many difficult challenges ahead (for the two summary lists that the IPCR Initiative offers, see Section IV “Many Difficult Challenges Ahead”).

More and more people are coming to the realization that overcoming the challenges of our times will require problem solving on a scale most of us have never known before—and that there is an urgent need to restructure our economic systems and our education systems to respond to these challenges.

There has never been a time in the course of history when both the capacity to cultivate practical wisdom and the capacity to build a positive and constructive consensus were as important as they are now. Are we up to the challenge?

From this writer’s point of view, there is a wealth of resources and initiatives relevant to responding to the challenges of our time; unfortunately, many such resources and initiatives are not quite “coming through the mist as much as they should be”.

The IPCR Initiative recognizes that even though the difficulties of the challenges ahead are unprecedented, there is also much hope; 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.

We have the resources necessary to overcome the challenges of our times.

An Urgent Need for a Greater Sense of Personal Responsibility

This document, “The IPCR Initiative: Executive Summary 2010”, is an attempt to summarize and provide quick access to the concepts, approaches and resources identified by this writer as having the most potential to create multiplier effects of a positive nature.

However, (to repeat, for emphasis), there are many difficult challenges ahead. One of the items (#10) in the IPCR “Ten Point Assessment of the Most Difficult Challenges of Our Times” (see complete ten point list in Section IV) is as follows: “Sorting out what are real challenges and what are sound and practical solutions is becoming more and more difficult, as there is now, in many parts of the world, a multitude of ideas of all kinds coming to the fore in personal, family, community, and cultural life—all at the same time”. There is often a feeling, at least for this writer, that it is hard to get positive suggestions and ideas for potential solutions “in edgewise”.

Another difficulty which can be associated with the complexity of modern life is that many of us would like to believe there are experts “somewhere” who understand what the problems are, and who can resolve them without there needing to be any effort on our part. As we go forward from this point in time, this writer very sincerely hopes that more and more people come to the realization that the difficult challenges ahead are not something the experts will resolve while the rest of us are doing something else.... Everyone is involved when it comes to determining the markets that supply the “ways of earning a living”; and given the unprecedented nature of the challenges ahead, all of us have important responsibilities in the coming months and years ahead.

This urgent need for a greater sense of personal responsibility can be more keenly felt by considering the following descriptions of the challenges ahead...

1) There still seems to be a majority of people on the planet who do not have a clear understanding, well-grounded in personal experience, of which basic elements of community life and cultural traditions lead to mutually beneficial understandings, which lead to cycles of violence—and why it is so important for people to achieve clarity on this subject.

2) “When we attempt to build peace without being embodiments of peace ourselves, we inflict violence without even knowing we are doing so. That might be why we professionals have not been very successful in our peacebuilding efforts, especially when it comes to going beyond stopping war and transforming relationships and society.” (Dr. Hizkaes Assefa, in article “Embody Peace”)

3) “Cultures” of violence, greed, corruption, and overindulgence which have become so common that many of us accept such as inevitable. (Item #2 in the IPCR “Ten Point Assessment of the Most Difficult Challenges of Our Times”)

4) “The subject of religious education is one on which it is difficult to say anything at present without appearing to take sides in those unhappy wrangles to which there seems to be no end....”

(Prof. J. S. MacKenzie, First International Moral Education Congress in 1908)

It must be said that most of us are far from understanding why what we believe to be solutions are not working as well as we thought they might. In this kind of environment, peacebuilding work is difficult. There is much inner work that needs to be done; and many people who do not understand why there is much inner work that needs to be done.

It is in this kind of cultural and historical context that The IPCR Initiative identifies an exponential increase in compassion for our fellow human beings as an essential and critical element of a truly comprehensive response to the challenges of our times.

On a similar note, The IPCR Initiative is an advocate for comprehensive Community Visioning Initiatives, which can assist in maximizing citizen participation in identifying challenges, and in solution-oriented activity. Many people may think it is naïve to imagine that people from so many diverse religious, spiritual, moral, and cultural traditions can decide to come together in such a way as to not only encourage, but participate in, a high percentage of constructive thinking and constructive action in response to the difficult challenges ahead. From this writer’s point of view, such skepticism and cynicism depend for their existence on doubts as to whether it is possible for people to achieve highly advanced forms of wisdom and compassion through genuine instruction and sincere effort. *Thus it is that there is a great responsibility on those people who are in any way representatives of religious, spiritual, and/or moral tradition—to demonstrate what is possible along the lines of wisdom and compassion, to provide genuine instruction when sincere efforts are being made, to contribute to the greater good of the whole, and to help restore confidence in the higher values of life.*

Additional Difficulties

The IPCR Initiative has given much attention to developing concepts, approaches, and resources which can help communities of people develop a healthy appreciation for each others strengths, create a well-developed capacity to resolve even the most difficult challenges, and actualize a high level of compassion for their fellow human beings in the everyday circumstances of community life. Unfortunately, many of these concepts, approaches, and resources seem difficult to describe in simple terms, especially since there are no examples of a “constellation” of such concepts, etc having already been implemented.

In addition, there may be many readers who wonder what qualifications this writer has which are convincing enough to cause readers to explore this document further. The plain truth of the matter is I have had access to spiritual teachings which have convinced me that there is much that can be done to generate goodwill and promote peace that has not yet been done (including in my own personal realm); and I have lived most of my life at a most auspicious 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. Having had access to this much inspiration, and being able to see very clearly how many related fields of activity could be contributing to the greater good, can it be so surprising that I have given as much attention as I could to exploring how this potential could be realized? Such are my qualifications. If I do not achieve success (in the sense of being recognized as a valuable contributor to specific fields of activity); I still have, in my own mind, the belief that I have contributed something towards the efforts of others, in the future, who *will succeed*.

Though the magnitude of the difficulties ahead may cause us to lose hope at times, faith helps us to believe that there will be ways forward (and if not for us, at least for many others); and if there will be ways forward (successful responses to the challenges of our times), then the more constructive questions are: how can people earn a living contributing to such responses, and how do we—individually—discover what our unique contributions will be. By exploring IPCR Initiative documents and resources, individuals and communities of people can find many different ways of answering those two questions.

... for the greater good of the whole

The IPCR Initiative is dedicated to assisting fellow human beings, wherever they may be, who are also trying to fill in the blank in the statement below:

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.

I hope there are people who find the concepts, approaches, and resources of The IPCR Initiative helpful and relevant; who make use of them to create more solution-oriented employment, for themselves, and for other people in their communities; and who share the best of what they learn with others, for the greater good of the whole.

There are many people who will be very appreciative when they find that they have an important role to play in the work ahead. Leaders should guide citizens so that they can discover how they can do their part to contribute to the greater good of the whole.

II. On the Growth and Development of Societies and Culture

A. From section “Problems That May Arise...” in “The Twilight of One Era, and the Dawning of Another” (p. 13)

1) As young children grow into adults, the everyday circumstances of community life and cultural traditions provide “frameworks” by which they “understand their experiences and make judgments about what is valuable and important”. These “frameworks” shape the way people come into contact with each other, and the way they interpret facts, issues, and events—and provide the context by which people decide what are appropriate responses to the circumstances of their lives. These “frameworks” are often the source of a person’s thoughts about who they are, how they feel about themselves, how they evaluate other peoples “frameworks”, and how other people might evaluate their “framework”.

2) “Socialization: the process by which a human being beginning at infancy acquires the habits, beliefs, and accumulated knowledge of society through education and training for adult status.”

(Merriam-Webster's Medical Dictionary)

B. From section “Education Systems in Times of Crises” in “The Twilight of One Era, and the Dawning of Another” (p. 6)

1) Specifically, from the report “General Education in a Free Society” (The Harvard Committee, 1945)

a) “... there are truths which none can be free to ignore, if one is to have that wisdom through which life can becomes useful. These are the truths concerning the structures of the good life and concerning the factual conditions by which it may be achieved...”

b) “A supreme need of American education is for a unifying purpose and idea. As recently as a century ago, no doubt existed about such a purpose; it was to train the Christian citizen. Nor was there any doubt about how this training was to be accomplished.... We are (now) faced with a diversity of education which, if it has many virtues, nevertheless works against the good of society by helping to destroy the common ground of training and outlook on which any society depends.”

III. "...when groups of people have different ideas about morality and the best way to live."

A. From the section "Problems That May Arise..." in "The Twilight of One Era, and the Dawning of Another" (p. 14-15)

Some thoughts on conflicts which arise when groups of people have different ideas about morality and the best way to live

"Because systems of meaning and ways of thinking differ from one culture to another, people from different cultures typically develop different ideas about morality and the best way to live.... These cultural differences become even more problematic when groups have radically different expectations about what is virtuous, what is right, and how to deal with moral conflicts."

1) Some of the problems:

- a) "Because identity describes who we are as a person, we tend to protect those things (beliefs, values, group affiliations) that help create our sense of self."
- b) "Each party may believe that its ways of doing things and thinking about things is the best way and come to regard other ways of thinking and acting as inferior, strange, or morally wrong."
- c) "They may form negative stereotypes and attribute moral depravity or other negative characteristics to those who violate their cultural expectations, while they ignore their own vices and foibles, perceiving their own group to be entirely virtuous."
- d) They may view any compromise about their most cherished values as a threat to their very identity and a grave evil."
- e) "In some cases, one group may come to view the beliefs and actions of another group as fundamentally evil and morally intolerable. This often results in hostility and violence and severely damages the relationship between the two groups. For this reason, moral conflicts tend to be quite harmful and intractable."
- f) "Since resolving conflict necessarily involves some kind of change, it is essential to understand the operation of worldviews. When people are asked to change their identity or things they find meaningful, they will resist, sometimes even when the alternative is death."

[Most of the above quotes are from the article "Moral and Value Conflicts" by Michelle Maiese (July, 2003) (see http://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/intolerable_moral_differences/?nid=1036)

IV. Many Difficult Challenges Ahead

A. From Section 3 “Assessment...” in “The IPCC Workshop Primer” (p. 5)

We live in very complex world. There are very difficult challenges ahead. These challenges include, but are not limited to:

- 1) global warming and reducing carbon emissions
- 2) peak oil and reducing dependence on petroleum based products
- 3) global inequities and the tragic cycles of malnutrition, disease, and death
- 4) an increasing world population requiring more resources when many resources are becoming more scarce (*with a special emphasis on the increasing number of people who are consuming resources and ecological services indiscriminately*)
- 5) the trend towards urbanization (half the world’s population now live in cities, and there are now more than 400 cities with a population of 1 million or more) is creating human settlements which require more and more complex and energy intensive infrastructures just when there is a need to minimize our impact on ecosystems due to global warming and widespread resource depletion
- 6) cultures of greed, corruption, and overindulgence have caused a crises of confidence in financial markets, and are in many ways slowing the restructuring of investment priorities needed to respond to the challenges listed here (and other challenges)
- 7) there still seems to be a majority of people on the planet who do not have a clear understanding, well-grounded in personal experience, of which basic elements of community life and cultural traditions lead to mutually beneficial understandings, which lead to cycles of violence—and why it is so important for people to achieve clarity on this subject.

B. The IPCC Initiative “Ten Point Assessment of the Most Difficult Challenges of Our Times”

Note: The IPCC Initiative is aware that there are many very difficult issues which could be defined as “the most difficult challenges of our times”. By even making a list at all, The IPCC Initiative is not suggesting it can offer a definitive assessment.

The purpose of the designations made in the following ten point summary is

- to help other people appreciate how becoming involved in a comprehensive assessment of the challenges of our times can be useful for re-framing public discourse
- to help other people appreciate that these issues “pervade our globe; ... are complex due to the interdependent nature of all modern nation-states; (and) are all interwoven, making it difficult, if not impossible, to deal with one in isolation from the others...”¹¹
- to illustrate how The IPCC Initiative can contribute to the resolution of even the most profound challenges of our times.

[**Special Note:** The following “Ten Point Assessment...” has a significant number of footnotes in its appearances in other IPCC Initiative documents (for the most up to date notes and references, see the footnotes to the “Ten Point Assessment...” in Section 3 “Assessment...” in “The IPCC Workshop Primer”). Those footnotes are not reproduced here, as readers can readily access “The IPCC Workshop Primer” from The IPCC Initiative website homepage, at www.ipcri.net]

The ten point assessment:

1. Community building associated with energy descent (see Challenges #4, 5, and 6) (as a result of either wise decisions, key supply shortages, or lack of other options) may or may not be accompanied by an exponential increase in compassion for our fellow human beings. *Without such an exponential increase*, an increase in the need for emergency assistance to people with basic human needs [as a result of migrations from areas where carrying capacity has been exceeded (areas such as mega-cities), for example (see Challenge #8)] may coincide with a decrease in our capacity to respond to such emergencies

2. “Cultures” of violence, greed, corruption, and overindulgence which have become so common that many of us accept such as inevitable

3. The source of threats—whether perceived or real—to the identities and/or cherished meanings of many communities of people is too often linked to religious, spiritual, and/or moral traditions; and such threats too often result in conflicts which cast a shadow of negative associations onto such traditions. These negative associations have caused many people to disassociate from the religious, spiritual, and/or moral traditions linked to such threats; and have accumulated to such a degree that the real treasured wisdom of many such traditions now seems as if it is hidden—or remains undiscovered. This is unfortunate—as such treasured wisdom contains teachings which inspire and encourage people to

a) appreciate 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.”

4. 5. and 6. Planet-wide climate chaos and global warming, the end of the era of cheap oil (“peak oil”), and widespread resource depletion and extinction (the “Triple Crises”)

Consider the following references (with additional corroborating quotes) to preconference (September, 2007) information for a “Teach In: Confronting the Global Triple Crises—Climate Change, Peak Oil (The End of Cheap Energy), and Global Resource Depletion and Extinction” (September 14-17, 2007 at The George Washington University Lisner Auditorium in Washington D.C.) Sponsored by The International Forum on Globalization (www.ifg.org) and The Institute on Policy Studies

“The planet’s ecological systems are on the verge of catastrophic change for which few societies are prepared. So far, responses by governments to this emergency are inadequate, or counterproductive. We call it the “Triple Crisis,” the convergence of three advancing conditions:

a) Planet-wide climate chaos and global warming (“World carbon emissions must start to decline in only six years if humanity is to stand a chance of preventing dangerous global warming, a group of 20 Nobel prize-winning scientists, economists and writers declared today.”)

b) The end of the era of cheap energy (“peak oil”) (“The human community’s central task for the coming decades must be the undoing of its dependence on oil, coal, and natural gas in order to deal with the twin crises of resource depletion and climate chaos.”)

c) The depletion of many of the world’s key resources: water, timber, fish, fertile soil, coral reefs; and the expected extinction of 50% of the world’s species.

“All are rooted in the same systemic problem—massive overuse of fossil fuels and the Earth’s resources; all driven by an economic ideology of hyper growth and consumption that’s beyond the limits of the planet to sustain.”

7. The increasing world population and its implications relating to widespread resource depletion⁷ (with special focus on *the increasing number of people* who are consuming material goods and ecological resources *indiscriminately*)

8. Current trends indicate that we are creating more and more “urban agglomerations” (cities with a population of more than 1 million people), which require more and more complex and energy intensive infrastructures, where it is more and more difficult to trace the consequences of our individuals investments of time, energy, and money—and which are the least appropriate models when it comes to implementing resolutions to many of the other challenges included in this list. (Note: “Response nodes” for emergency assistance, and centers for regional and international exchange of “weak link” materials do not require a mega-city infrastructure base)

9. Any shortages of goodwill in times of unprecedented transition could tilt already precarious systems into further disarray—and thus erode established systems in even the most stable communities and regions

10. Sorting out what are real challenges and what are sound and practical solutions is becoming more and more difficult, as there is now, in many parts of the world, a multitude of ideas of all kinds coming to the fore in personal, family, community, and cultural life—all at the same time.

C. “...an urgent need to restructure our economic systems and our education systems....”

[From Appendix 1-Part C “Starting Points Links for 117 Related Fields of Activity” (see introduction) in “The IPCC Workshop Primer” (Note: that Appendix section is also the “Links” section for The IPCC Initiative website at www.ipcri.net)

More and more people are coming to the realization that resolving these challenges will require problem solving on a scale most of us have never known before—and that there is an urgent need to restructure our economic systems and our education systems to respond to these challenges.

D. From the section “Education Systems in Times of Crises” in “The Twilight of One Era, and the Dawning of Another” (p. 7-8)

1) Identifying Experienced Practitioners, Stakeholders, and People Needing Assistance

Consider the assessment of the most difficult challenges of our times which is offered in the part A of this section (see p. 5). (Note: For this question, readers may wish to construct their own list of the most difficult challenges of our times—but it is not necessary to do that to understand the point of the question.)

a) Who are the Experienced Practitioners, who are most qualified to be educating people on how to successfully overcome each of the challenges identified?

(Special Notes: Please be specific, as in times of emergency, it will be most important for leaders to understand which people are perceived as most qualified by the majority of the residents in a particular community. Also, please be straightforward and honest: if you do not know who would be most qualified to respond, please respond accordingly.)

b) Who are the Stakeholders (the people who will be affected by the education provided and guidance given by the Experienced Practitioners)?

c) Who are the People Needing Assistance (the people who do not know how to respond to the challenges you identified)?

2) 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?

E. “How to find suitable teachers...” (1908)

[From the introduction section to “The Twilight of One Era, and the Dawning of Another”]

“How to find suitable teachers is, therefore, the really important question with which we are confronted. And I doubt whether they can *be found*—at least in sufficient numbers. They will have to be *made*; and how this is to be done is the real problem that faces those interested in moral education at the present time.”

Prof. J. S. Mackenzie

(at the First International Moral Education Congress, University of London, 1908)

E. What The IPCR Initiative Provides (in the context of this section in the “...Executive Summary”)

(Original to this document)

The IPCR Initiative does not attempt to advocate for one particular faith tradition or one particular cultural tradition—The IPCR Initiative advocates for that kind of cultural content which will provide solutions to the critical challenges ahead, and provides “tools” for communities of people to discover that kind of cultural content for themselves.

V. Community Visioning Initiatives for the Duration of the Emergency

[From Section 3 “A Summary of the Potential of Community Visioning Initiatives” in “1000Communities²”]

A. What are Community Visioning Initiatives?

1) 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.

2) In its most basic format, a Community Visioning Initiative (CVI) is simply a more comprehensive variation of the above mentioned approach to problem solving.

3) Community Visioning Initiatives (CVIs) are especially useful as a means of increasing or maximizing citizen participation in the planning phase of community revitalization efforts.

4) In 1984, the non-profit organization Chattanooga Venture [Chattanooga, Tennessee (USA)] organized a Community Visioning Initiative 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.

5) Community Visioning Initiatives (CVIs) can be described as a series of community meetings designed to facilitate the process of brainstorming ideas, organizing the ideas into goals, prioritizing the goals, and identifying doable steps.

6) Many CVIs have followed a model which has three basic steps, and which requires 3 to 6 months to complete (this is a variation of the “Oregon Model”):

a) Where are we now? (or What are we now?)

An assessment which incorporates:

- Community Values
- Strengths and Weaknesses
- Most Difficult Challenges
- Most Valuable Resources

b) Where do we want to go? (or What do we want to be?)

Brainstorming and strategic planning sessions which involve:

- Brainstorming Positive or Desirable Community Improvements
- Developing these Ideas into Practical Goals
- Prioritizing the Goals

c) How can we get there?

Brainstorming and/or focus group sessions which answer the questions:

- What action plans will help us achieve our goals?
- Who will implement the action plans?
- How will they be implemented? (With what funding?)
- How will we know if our efforts are achieving the desired results?

7) Many CVIs 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.

8) The “1000Communities²” proposal (IPCR document “1000Communities²”) incorporates input from many different fields of activity, and emphasizes a time-intensive approach to Community Visioning, which may take up to 1^{1/2} years (18 months) to complete. (For more details, see Sections XVII and XVIII of this “Executive Summary” document)

B. A Well-Organized Community Visioning Initiative is....

1) a proactive, inclusive, systematic, practical, and doable process for encouraging 100% resident involvement in identifying, creating, and gathering together all ideas for collective effort that can help us overcome the challenges of our times

2) a commitment to periodic assessment of the following question: what points for discussion in public discourse are recognized as essential to community well-being and the greater good of the whole?

3) an affirmation of the reality that all residents have civic responsibilities, and that they will be called upon to contribute to the extent that they can, when urgent responses are needed to overcome of the challenges of our times

4) a way to “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.”

5) a reliable means of drawing out solutions to the many challenges of our times

6) a reliable means of building consensus for the collective efforts necessary to implement such solutions

7) an opportunity for all residents to learn civic skills relevant to sustaining ongoing community revitalization

C. A Well-Organized Community Visioning Initiative will....

1) help people appreciate how becoming involved in a comprehensive assessment of the challenges of our times—and in well-organized “brainstorming” on how we are going to overcome such challenges—can lead to a positive and constructive re-framing of public discourse

2) increase our awareness of the countless numbers of “things people can do in the everyday circumstances of their lives” which will contribute to peacebuilding and community revitalization efforts, in our own communities and regions—and in communities around the world

- 3) create local community points of entry “clearinghouses” of “things people can do in the everyday circumstances of their lives” which will contribute to overcoming the challenges of our times
- 4) identify a variety of ways for residents to have a more active role in deliberately and systematically using their time, energy, and money to reinforce specific local community and regional goals
- 5) help people to have a positive impact on the quality of life in their communities—and help people to realize how much of an impact they already have
- 6) revive and deepen our appreciation for civic duty and community service
- 7) create greater understanding for the need of cooperation, and thus increase the likelihood of close-knit neighborhoods and communities
- 8) help people to have a greater appreciation for the need—and the difficulties—of building consensus among nations of the world
- 9) provide a re-evaluation of the local education curriculum and the resulting knowledge base by generating new goals, which can then be compared to the goals represented by the current curriculum of local and regional educational institutions
- 10) assist with outreach, partnership formation, consensus building, project development, and the development of service capacity for a significant number of already existing (or forming) organizations and businesses
- 11) increase participants’ awareness of the storehouses of accumulated wisdom which are our heritage from the past, and the significant numbers of people who are currently accumulating valuable experience and establishing constructive understandings relevant to overcoming our current challenges

D. A Just Transition

[#11 in “48 Different Ways to Describe The IPCR Initiative”]

(#11) A just transition to patterns of investment which in many ways represent solutions to prioritized challenges.

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.

As mentioned on p. 125 of the “1000Communities2”, at <http://ipcri.net/images/1000Communities2.pdf> 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.”

The IPCR Initiative encourages and supports 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.

E. Many Hands Make Much Work Light

1) [Again, from Section 3 “A Summary of the Potential of The IPCR Initiative” in “1000Communities²”]

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 emphasizes a high level of compassion for our fellow human beings.

2) [And from “IPCR Community Journal” post “Community Visioning Initiatives for the Duration of the Emergency”]

Given the nature of complex societies, it is understandable that many of us would like to believe there are experts “somewhere” who understand how we got into this, and must therefore know how we can get out of it. However, this writer very sincerely hopes that more and more people are also coming to the realization that the difficult challenges ahead are not something that the experts will resolve while the rest of us are doing something else.... Everyone is involved when it comes to determining the markets that supply the “ways of earning a living”; and given the unprecedented nature of the challenges ahead, all of us have important responsibilities in the coming months and years ahead. Unfortunately, sorting out what our responsibilities are—or sorting out what the real challenges are, and what are sound and practical solutions—is becoming more and more difficult, as there is now, in many parts of the world, a multitude of ideas of all kinds coming to the fore in personal, family, community, and cultural life—all at the same time.

Somehow or other, we need to sort through all this, and we need to do so in a way that helps us to realize how much we need to be learning so that we can be part of the solutions... and how much we really need to be on the same side, helping each other.

As the ancient Chinese proverb says: “Many hands make much work light.”

VI. Problems That May Arise (when planning for, and implementing, Community Visioning Initiatives)

A. #34 in Section 11 “36 Problems That May Arise (when planning for, and implementing, Community Visioning Initiatives)” in “The IPCR Workshop Primer”

(#34) Proactive Measures Will Be Necessary to Encourage Constructive Activity during Community Visioning Initiatives

a) Consider the following commentary on preparation for carrying out a Community Visioning Initiative....

People who are doing preliminary planning for carrying out a Community Visioning Initiative 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.

b) Question #14 (from the document “39 Suggestions for Preliminary Survey Questions”, included in this “Workshop Primer” as Section __) is as follows:

Please list at least 5 preventative measures which you believe would proactively encourage a high percentage of constructive thinking and constructive action during the carrying out of a Community Visioning Initiative in your community.

B. From Footnote #12 for Section 3 “An Assessment of the Most Difficult Challenges of Our Times” in “The IPCR Workshop Primer”

(Footnote #12) Many people may think it is naïve to imagine that people from so many diverse religious, spiritual, moral, and cultural traditions can decide to come together in such a way as to not only encourage, but participate in, a high percentage of constructive thinking and constructive action in response to the difficult challenges ahead. From this writer’s point of view, such skepticism and cynicism depend for their existence on doubts as to whether it is possible for people to achieve highly advanced forms of wisdom and compassion through genuine instruction and sincere effort. Thus it is that there is a great responsibility on those people who are in any way representatives of religious, spiritual, and/or moral traditions....

C. #17 in Section 11 “36 Problems That May Arise (when planning for, and implementing, Community Visioning Initiatives)” in “The IPCR Workshop Primer”

(#17) We must help each other.

Some residents may feel uneasy concerning the problem of residents who are less educated and less informed having as much of a say in Community Visioning Initiatives “process-voting” (votes which prioritize challenges identified, solutions identified, and steps in action plans) as those who have spent years working on these issues. This is a fundamental problem, which is not confined to Community Visioning Initiative processes; *as people who are not sufficiently informed about critical issues are everywhere, and they are investing their time, energy, and money—voting—all the time.* If we are honest with ourselves about this issue, we must admit that there are very few people who have successfully aligned all of their investments of time, energy, and money with all of the principles, practices and codes of conduct associated with the religious, spiritual, or moral tradition they feel closest to. This writer believes that there are many serious challenges before us now, and that we will need to invest our time, energy, and money very wisely to overcome these challenges. How can we do it? We must help each other. The Community Visioning Initiative outlined in the proposal associated with this document (“1000Communities2” at <http://ipcri.net/images/1000Communities2.pdf>) is time intensive so that we will have time to learn much more than we know now about how to help each other.

D. “...issues that require some sifting of very complex information”

1) From Section 13 “Some Thoughts on Evaluation” from “The IPCR Workshop Primer”

More and more people are coming to the realization that resolving the challenges ahead will require problem solving on a scale most of us have never known before. At this particular point in time, however, there is little consensus as to what the most difficult challenges are. In this kind of environment, much time, energy, and money may be expended without actually moving large segments of the world population closer to any significant resolutions.

2) From Appendix 2 “About Global Warming, Peak Oil, and Population and Consumption Patterns” in “1000Communities2”

In this particular section of the proposal, some of the evidence which has formed this writers’ views about the challenges of our times will be brought forward. This evidence is associated with issues that require some sifting of very complex information, which by its nature must be considered incomplete at best. Therefore, what is provided here is simply offered as starting points for readers who have not yet explored these issues in depth—and as an indication of the kind of sources this writer regards as trustworthy and service-oriented. (“...words that come from the depth of experience have the ring of sincerity that convinces.”¹) This writer recognizes that a significant degree of consensus may be needed to resolve the most complex challenges. *That is one of the reasons why he is advocating the use of Community Visioning Initiatives.*

E. Are we up to the challenge?

One important question, considered very carefully by this writer when evaluating information on the Internet, is: “Why is this source providing this information?” This writer is inclined to regard information as trustworthy and reliable a) if the source of the information has been working for a long time in their field of activity b) if the source of the information is highly regarded in their field of activity and c) if the source of the information is clearly trying to respectfully provide good service to their fellow human beings, and contribute to the greater good of the whole.

There are sources of information which are clearly trying to persuade people to support a particular agenda, without encouraging them to arrive at an independent assessment, and without suggesting that the issue is complex and may require some time arrive at an independent assessment. And there are people who use irresponsible and disrespectful language in ways which do not suggest that their motive is to respectfully provide good service to their fellow human beings, and contribute to the greater good of the whole. This writer recognizes that a significant degree of consensus may be needed to resolve the complex challenges ahead. (Somehow or other, we need to sort through all this, and we need to do so in a way that helps us to realize how much we need to be learning so that we can be part of the solutions... and how much we really need to be on the same side, helping each other.) The need to be one the same side helping each other is one of the reasons why he is advocating the use of Community Visioning Initiatives. In all IPCR documents relating to Community Visioning Initiatives, residents are being encouraged to participate in as many ways as possible—and to help and support others who are making sincere efforts to contribute to the process. Are we up to the challenge?

F. “The function of work should be to practice our ideal of life.”

1) From “Education Systems in Times of Crises” in “The Twilight of One Era, and the Dawning of Another”

Two Excerpts from “Why the Village Movement?” by J.C. Kumarappa (first edition, 1939)

a) “Work absorbs most of our waking hours, and many of the problems connected with work and our dealings with our fellow man are what determine the nature of our life. Therefore, it behooves us to sit up and take note of what our work makes of us....”

b) “The function of work should be to practice our ideal of life.”

G. Notes on the Chattanooga, TN Visioning Initiatives

[From Footnote #5 in Section 5 “Brief Descriptions of The Eight IPCR Concepts” in “The IPCR Workshop Primer”]

(Footnote #5) From a 25 page brochure titled “Revision 2000: Take Charge Again”, received from Chattanooga Venture. This brochure also included a description of the 40 goals created by Chattanooga Vision 2000 (carried out in 1984), a detailed description of meetings and meeting schedules, and an overview “How You Can Make A Difference,” in a question and answer format. This writer also received from Chattanooga Venture a video, titled “A Community With a Vision,” which documents the 1984

visioning initiative “Vision 2000”—and a handbook titled “The Facilitator’s Manual,” subtitled “A Step-by-Step Guide for Groups to: Brainstorm Ideas, Create a Shared Vision, Develop Plans, Make Choices.” The statistical information associated with the “Chattanooga Vision 2000” process was also cited in the following source: a detailed overview of Chattanooga community revitalization efforts in the Boundary Crossers Case Study titled “Chattanooga: The Sustainable City”; however, this overview is no longer accessible via the Internet (it was accessible for some time at the website of the James MacGregor Burns Academy of Leadership, at the University of Maryland, College Park). Here is a list of other, shorter overviews of the “Vision 2000” process:

- a) Sustainable Communities Network Case Study “Chattanooga: A City Worth Watching” at http://www.sustainable.org/casestudies/tennessee/TN_af_chattanooga.html)
 - b) Best Manufacturing Practices Center of Excellence “Best Practice: Chattanooga Venture/Community Vision” at http://www.bmpcoe.org/bestpractices/internal/chatt/chatt_8.html)
 - c) Project for Public Spaces “The Chattanooga Riverpark: Transforming a City and its Economy” at http://www.pps.org/topics/success/success_chatanooga)
 - d) the University of Michigan’s Community Economic Adjustment Program “A Civic Vignette: The Chattanooga Story” at <http://www.irlee.umich.edu/ceap/chattanooga.html>)
- (All confirmed December 25, 2009)

There are additional publications which briefly cite the above mentioned statistics, and which are accessible via the Internet. One example is “The Next Form of Democracy: How Expert Rule is Giving Way to Shared Governance... and why politics will never be the same” by Matt Leighninger Vanderbilt University Press 2006 p. 16 (accessible through google books at http://books.google.com/books?id=m_ZF8JZydPQC&printsec=frontcover&dq=the+next+form+of+democracy&cd=1#v=onepage&q=&f=false) (confirmed December 25, 2009)

Special Note: In the above mentioned book “The Next Form of Democracy...”, author Matt Leighninger offers perspective on the astounding success of the Chattanooga “Vision 2000” process by including the following commentary: “Many other communities followed Chattanooga’s example, but many of them stumbled because they failed to keep citizen and community organizations involved in implementing the visions. If a vision did not include measurable benchmarks, and specific commitments by people and organizations, it stood little chance of becoming reality.” (p. 16) (And *this commentary was footnoted*, as a general reference to the book “Results That Matter: Improving Communities by Engaging Citizens, Measuring Performance, and Getting Things Done” by Paul D. Epstein, et al. Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, 2006)

VII. Persistent Ironies

A. From Section “Questionnaires That Can Help Build Caring Communities” in “Brief Descriptions of The Eight IPCR Concepts”

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.

B. From “Transitioning from Less Solution-Oriented Employment to More Solution-Oriented Employment” in “The IPCR Workshop Primer”

“The transition from an unsustainable fossil fuel-based economy back to a solar-based (agriculture and forestry) economy will involve the application of the embodied energy that we inherit from industrial culture. This embodied energy is contained within a vast array of things, infrastructure, cultural processes and ideas, mostly inappropriately configured for the “solar” economy. It is the task of our age to take this great wealth, reconfigure it, and apply it to the development of sustainable systems.”
(David Holmgren, from “Energy and Permaculture” article)

C. From Section “Community Visioning Initiatives, Job Fairs, and a ‘Just Transition’ to More Solution-Oriented Employment” in “The Twilight of One Era, and the Dawning of Another”

“Transforming our nation's economic, energy, and environmental systems to move toward a green economy will require a level of expertise, innovation, and cooperative effort unseen since the 1940s to meet the challenges involved.

“Creating millions of new green jobs through targeted investment and spending is one thing; filling those jobs with qualified candidates is quite another thing. This transition will require a massive job training (and retraining) effort on the part of business, government, and education if it is to scale up quickly.”

(both excerpts in “Worldwatch Institute” open letter to U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan)

D. A Just Transition

[#11 in “48 Different Ways to Describe The IPCR Initiative”]

(#11) A just transition to patterns of investment which in many ways represent solutions to prioritized challenges.

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.

As mentioned on p. 125 of the “1000Communities2”, at <http://ipcri.net/images/1000Communities2.pdf> 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.*”

The IPCR Initiative encourages and supports 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.

E. “... the *increasing number of people* who are consuming material goods and ecological resources *indiscriminately*”.

1) From Footnote #5 in Section 3 “An Assessment...” in “The IPCR Workshop Primer”

“In 1804, the world population was 1 billion.
In 1927, the world population was 2 billion (123 years later).
In 1960, the world population was 3 billion (33 years later).
In 1974, the world population was 4 billion (14 years later).
In 1987, the world population was 5 billion (13 years later).
In 1999, the world population was 6 billion (12 years later).”
“As of October, 20, 2009 at 00:43 GMT (EST + 5), the world population was estimated to be 6,791,794,939.”

2) From Challenge #7 in “A Ten Point Assessment of the Most Difficult Challenges of Our Times”

The increasing world population and its implications relating to widespread resource depletion (with special focus on *the increasing number of people* who are consuming material goods and ecological resources *indiscriminately*).

3) From Footnote #6a in Section 3 “An Assessment...” in “The IPCR Workshop Primer”

a) From the “Online Features/Consumption/State of Consumption: Trends and Facts” section of the Worldwatch Institute website at <http://www.worldwatch.org/node/810>
(see paragraphs 1 and 2) (Confirmed June 8, 2008)

“By virtually any measure—household expenditures, number of consumers, extraction of raw materials—consumption of goods and services has risen steadily in industrial nations for decades, and it is growing rapidly in many developing countries.”

“By one calculation, there are now more than 1.7 billion members of ‘the consumer class’—nearly half of them in the developing world. A lifestyle and culture that became common in Europe, North America, Japan, and a few other pockets of the world in the twentieth century is going global in the twenty-first.”

4) From section “Problems That May Arise (when planning for, and implementing Community Visioning Initiatives)” in “The Twilight of One Era, and the Dawning of Another”

The following passages²⁴ are excerpts from “International Communications: A Media Literacy Approach” by Art Silverblatt and Nikolai Zlobin (July, 2004) (most content accessible at Google Books)

“Popular programming reflects a level of acceptance and shared values among large numbers of people. People tend to watch programs that meet their approval. If they are truly offended by violent programs, they would not watch them. In that sense, media programming can be regarded as a text that reflects the attitudes, values, behaviors, preoccupations, and myths that define a culture.” (p. 66)

“At the same time, media programming reinforces cultural attitudes, values, behaviors, preoccupations, and myths. Media messages are communicated through the countless hours of media programming that repeat, directly or indirectly, the cultural script.” (p. 68)

“Finally, the media do not merely reflect or reinforce culture, but in fact shape attitudes, values, behavior, preoccupations, and myths.” (p. 68)

“The ability to identify and evaluate propaganda messages undermines the central persuasive function of propaganda by empowering individuals to develop independent judgments about the messages they receive through the media. However, developing an awareness of propaganda is not an easy task....” (p. 50)

“The United States is the home of the world’s largest and most influential advertising industry. As of 2001, 43% of the advertising produced in the world originated in the United States. Indeed, half of the top 100 global marketers—and six of the top ten—are U.S. companies.” (p. 228)

“The international market is saturated with American entertainment programming. Hollywood films account for approximately 85% of movie audiences worldwide. Further, American programming makes up approximately 65% of global prime-time TV viewing.” (p. 69)

E. Summary for this section “Persistent Ironies”

1) #1 in Section 11 “36 Problems That May Arise (when planning for, and implementing, Community Visioning Initiatives)” in “The IPCR Workshop Primer”

“Oh! What a tangled web we weave
when first we practice to deceive.”

2) #28 in “48 Different Ways of Describing The IPCR Initiative”

(#28) “Constellations” of initiatives which can help us sort through all this

Everyone is involved when it comes to determining the markets which supply the “ways of earning a living”. All of us have important responsibilities associated with resolving a significant number of very serious challenges in the months and years ahead. We need our public discourse to be as honest, responsible, and transparent as possible, so we can identify, nurture, support, and sustain ways to build a collective force greater than the challenges we are now facing. True confidence is never really built up by merely convincing a majority of the people involved that they *believe* the markets are based on sound and practical principles; true confidence is built up because people believe that the efforts of everyone working together is a greater force than the challenges they are facing. Unfortunately, sorting out what our responsibilities are—or sorting out what the real challenges are, and what are sound and practical solutions—is becoming more and more difficult, as there is now, in many parts of the world, a multitude of ideas of all kinds coming to the fore in personal, family, community, and cultural life—all at the same time.

The IPCR Initiative provides a “constellation” of initiatives which can help us sort out what the real challenges are, and what are sound and practical solutions—and does so in a way that helps us to realize how much we need to be learning so that we can be part of the solutions... and how much we really need to be on the same side, helping each other.

3) #33 in Section 11 “36 Problems That May Arise (when planning for, and implementing, Community Visioning Initiatives)” in “The IPCR Workshop Primer”

(#33) “The Great Way is very level...”

“Were I to have the least bit of knowledge, in walking on a Great Road,
it’s only going astray that I would fear.
The Great Way is very level;
but people greatly delight in tortuous paths.”

[From Chapter 53 of “Te-Tao Ching” (by Lao Tzu) (possibly written in 6th Century B.C.E., sufficient evidence unavailable) (translation by Robert G. Hendricks) Ballantine Books, New York 1989]

G. From #43 in “48 Different Ways to Describe The IPCR Initiative”

(#43) Many opportunities for local newspapers to contribute very valuable community services

The IPCR Initiative believes it is providing sufficient information and inspiration to suggest that there are many opportunities for local newspapers to contribute very valuable community services in the planning, implementation, evaluation, and follow up stages associated with Community Visioning Initiatives. Here is a list of some of the community services local newspapers could contribute:

- a) provide information about the potential of Community Visioning Initiatives
- b) advocate for the implementation of Community Visioning Initiatives

- c) be directly involved in making Preliminary Surveys accessible, provide in-depth coverage of the response compilation process to assure credibility, and provide a variety of summary and analysis of the responses.
- d) provide ongoing public access to details of each stage of the Community Visioning process
- e) provide ongoing public access to details of workshops and other educational experiences at “Community Teaching and Learning Centers”
- f) provide in-depth coverage of the response compilation process to assure credibility
- g) provide a variety of summary and analysis of the responses at each stage of the process
- h) provide follow-up coverage of the projects and initiatives which spin-off from the action plans receiving significant community support
- i) encourage citizen input as a way of further evaluating the successes and failures of the process

VIII. The Potential of Questionnaires

A. From the introduction to Section 10 “39 Suggestions for Preliminary Survey Questions (as preparation for implementing Community Visioning 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 Interfaith Peacebuilding and Community Revitalization (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.

One of The Eight IPCR Concepts—and thus part of the “constellation” of initiatives referred to above—is “Questionnaires That Help Build Caring Communities”. The description of that concept offered in the document “Brief Descriptions of The Eight IPCR Concepts” begins as follows: “Organizations and communities of people often use questionnaires and surveys to identify problems and solutions, and to build consensus for collective action.”

Hopefully, the questions listed in Section 10 (“39 Suggestions for Preliminary Survey Questions (as preparation for Community Visioning Initiatives)”) can be seen as the beginnings of a database of questions that can help build caring communities. In addition, this elemental part of community building can also be understood as one facet of a multi-faceted approach to peacebuilding and community revitalization—which is summed up in Section XII “The Contributions The IPCR Initiatives Hopes to Make”.

However, the most significant role for these questions, from this writer’s point of view, is that they are a starting point for creating preliminary surveys, as preparation for Community Visioning Initiatives. The IPCR Initiative document “1000Communities²” is a 161 page proposal which advocates for Community Visioning Initiatives, “Community Teaching and Learning Centers”, and “sister community” relationships as a way of generating an exponential increase in our collective capacity to overcome the challenges of our times. Here is an excerpt from the “1000Communities²” document (from p. 47) which highlights the importance of preliminary surveys:

“This “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 CVI
- c) starting points for public discourse about the importance of the CVI
- d) starting points for CTLC 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 CVI, 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 at <http://ipcri.net/images/1000Communities2.pdf> , see Section 5)”

This writer recognizes that many of the questions offered here as suggestions are not easily answered in one sitting. He also recognizes that although most of the key leaders (referred to above) could contribute something as a response to most of the questions, many residents of a given community may not contribute responses—either because it would take too much time, or because the questions explore complex subjects they are not familiar with. It is very important for communities of people to become aware that there are very difficult challenges ahead, and these difficult challenges will require some very significant learning experiences before we are able to resolve them. Refined questionnaires, with questions which most of the residents can quickly respond to, can be developed from responses to preliminary surveys like this one; and the refined questionnaires can do much to maximize citizen interest and participation in integrating new knowledge and new skill sets into the community.

People who explore the questions offered here carefully will also discover that there are many questions which touch on the subject of compassion for our fellow human beings. Many questionnaires are noteworthy for what they do not ask. This writer understands 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 religious, spiritual, and moral “world views”. A significant number of the questions that follow have been created to assess whether other people see such a critical need, and how such a goal might be accomplished.

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.

Questionnaires can be created which will accumulate information, suggestions, etc. that can be of critical importance in resolving the above mentioned “irony”—and which can provide the above mentioned assistance to the process of organizing and implementing Community Visioning Initiatives.

[Additional Note: The concept of “Questionnaires That Can Help Build Caring Communities”—one of The Eight IPCR Concepts—developed from this writer’s exploration of “Quaker Queries”. See subsection C. of this section for a description of the IPCR Concept “Community Queries” (which eventually became “Questionnaires That Can...”), and some commentary on the subject of “Quaker Queries”. I highly recommend an exploration of “Quaker Queries”, especially for people who are interested in the use of questionnaires as a way of building consensus on difficult issues.]

B. Some Examples of Suggested Questions

(#3) An Initial Assessment

For the questions below, please check the box which best corresponds 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.”

<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.”

<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

(#7) Engines of Economic Stability

Many people seem to be worried that “the economy” will collapse if there is widespread movement from “consuming material goods and ecological resources indiscriminately” to “discriminating carefully about use of material goods and ecological resources”... and yet many of the challenges of our times are very deeply rooted in cultural traditions, which suggest that it may require decades, generations, or even centuries to resolve such challenges. Surely, there will be work to do....

Please carefully consider the above introduction to this question, and then respond to the following questions.

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
- maintain 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, maintain 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 |

(#8) 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?

(#9) Identifying Experienced Practitioners, Stakeholders, and People Needing Assistance

Consider the assessment of the most difficult challenges of our times which you created as a response to question #6 part a).

- a) Who are the Experienced Practitioners, who are most qualified to be educating people on how to successfully overcome each of the ten challenges you identified?

(Special Notes: Please be specific, as in times of emergency, it will be most important for leaders to understand which people are perceived as most qualified by the majority of the residents in a particular community. Also, please be straightforward and honest: if you do not know who would be most qualified to respond, please respond accordingly.)

- b) Who are the Stakeholders (the people who will be affected by the education provided and guidance given by the Experienced Practitioners)?

- c) Who are the People Needing Assistance (the people who do not know how to respond to the challenges you identified)?

(#14) Proactive Measures to Encourage Constructive Activity during Community Visioning Initiatives

Consider the following commentary on preparation for carrying out a Community Visioning Initiative....

People who are doing preliminary planning for carrying out a Community Visioning Initiative 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.

The question: please list at least 5 preventative measures which you believe would proactively encourage a high percentage of constructive thinking and constructive action during the carrying out of a Community Visioning Initiative in your community.

(#23) Seeking Information About Our Moral Compasses

g) “The most advanced societies are the ones which are successful at integrating spiritual wisdom into the everyday circumstances of community life.”¹⁸

<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:

(#24) 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 the World Health Organization, 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.”

a) Do you believe there are “solutions in sight” for the above mentioned problems, or do you agree with the authors at the World Health Organization? If you believe there are “solutions in sight”, please be specific and describe such solutions. Or, if you agree that “no solutions seem to be in sight”, offer your view on as to why we seem to be at a point where “no solutions seem to be in sight” for those problems.

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 mentioned problems (the global drugs trade and the global 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.

(#32) 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.

(#34) If Only There Was a Way....

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 _____.

C. Quaker Queries

From the “Additional Notes” section of Section 10 “39 Suggestions for Preliminary Survey Questions (in preparation for implementing Community Visioning Initiatives)” in “The IPCR Workshop Primer”

On the Subject of Quaker Queries

1) Below is a description of the community building concept “Community Queries”, a concept which eventually became “Questionnaires That Can Help Build Caring Communities” (this description is also in the Spring, 2005 issue of The IPCR Journal/Newsletter)

“Community Queries”— The concept of “Community Queries” introduced here is simply an expansion of the use of “Queries” by the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers), so that the concept applies to the geographical area sense— and the most inclusive sense— of the word “community.” Here are 13 specific examples of “Queries” (from sets of queries used by three different Quaker meetings): 1) “Does our Meeting prepare all its members and children for worship, and for a life consistent with the principles of the Religious Society of Friends?” 2) “Do you seek employment consistent with your beliefs, and in service to society?” 3) “Do you weigh your day-to-day activities for their effect on peace-keeping, conflict resolution and the elimination of violence?” 4) “Are you concerned for responsible use of natural resources and their nurture for future generations?” 5) “Do you try to avoid wasteful consumption and pollution?” 6) “Are you working towards the removal of social injustices? Have you attempted to examine their causes objectively, and are you ready to abandon old prejudices and think again?” 7) “Do any of your interests, important though they may appear to you, unduly absorb your time and energy to the hindrance of your growth in grace and of your service to God?” 8) “Are you loyal to the truth?” 9) “When pressure is brought to bear upon you to lower your standards, are you prepared to resist it?” 10) “Do all adults and children in our Meeting receive our loving care and encouragement to share in the life of our Meeting, and to live as Friends?” 11) “When a members conduct or manner of

living gives cause for concern, how does the Meeting respond?" 12) "Are you sufficiently conversant with our Christian Discipline to be able, when difficult questions arise, to consider them with an informed mind as well as a loving and tender spirit?" 13) "Do you live in accordance with your spiritual convictions?" Surely, it would be a valuable exercise for any local community, faith community, non-profit human service organization, etc. to invite all residents, members, employees, participants, etc. (as appropriate to the nature of the "community") to become involved in the process of creating a set of "Queries" for that particular community of people.

2) Commentary on Quaker Queries from The Co-Intelligence Institute (see <http://www.co-intelligence.org/QuakerQueries.html>)

"Quakers often use what they call "queries" as a focus for individual and collective meditation, consideration and prayer, guiding Quaker seekers in their search for greater love, truth, and insight into how to serve humanity and live lives that are consistent with their core values. Queries can be self-created, group-created, or drawn up by higher Quaker authorities as official mandates for exploration. They are intended as questions to live with and into.

"At a personal level, queries can be used to probe-in-depth into some issue or concern, seeking the truth of one's deepest responses to it. One writer suggests: 'The object is to stir the conscience in a gentle but firm way, and, through self-examination, to bring about a change or reaffirmation of attitude or behavior.' Others describe a query as a way of opening themselves to divine guidance and transformation which, as in other forms of earnest prayer, can happen instantly.

"In some Quaker traditions, the queries are used collectively to derive a 'sense of the meeting', an explicit, shared awareness of where they are at as a spiritual community of seekers, how they are doing, where they have fallen short, or where they want to go. Sometimes Quaker meetings (which are organizationally analogous to churches or temples) will share with each other their communal responses to the same queries, seeking support from each other in living more Quakerly lives.

"Queries, suggests Quaker lecturer Martin Grundy, can provide an occasion 'to take a piece of the spiritual life of the meeting and examine -- wrestle with -- our understanding of how we are called to live as Friends,.... an opportunity for a corporate discipline of paying attention to what God might have to teach us.... Careful and prayerful consideration of the queries can be the outward structure that melds the individuals and the faith community.... [providing] a checklist of how faithful we are as we trudge along on our journey, together.'"

D. Many opportunities for local newspapers

[From #43 in "48 Different Ways to Describe The IPCR Initiative"]

(#43) Many opportunities for local newspapers to contribute very valuable community services

The IPCR Initiative believes it is providing sufficient information and inspiration to suggest that there are many opportunities for local newspapers to contribute very valuable community services in the planning, implementation, evaluation, and follow up stages associated with Community Visioning Initiatives. Here is a list of some of the community services local newspapers could contribute:

- a) provide information about the potential of Community Visioning Initiatives
- b) advocate for the implementation of Community Visioning Initiatives

- c) be directly involved in making Preliminary Surveys accessible, provide in-depth coverage of the response compilation process to assure credibility, and provide a variety of summary and analysis of the responses.
- d) provide ongoing public access to details of each stage of the Community Visioning process
- e) provide ongoing public access to details of workshops and other educational experiences at “Community Teaching and Learning Centers”
- f) provide in-depth coverage of the response compilation process to assure credibility
- g) provide a variety of summary and analysis of the responses at each stage of the process
- h) provide follow-up coverage of the projects and initiatives which spin-off from the action plans receiving significant community support
- i) encourage citizen input as a way of further evaluating the successes and failures of the process

IX. The Potential of “Community Teaching and Learning Centers”

A. “How to find suitable teachers...” (1908)

[From the introduction section to “The Twilight of One Era, and the Dawning of Another”]

“How to find suitable teachers is, therefore, the really important question with which we are confronted. And I doubt whether they can *be found*—at least in sufficient numbers. They will have to be *made*; and how this is to be done is the real problem that faces those interested in moral education at the present time.”¹

Prof. J. S. Mackenzie

(at the First International Moral Education Congress, University of London, 1908)

B. From Section 9 “Community Teaching and Learning Centers” in “The IPCR Workshop Primer”

[subsection: “Community Teaching and Learning Centers”: A Special Form of Community Education]

The concept of “Community Teaching and Learning Centers” (CTLCs) was created by the organization “Teachers Without Borders” (see www.teacherswithoutborders.org).

“Teachers Without Borders” defines CTLCs as follows:

“Community Teaching and Learning Centers (CTLCs) are local, practical education centers designed to be embraced by and emerge from the community itself. CTLCs use existing facilities and are often outfitted with libraries (such as dictionaries, references, educational material of general interest) and computers, face-to-face classrooms, and break-out spaces, used primarily to serve several essential functions for community sustainability.” [From a “Community Teaching and Learning Centers” section of the “Teachers Without Borders” website before it was revised to the current website content (At current TWB website, see <http://www.teacherswithoutborders.org/pages/community-teaching-and-learning-centers>)

One of the primary goals of the “Teachers Without Borders” organization is to develop “teacher-leaders”. “Teachers Without Borders” helps create “teacher-leaders” in two ways:

“We help to grow teachers.... We identify talent and find a way of attracting, retaining, and supporting cohorts of teachers from all sectors of local communities. We find mentors for teachers to ensure subject-matter mastery and teaching technique, and then provide opportunities at our community teaching and learning centers for emerging teachers to practice. Our plan is to start from the ground up - incorporating local mentorship, distance learning, and community college offerings, then assist local talent in completion, at a high level, of course work at four-year schools. Most importantly, we provide a means of steady communication and feedback amongst cohorts of teaching talent.” [From a “Community Teaching and Learning Centers” section of the “Teachers Without Borders” website before it was revised to the current website content] (At current TWB website, see <http://www.teacherswithoutborders.org/pages/who-we-are>)

In the “1000Communities²” proposal (see Section XVII of this “Executive Summary” document), 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 Section __, and Section 9 in the “1000Communities²” proposal), 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 Community Visioning Initiative (for details on the 15 Steps, see Section 6, p. 22-42, in the “1000Communities²” proposal at <http://ipcri.net/images/1000Communities2.pdf>)
- 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

C. From Section 9 “Community Teaching and Learning Centers” in “The IPCR Workshop Primer”

[subsection: A Just Transition to patterns of investment which *in many ways* represent solutions to prioritized challenges.]

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.”

Such a “just transition”—from patterns of investment which in only limited ways represent solutions to critical challenges to patterns of investment which *in many ways* represent solutions to critical challenges—has achieved some significant momentum in the fields of renewable energy and “greening

the economy". The excerpts below (source: an open letter from Worldwatch Institute to newly appointed U.S. Education Secretary Arne Duncan) suggest there is much momentum, and also much unrealized potential, in such a "just transition".

"OPINION: Letter to the New Education Secretary
by Worldwatch Institute on December 19, 2008

Worldwatch is pleased to publish this open letter from prominent education and environment leaders urging the newly nominated U.S. education secretary, Arne Duncan, to consider the importance of education in carrying out President-elect Barack Obama's environmental agenda.

Dear Mr. Duncan:

Congratulations on your nomination. As you jump into the daunting challenge of bolstering our sagging education system, you have a powerful opportunity presented by the need to create a carbon-free economy.

President-elect Obama has astutely perceived the linkages between climate change, economic stimulus, energy security, and job training by declaring that the transition to a green economy is his "top priority." The missing link in this system is the critical role that education can play in quickly making the green economy a reality....

Transforming our nation's economic, energy, and environmental systems to move toward a green economy will require a level of expertise, innovation, and cooperative effort unseen since the 1940s to meet the challenges involved.

Creating millions of new green jobs through targeted investment and spending is one thing; filling those jobs with qualified candidates is quite another thing. This transition will require a massive job training (and retraining) effort on the part of business, government, and education if it is to scale up quickly.

But green manufacturing workforce development programs are just one piece of what is needed; the green economy will not be driven by manufacturing workers alone. Architects, engineers, planners, scientists, business managers, financial experts, lawyers, entrepreneurs, political leaders, resource managers, and many others, as well as workers - not to mention environmentally literate consumers - will all be needed to drive the green economy.

American workers, managers, and professionals at all levels and in all sectors must understand the foundations of a green economy as represented in leading environmental and sustainability education programs. These foundations call for redesigning the human economy to emulate nature: operating on renewable energy, creating a circular production economy in which the concept of "waste" is eliminated because all waste products are raw materials or nutrients for the industrial economy, and managing human activities in a way that uses natural resources only at the rate that they can self-regenerate (the ideas embodied in sustainable forestry, fishing, and agriculture).

To produce such a literate workforce and citizenry, America will need to make major new investments in our educational systems to implement the green economy...." (end of quote from Worldwatch Institute letter)

D. From Section 9 “Community Teaching and Learning Centers” in “The IPCR Workshop Primer”

[subsection: The key role which can be played by philanthropy]

Here also, it will be most appropriate to provide some inspiration relating to the key role which can be played by philanthropy, in both creating education systems, and in the “just transition” to more solution-oriented employment: (Note: Specifically, this writer believes that if there was anything resembling the kind of philanthropy described below directed to the support of Community Visioning Initiatives, there could be much momentum generated towards resolving the challenges of our times.) Again, the work of Booker T. Washington (and of the philanthropists who recognized the value of the work he was doing) is most inspirational:¹

“Washington's philosophy and tireless work on education issues helped him enlist both the moral and substantial financial support of many major white philanthropists. He became friends with such self-made men as Standard Oil magnate Henry Huttleston Rogers; Sears, Roebuck and Company President Julius Rosenwald; and George Eastman, inventor and founder of Kodak. These individuals and many other wealthy men and women funded his causes, such as supporting Hampton and Tuskegee institutes. Each school was originally founded to produce teachers. However, graduates had often gone back to their local communities only to find precious few schools and educational resources to work with in the largely impoverished South.

“In 1912, Rosenwald provided funds for a pilot program involving six new small schools in rural Alabama, which were designed, constructed and opened in 1913 and 1914 and overseen by Tuskegee; the model proved successful. Rosenwald (then) established The Rosenwald Fund. The school building program was one of its largest programs. Using state-of-the-art architectural plans initially drawn by professors at Tuskegee Institute, the Rosenwald Fund spent over four million dollars to help build 4,977 schools, 217 teachers' homes, and 163 shop buildings in 883 counties in 15 states, from Maryland to Texas. The Rosenwald Fund used a system of matching grants, and black communities raised more than \$4.7 million to aid the construction. These schools became known as Rosenwald Schools. The local schools were a source of much community pride and were of priceless value to African-American families when poverty and segregation limited their children's chances. By 1932, the facilities could accommodate one third of all African American children in Southern U.S. schools.”

X. The Treasured Wisdom of Religious, Spiritual, and Moral Traditions—is it in the “tool box”?

[From the section “The Treasured Wisdom of Religious, Spiritual, and Moral Traditions—is it in the ‘tool box’?” in “The Twilight of One Era, and the Dawning of Another”]

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.

And yet, when we wish to discuss matters of religious, spiritual, or moral education, we often find ourselves in the same position as Prof. J. S. MacKenzie, as he expressed it in 1908:

“The subject of religious education is one on which it is difficult to say anything at present without appearing to take sides in those unhappy wrangles to which there seems to be no end....”²⁷

And, as mentioned earlier (in the section “Problems That May Arise....”. see p. 14):

“In some cases, one group may come to view the beliefs and actions of another group as fundamentally evil and morally intolerable. This often results in hostility and violence and severely damages the relationship between the two groups. For this reason, moral conflicts tend to be quite harmful and intractable.”

This writer feels that *somehow* many people have—unfortunately—learned to mistakenly equate flaws in human nature with the practical wisdom and compassion associated with religious, spiritual, and moral traditions. This writer also feels that, with enough experiences of a positive and mutually beneficial nature, many people can come to learn more about the practical wisdom and compassion associated with religious, spiritual, and moral traditions and less about the flaws in human nature.

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”.

Such treasured wisdom contains teachings which inspire and encourage people to

- a) appreciate 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."

This writer believes it is becoming more and more likely that an exponential increase in compassion for our fellow human beings will need to become an essential and critical element of a truly comprehensive response to the challenges of our times. In such circumstances, we cannot afford to exclude from our "tool box" the time-tested sources which have helped people learn compassion over many centuries.

What we need to do instead is to learn how to cultivate the time-tested sources so that the sources yield the treasured wisdom.

XI. The IPCR Mission Statement

[From the “Mission Statement” section of The IPCR Initiative website homepage, at www.ipcri.net]

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

XII. The Contributions The IPCR Initiative Hopes to Make

[From Section 2 “The IPCR Initiative—Creating a Multiplier Effect of a Positive Nature” in “The IPCR Workshop Primer”]

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.

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.

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.

The IPCR Initiative is a “constellation” of initiatives which provide a “trellis” for communities of people to “organically grow” towards their own collective definitions of “spiritual formation” and “right livelihood”.

Specifically, the contributions The IPCR Initiative hopes to make, along the lines described by the four preceding paragraphs, are as follows:

- a) inspire, encourage, and support the creation of many local community specific and regional specific variations of the “1000Communities²” proposal—so that Community Visioning Initiatives take place in as many ways and in as many communities as possible
- b) introduce 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) through workshops offered at the local community level (For an overview of these concepts, see the IPCR document “Brief Descriptions of The Eight IPCR Concepts”, at <http://ipcri.net/images/1-Brief-Descriptions-of-The-Eight-IPCR-Concepts.pdf>)
- 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 117 fields of related activity (see Appendix 1—Part A) and generate enough regular feature material in categories such as local community and regional model projects, 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....)

f) and combine the resources created by “clearinghouses,” and “community newsletters” to link many associated efforts—such as those in Appendix 1—Part B (“Starting Point Links for Learning About 113 Related Fields of Activity”)

—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.

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.*

XIII. Brief Descriptions of The Eight IPCR Concepts

[From Section 5 “Brief Descriptions of The Eight IPCR Concepts” in “The IPCR Workshop Primer”]

The Eight IPCR Concepts are:

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

Special Note: In addition to the brief descriptions of the Eight IPCR Concepts, a summary statement, three related fields of activity (from a list of “117 Related Fields of Activity”, see Appendix 1—Part B), and one sample question (from various IPCR documents) are included with each IPCR concept, as examples of starting points for workshop discussion.

Here are brief descriptions of The Eight IPCR Concepts (and their associated summary statements, three related fields of activity, and one sample question).

1. “Community Good News Networks”

“Community Good News Networks” is a name for participation by local community residents in an ongoing process of actively discovering, sharing, encouraging, and creating good news, for the purpose of “... 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.”

One way to begin creating “Community Good News Networks” is as follows: ongoing intergenerational programs—programs that bring together elders of the community with young people (ages 5-18) of the community—are created at appropriate meeting places such as local places of worship. Such intergenerational programs would include the following activities: 1) collecting and sharing good news articles, stories, etc., and making contributions to “Good News Reference Resources,” specific to local communities and regions 2) sending notecards of gratitude and encouragement—and invitations to visit—to people who are making good news in the local community or region 3) inspirational sharing meetings featuring “good news makers” from the local community or region.

As more and more good news is discovered, shared, and created, participants can give special attention to identifying the “good news makers” who live near their specific meeting place. A local “Community Faith Mentoring Network” could then be established to facilitate matching people of all ages with “faith mentors” in their local community.

Summary Statement: 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.

Related Fields of Activity—intergenerational projects, positive news, solutions journalism

Example Question for Discussion:

When future generations look back into the past for examples of peacebuilding, community revitalization, and ecological sustainability, what do you hope they will find?

a) What individuals, organizations, or institutions will such future generations rely upon to provide records of peacebuilding, community revitalization, and ecological sustainability efforts of the past—especially peacebuilding, community revitalization, and ecological sustainability efforts at the local community and regional level?

2. “Community Faith Mentoring Networks”

A “Faith Mentor” can be defined as “a person, who by word, action, and presence, models a meaningful lifestyle, clarifies important life issues, and provides guidance for deepening spirituality in a caring and accepting environment.”

Do most of us believe that we already have a “faith mentor” in our lives, and are progressing, consciously and deliberately, towards the full realization of our spiritual potential? Those of us who have had a “faith mentor” in our lives, or have one now, know how much of a difference such a person has made in our lives... surely, we can then sympathize with others who would like to have such a person in their lives, but do not.

While the development of a faith mentoring relationship often takes place within a particular faith community, “Community Faith Mentoring Networks” would be a partnership among many different places of worship and faith traditions, for the purpose of 1) increasing our collective capacity to encourage and inspire individual spiritual formation—with all the beneficial consequences that follow for individuals, communities, regions, etc. and 2) building trust among people from different faith communities and cultural traditions.

Applied at the local community and regional level, “Community Good News Networks” and “Community Faith Mentoring Networks” can create ongoing opportunities for people of one particular faith community or cultural tradition to experience the highest ideals of all local community specific and regional specific faith communities and cultural traditions, as representatives of such ideals are better appreciated, more easily recognized—and more numerous— in the everyday circumstances of community life.

Summary Statement: We reap what we sow.

Related Fields of Activity—individual spiritual formation, inspiring role models, right livelihood

Example Question for Discussion:

Please complete the following sentence (in as many ways as you believe might be helpful to people who might read what you have written).

“If only there was a way to _____.”

3. “Spiritual Friendships”

Currently, the “deepening of spirituality in a caring, accepting environment,” mentioned in connection with the “faith mentor” definition, is most often achieved within the context of specific faith communities, and faith-oriented family environments. This “deepening of spirituality in a caring, accepting environment” can be deliberately accelerated by the cultivation of “Spiritual Friendships.”

One way of developing “Spiritual Friendships” is as follows... Within a particular faith community—or among people from different religious, spiritual, or moral traditions—small groups are formed which would include the following three elements: 1) Participants (at least most participants) declare an intention to take a specific step towards achieving a goal associated with their personal spiritual growth (By making such a declaration, participants will thereby be motivated to “do their homework” before the next meeting... that is, they will, by their desire to be true to their word—and by their desire to encourage the integrity of the process as a whole—feel some sense of urgency and responsibility about making an honest effort related to their declaration.) 2) All participants are provided with an opportunity, in a respectful and considerate small group environment, to speak about their efforts they made in the interval between meetings 3) Participants have the right to choose how they will benefit from the small group process (they can choose to speak about their efforts, or choose not to speak about them; they can seek feedback or encouragement, or prefer no response; they can remain silent and listen, etc.)

Summary Statement: “Spiritual Friendships” are relationships based on a sense of responsibility and accountability in association with the process of individual spiritual formation—and thus inspire, encourage, and support honest efforts associated with specific spiritual goals.

Related Fields of Activity—interfaith dialogue, spiritual discipline, building community

Example Question for Discussion:

For the question below, please check the box (or boxes) which best corresponds to the way you view the following statement:

“Most people making efforts to realize their spiritual potential need to live in caring communities, so that they can find support from association with kindred spirits.”

agree

agree in some way

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:

4. “Questionnaires That Can Help Build Caring Communities”

Organizations and communities of people often use questionnaires and surveys to identify problems and solutions, and to build consensus for collective action.

Questionnaires and surveys as a community building tool can provide:

- 1) the beginnings of a database of questions that can help build caring communities
- 2) a starting point for creating preliminary surveys, as preparation for Community Visioning Initiatives (Example: Responses and summarized results from sending preliminary surveys to 150 key community leaders can provide a) evidence from local leaders of the need for a re-assessment of current priorities b) an aid to mobilizing a high level of interest in the planned Community Visioning Initiative c) starting points for workshop topics at “Community Teaching and Learning Centers”)
- 3) a focal point for community and individual self-examination [Example: “Quaker's often use what they call ‘queries’ as a focus for individual and collective meditation, consideration and prayer—(and for) guiding Quaker seekers in their search for greater love, truth, and insight into how to serve humanity and live lives that are consistent with their core values.” (Two Quaker queries: "Do you seek employment consistent with your beliefs, and in service to society?" "When a members conduct or manner of living gives cause for concern, how does the Meeting respond?")]
- 4) a way to evaluate a Community Visioning process, so that the most valuable learning experiences can be shared with other communities.

Here are some example questions which are designed to be helpful in building caring communities:

- 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.
[___ 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) From your point of view, what are the most difficult challenges of our times? Do you believe that we—collectively—have the resources necessary to overcome the challenges you have identified as the most difficult challenges of our times?

c) Who are the Experienced Practitioners, who are most qualified to be educating people on how to successfully overcome each of the challenges you perceive as most threatening to peace and well-being around the world? (Note: Please be specific, as in times of emergency, it will be most important for leaders to understand which people are perceived as most qualified by the majority of the residents in a particular community).

d) Consider the following commentary on preparation for carrying out a Community Visioning Initiative.... People who are doing preliminary planning for carrying out a Community Visioning Initiative 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. The question: please list at least 5 preventative measures which you believe would proactively encourage a high percentage of constructive thinking and constructive action during the carrying out of a Community Visioning Initiative in your community.

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

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.

Questionnaires can be created which will accumulate information, suggestions, etc. that can be of critical importance in resolving the above mentioned “irony”—and which can provide the above mentioned assistance to the process of organizing and implementing Community Visioning Initiatives.

Summary Statement: Ongoing community and individual self-examination can encourage a high percentage of constructive thinking and constructive action during Community Visioning Initiatives—and help communities of people deliberately focus how they spend their time, energy and money so that these “investments” are consistent with their core values.

Related Fields of Activity—identifying problems and solutions, community self-awareness, building consensus

Example Question for Discussion:

Please check the box which best corresponds to the way you view of the following statement:

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.

- | | | | | |
|---|---|---|--|---|
| <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 way things are going now | I don't believe it-- there is no evidence to support it |

5. “Community Visioning Initiatives for Peace”

We live in very complex world. There are very difficult challenges ahead. More and more people are coming to the realization that resolving the challenges ahead will require problem solving on a scale most of us have never known before.

This writer also hopes that more and more people are also coming to the realization that the difficult challenges ahead are not something that the experts will resolve while the rest of us are doing something else. Everyone is involved when it comes to determining the markets that supply the “ways of earning a living”; and given the unprecedented nature of the challenges ahead, all of us have important responsibilities in the coming months and years ahead.

We are in need of innovative and imaginative solutions.

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.

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. The more comprehensive Community Visioning Initiatives (the “Vision 2000” initiative mentioned above took 5 months) carry out a series of meetings which focus on five particular areas: identifying challenges, prioritizing challenges, identifying solutions, prioritizing solutions, and creating action plans. Combined with ongoing workshops and much formal and informal educational activity, these meetings, though only a part of the Visioning Initiative, may last 4-6 months. These 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.

One of the main goals of these kind of Community Visioning Initiatives is to maximize citizen participation in identifying challenges, and in solution-oriented activity.

In addition, the job fairs which come at the end of the Community Visioning Initiative process (as it is described in the IPCR document “1000Communities²”) 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.

Using a system as comprehensive as the Community Visioning process outlined in the “1000Communities²” document (at <http://ipcri.net/images/1000Communities2.pdf>) to identify challenges, resources, solutions, and action plans will eventually, over the years, result in people approximating “a highest synthesis of truth and community”, *from their point of view. It is also highly likely that, because the stakes are high—and because for those communities of people who are sincere enough to carry out comprehensive and time-intensive Community Visioning Initiatives will gravitate towards outcomes which are honest, responsible, compassionate, and service-oriented—what they will discover as a highest synthesis will be of such a similar spiritual essence to other communities (which have carried out Community Visioning Initiatives of a similar nature) as to significantly increase the likelihood of kinship experiences between many diverse communities of people.* Even if much disagreement remains about the nature of the challenges ahead, the potential associated with Community Visioning Initiatives can be actualized to such a degree that significant gains can be made in many fields of activity.

Summary Statement: Community Visioning Initiatives can help sort through information and commentary to identify local community specific priorities, and do so in a way that will help residents to realize how much they need to be learning so that they can be part of the solutions... and how much they really need to be on the same side, helping each other.

Related Fields of Activity-- identifying goals, building trust, developing civic skills

Example Question for Discussion:

Please consider this brief description of community visioning initiatives in general, and of Chattanooga “Vision 2000” [Chattanooga, Tennessee (USA)] in particular:

Community visioning initiatives have, in the past, been used most often for the purpose of maximizing citizen participation in the planning and development phases of community revitalization efforts. Community visioning initiatives can be described as a series of community meetings designed to facilitate the process of brainstorming ideas, organizing the ideas into goals, prioritizing the goals, and identifying doable steps. In 1984, the non-profit organization Chattanooga Venture [Chattanooga, Tennessee (USA)] organized a visioning initiative 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.

Now consider the following statement:

“The mission of a community visioning initiative (in the area where I am a resident) should be to encourage 100% citizen involvement/participation in identifying, creating, and gathering together all ideas for collective effort that

- a) _____
- b) _____
- c) _____

and then, further, to organize these ideas into goals, identify doable steps associated with such goals... and then facilitate the development of a coalition of citizens with the necessary faith, resources, patience, and perseverance to work through the steps and realize the goals.”

Please fill in the blanks in the above statement.

6. “Spiritually Responsible Investing”

The way we “invest” our time, energy, and money has a direct impact on the “ways of earning a living” that are available.

As J.C. Kumarappa expresses it in his book “Why the Village Movement?”: “A buyer hardly realizes he owes any duties at all in his everyday transactions.” (And yet), “... every article in the bazaar has moral and spiritual values attached to it.... Hence it behooves us to enquire into the antecedents of every article we buy.” But, as we ourselves well know, the task of inquiring into the moral or spiritual history of every article we buy (and, similarly, the task of inquiring into the consequences of our “investments” of time and energy) is becoming increasingly complex... and is, for most of us, simply beyond our capacity to accomplish.

This level of complexity in our everyday circumstances should not discourage us to the point of abdicating our roles as responsible stewards of our time, energy, and money—for that would only increase the distrust and violence we are, hopefully, trying to minimize. Instead, we can make it a priority to carefully channel our “investments” of time, energy, and money into activities which are in accordance with our spiritual convictions or core values (as indicated by a full disclosure of information, which is readily available)—and which are in accordance with circles of activity which are closer to the community we live in [“The smaller the circumference, the more accurately can we gauge the results of our actions and (the) more conscientiously shall we be able to fulfil our obligations as trustees.”]

As a way of encouraging new exploration into the concept of “Spiritually Responsible Investing”, here are three propositions, and one definition. [Note: The following propositions and definition were first offered in the IPCR document “Spiritually Responsible Investing: Integrating Spiritual Wisdom into the Everyday Circumstances of Community Life” (March-April, 2007) (see <http://ipcri.net/images/1-Spiritually-Responsible-Investing-paper-for-FSSC.pdf>)]

The first proposition is: 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.

The second proposition is: The ways we “invest” our time, energy, and money have a direct impact on the “ways of earning a living” that are available.

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

And the one definition: Spiritually Responsible Investing can be defined as investments of time, energy, and money which increase our capacity to integrate spiritual wisdom into the everyday circumstances of community life.”

An IPCR Journal/Newsletter can contribute to the careful channeling of our “investments” of time, energy, and money by serving as a “clearinghouse” for “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.”

“If many people can learn to find contentment and quality of life while consuming much less, this limiting of desires at the ‘root’ will save much trouble trying to respond to the symptoms as they materialize worldwide. This is part of the ‘spiritual teachings’ element which often gets overlooked....”

“... (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.”

Summary Statement: Everyone is involved when it comes to determining the markets that supply the “ways of earning a living.”

Related Fields of Activity—village industries, alternative gifts, emergency humanitarian aid

Example Question for Discussion:

Consider keeping a record of all of your “investments” of time, energy, and money for one month. And then, after one month, make a list of what goals receive the most significant “investments” of time, energy, and money—and rank each most significant, next most significant, etc., using 1 as most significant, 2 as next most significant, and so on.

7. “Ecological Sustainability”

Consider: the increasing world population, and the increasing number of people who are consuming material goods and ecological services indiscriminately. Evidence is accumulating which suggests that “(the) planet’s ecological systems are on the verge of catastrophic change for which few societies are prepared.” A September, 2007 conference program is focusing on the “Triple Crisis,” a “convergence of three advancing conditions”:

a) Planet-wide climate chaos and global warming; (“World carbon emissions must start to decline in only six years if humanity is to stand a chance of preventing dangerous global warming, a group of 20 Nobel prize-winning scientists, economists and writers declared today.”)

b) The end of the era of cheap energy (“peak oil”) (“The human community’s central task for the coming decades must be the undoing of its dependence on oil, coal, and natural gas in order to deal with the twin crises of resource depletion and climate chaos.”)

c) The depletion of many of the world’s key resources: water, timber, fish, fertile soil, coral reefs; and the expected extinction of 50% of the world’s species.

“All are rooted in the same systemic problem—massive overuse of fossil fuels and the Earth’s resources; all driven by an economic ideology of hyper growth and consumption that’s beyond the limits of the planet to sustain.”

“The energy invested in a particular thing, during its life from cradle to grave, is called the ‘embodied energy’ of that object. The amount of embodied energy that an item contains depends on the technology used to create it (the origin of materials inputs, how they were created and transported, etc.), the nature of the production system, and the distance the item travels from inception to purchase.” “By supporting items and processes that have lower embodied energy, as well as the companies that produce them, consumers can significantly reduce society’s energy use.” “If many people can learn to find contentment and quality of life while consuming much less, this limiting of desires at the ‘root’ will save much trouble trying to respond to the symptoms as they materialize worldwide. This is part of the ‘spiritual teachings’ element which often gets overlooked...”

Everyone is involved when it comes to determining the markets that supply the “ways of earning a living.” More and more people are coming to the realization that resolving these challenges will require problem solving on a scale most of us have never known before— and that there is an urgent need to restructure our economic systems and our education systems to respond to these challenges. Energy descent pathways, community visioning initiatives, “Community Teaching and Learning Centers”, sister community relationships, spiritually responsible investing, peacebuilding, reconciliation, relocalization, green job training, permaculture, community supported agriculture, local currencies, ecovillages, accountability indicators, and community revitalization are among the many practical and appropriate responses to the challenges of our times.

“The transition from an unsustainable fossil-fuel based economy back to a solar based economy (agriculture and forestry) will (require making best use of) the embodied energy we inherit from industrial culture. This embodied energy is contained within a vast array of things, infrastructure, cultural processes, and ideas.... It is the task of our age to take this great wealth, reconfigure it, and apply it to the development of sustainable systems.” (David Holmgren, from article “Energy and Permaculture”)

Summary Statement: Many hands make much work light.

Related Fields of Activity—world population awareness, energy descent pathways, permaculture

Example Question for Discussion:

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 association 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?

8. “IPCR Journal/Newsletters”

A collective effort by even a small community, to apply the seven previously mentioned IPCR concepts, would easily identify, develop, and create enough—

“good news makers;” descriptions of inspirational sharing meetings featuring “good news makers;” examples of questionnaires that help build caring communities; results at various stages of community visioning initiatives; examples of carefully channeling our “investments” of time, energy, and money; examples of how we determine the markets that supply the “ways of earning a living”; statistics associated with ecological footprint analysis; successful practices associated with building ecovillages; practical ways of applying the principles of permaculture; examples and descriptions associated with: energy descent pathways, relocalization projects; village support centers; village industries, cottage industries, and home industries; community supported agriculture and community supported manufacturing; community land trusts and co-housing projects; community revolving loans; ecological tipping points; fair trade practices; extended producer responsibility; barter networks and local currencies; energy farms; achieving zero waste; building civic skills and building community; inspiring role models; service-oriented initiatives; right livelihood employment listings; accountability indicators and statistics; model project case studies; apprenticeship programs; workshop and conference information; volunteer work; commentary; essays; letters to the editor; “community journal entries”; resource reviews; and, in general, “things people can do in the everyday circumstances of their lives....”

-- and links to other service-oriented organizations, initiatives, and projects—

to justify a monthly publication of an IPCR Journal/Newsletter... and, by its very nature, such a publication would be an ongoing contribution to the goals of

- a) “... 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) increasing our collective capacity to encourage and inspire individuals spiritual formation— with all the beneficial consequences that follow for individuals, communities, regions, etc.

- c) building trust among people from different faith communities and cultural traditions
- d) increasing our capacity to be responsible “stewards” of our time, energy, and money
- e) 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 ecological footprint analysis, global warming, and the “peaking” of oil production
- f) 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
- g) reducing the incidence of violence—and all the costs associated with war
- h) increasing emergency assistance to people with basic human needs
- i) reflecting an understanding of the value of silence.

Wouldn't you like the opportunity to discuss the contents of such a publication with your family, friends, neighbors, etc.?

Summary Statement: Each person must do his or her part, and trust that the others involved will do their part.

Related Fields of Activity—clearinghouse (of “things people can do...”), community journal “entries”, right livelihood employment listings

Example Question for Discussion:

Please check the boxes which best correspond to the way you view the following statement:

“There will be a noticeable increase in trust among people from different faith communities and cultural traditions (i.e. Christian, Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, Jewish, etc.; Asian, African, Hispanic, American, etc.) in the next 20 years.”

- | | | | | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|--|---|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| would actively contribute to making it happen | with some assistance it could happen | it would take a lot of effort make it happen | even with a lot of effort it might never happen | it will never happen | would actively prevent it from happening |

XIV. 117 Related Fields of Activity

[From Appendix 1, Section B “A List of 117 Related Fields of Activity” in “The IPCR Workshop Primer”]

A List of 117 Fields of Activity Related to Peacebuilding, Community Revitalization, and Ecological Sustainability

Important Notes:

- 1) This list is, and will always be, an incomplete list—because it reflects this writers’ preferences, and because of its very nature (i.e. it represents only a fraction of the 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).
- 2) The “Links” section of this website (the IPCR Initiative website, at www.ipcri.net), provides starting point links associated with each of these “fields of activity” (In addition, some “fields of activity” have text, excerpts, or commentary from referenced sources).

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| 1. alleviating hunger | 61. indicators/sustainability indicators |
| 2. alternative gifts | 62. individual spiritual formation |
| 3. appropriate technology | 63. inspiring role models |
| 4. barter networks | 64. interfaith dialogue |
| 5. capacity building | 65. interfaith peacebuilding |
| 6. car sharings | 66. intergenerational projects |
| 7. car-free zones | 67. life cycle assessment |
| 8. carbon footprint | 68. local community points of entry |
| 9. charitable foundations | 69. local currency |
| 10. child sponsorship | 70. locally based food processing |
| 11. citizen participation | 71. locally grown food |
| 12. citizen peacebuilding | 72. low impact transport systems |
| 13. co-housing | 73. meditation |
| 14. community banks | 74. mentoring |
| 15. community development | 75. microgeneration |
| 16. community economics | 76. neighborhood revitalization |
| 17. community education | 77. oil depletion protocol |
| 18. community gardens | 78. open courseware |
| 19. community good news networks | 79. open source social solutions |
| 20. community journals | 80. open space technology |
| 21. community land trusts | 81. organic farming |
| 22. community membership agreements | 82. peace studies programs |
| 23. community organizing | 83. peacebuilding |
| 24. community revitalization | 84. peak oil |
| 25. community revolving loans | 85. permaculture |

26. community service work
27. community supported agriculture
28. community supported manufacturing
29. community visioning initiatives
30. composting toilets
31. conflict resolution
32. consensus decision making
33. cradle to cradle
34. cultural diversity
35. development assistance
36. disease control
37. ecological footprint analysis
38. ecological tipping points
39. economic conversion
40. ecovillages
41. edible schoolyards
42. education—spiritual, moral, religious, interfaith
43. emergency humanitarian aid
44. emergency medical assistance
45. employment training/green job training
46. energy conservation
47. energy descent pathways
48. energy return on energy invested (EROEI)
49. evaluation strategies
50. fair trade
51. faith mentoring
52. farmers markets
53. food co-ops
54. green living
55. green politics
56. green purchasing
57. green retrofitting
58. holistic education
59. holistic health care
60. homesteading
86. positive news
87. preventative health care
88. questionnaires/surveys
89. recycling
90. renewable energy
91. renewable resources
92. right livelihood
93. right livelihood employment listings
94. school business partnerships
95. service learning
96. sister community relationships
97. slow money
98. socially engaged spirituality
99. socially responsible investing
100. spiritual discipline/spiritual practice
101. spiritual diversity (religious pluralism)
102. spiritual friendships
103. spiritually responsible investing
104. sustainable design/natural building
105. sustainable health care
106. urban agriculture
107. vegetarianism
108. village design
109. village industries/cottage industries
110. violence prevention
111. voluntary simplicity
112. waste water treatment
113. water conservation
114. water purification
115. world population awareness
116. yoga
117. zero waste

XV. IPCR Workshops

[From the webpage “IPCR Workshops”, accessible from the IPCR Initiative website homepage at www.ipcri.net]

A. 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 Section 3, and many other parts of this “IPCR Workshop Primer” (“48 Different Ways of Describing The IPCR Initiative”, “The Twilight of One Era, and the Dawning of Another”, etc)], 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”

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 Point Assessment of the Most Difficult Challenges of Our Times”
- 2) the 10 goals in “The IPCR Mission Statement”
- 3) The 8 IPCR Concepts
- 4) the 15 Step Outline for Carrying Out a Comprehensive and Time-Intensive Community Visioning Initiative
- 5) the 39 Suggestions for Preliminary Survey Questions (as Preparation for Community Visioning Initiatives
- 6) the 36 Problems That May Arise (in preparing for, and implementing, Community Visioning Initiatives
- 7) the 4 Step Approach to Project Development
- 8) the 117 Fields of Activity Which Are related to Peacebuilding, Community Revitalization, and Ecological Sustainability
- 9) the 10 Examples of Humanitarian Aid Which Can Be Explored Through “Sister Community” Relationships
- 10) the 48 Different Ways of Describing The IPCR Initiative

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 117 Related Fields of Activity (see Appendix 1—Parts B and C), 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.

B. 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 “117 related fields of activity”. As the ancient Chinese proverb states: “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. I am 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.

C. 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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D. IPCR Copyright Policy

In light of the urgent need to build bridges and increase collaboration between 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 (including this document) 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.]

E. 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.

XVI. The IPCR Workshop Primer

[From the IPCR Community Journal post “The IPCR Workshop Primer: An Introduction to The IPCR Initiative”]

[Posted at The IPCR Community Journal at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/ipcri/> on February 25, 2010 by Stefan Pasti, Founder and Outreach Coordinator, The IPCR Initiative]

[Published in the section “Highlights from The IPCR Community Journal” at the website of The IPCR Initiative (at www.ipcri.net) on February 25, 2010]

This message is an introduction to a new document from The Interfaith Peacebuilding and Community Revitalization (IPCR) Initiative titled “The IPCR Workshop Primer” (425 pages).

“The IPCR Workshop Primer” is meant to be a resource guide for facilitators of IPCR Workshops, and a resource guide for participants in IPCR Workshops. The word “Primer” is used to indicate that this resource is meant to be an energizer—it is meant to cause workshops to happen; and it is a storehouse of ideas for making workshops useful and inspiring. “The IPCR Workshop Primer” is also an introduction to the potential of The IPCR Initiative. “The IPCR Workshop Primer” is accessible for free (as a pdf file) from the IPCR website homepage (www.ipcri.net). [Note: All IPCR documents are accessible for free.]

“The IPCR Workshop Primer” was written and compiled by this writer (Stefan Pasti), who is the founder and outreach coordinator for The Interfaith Peacebuilding and Community Revitalization (IPCR) Initiative.

One Way of Describing The IPCR Initiative

[Note: There is a section in “The IPCR Workshop Primer” titled “48 Different Ways of Describing The IPCR Initiative.”]

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.

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.

In one of the “Keynote Documents” of The IPCR Initiative (“1000Communities²”), this writer 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.

Community Visioning Initiatives can be described as a series of community meetings designed to facilitate the process of brainstorming ideas, organizing the ideas into goals, prioritizing the goals, and

identifying doable steps. Many Community Visioning Initiatives require steering committees, preliminary surveys or assessments, workshops, task forces, and 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.

One of the main goals of Community Visioning Initiatives is to maximize citizen participation in identifying challenges, and in solution-oriented activity. In 1984, the non-profit organization Chattanooga Venture [Chattanooga, Tennessee (USA)] organized a Community Visioning Initiative 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.

Countless Numbers of Things People Can Do

Everyone is involved when it comes to determining the markets which supply the “ways of earning a living”. All of us have important responsibilities associated with resolving a significant number of very serious challenges in the months and years ahead.

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. [See Appendix 1 (of “The IPCR Workshop Primer”) Parts B and C on “117 Related Fields of Activity”, for some examples of the countless number of things people can do.]

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.

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.

[Special Note: 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.*]

Helping to make community building processes most effective, and relevant to the greater good of the whole

“The IPCR Workshop Primer” encourages the creation of a “constellation” of initiatives, which can bring to light the many truly inspiring contributions of genuine goodwill in your community and region, and contribute much to the building of “close-knit” communities of people... communities with a healthy

appreciation for each others strengths, communities with 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.

“The IPCR Workshop Primer” is an effort to provide many pieces of a “big picture” view in one place, so that there is both understanding of why there is a need for Community Visioning Initiatives, “Community Teaching and Learning Centers”, “sister community” relationships, and a variety of affordable workshops at the local community and neighborhood level—and understanding of the kind of tools and resources which can help make such community building processes most effective, and relevant to the greater good of the whole.

“The IPCR Workshop Primer” has 21 sections and 3 Appendices. The 21 sections include: “An Assessment of the Most Difficult Challenges of Our Times”, “Brief Descriptions of The Eight IPCR Concepts”, “A 15 Step Outline for a Community Visioning Initiative”, “Community Teaching and Learning Centers”, “39 Suggestions for Preliminary Survey Questions”, and “36 Problems That May Arise”. The 3 Appendices include “Starting Point Links for Learning More About ‘117 Related Fields of Activity’”, “48 Different Ways of Describing the IPCR Initiative”, and “The Twilight of One Era, and the Dawning of Another” (a 21 page summary paper, with a 14 page “Notes and Source References” section).

“The IPCR Workshop Primer” also includes a short story by this writer titled “The Spirit of the Sacred Hoop”. The first version of this 9 page short story was written in 1984. The story was revised to its current form in 2006. The story is about a tribe of people who are experiencing great challenges, a young woman’s vision of a bird who conveys a message of great importance to the tribe, and a great journey undertaken by the tribe to find the tree at the center of the sacred hoop. The story has influenced this writer’s thinking in many ways over the years. In particular, this writer believes that it (the story) contains one line—one sentence—which encapsulates the advantages of having many different paths by which we, as humans, can access the wisdom associated with religious, spiritual, and moral traditions (the wisdom associated with love, virtue, sacrifice, forgiveness, peace, etc.). Here this writer offers readers the opportunity to see if they can find that one line.

This writer encourages readers who explore this new resource to offer any comments, suggestions, recommendations, etc. Also, if readers have any questions, he encourages them to ask the questions. We need our public discourse to be as honest, responsible, and transparent as possible, so we can identify, nurture, support, and sustain ways to build a collective force greater than the challenges we are now facing. There is much which leaders *could be* asking from the people who respect their leadership, both as a matter of civic duty, and as a matter of necessity; and there are many people who will be very appreciative when they find that they have an important role to play in the work ahead. Leaders should guide citizens so that they can discover how they can do their part to contribute to the greater good of the whole.

With Kind Regards,

Stefan Pasti, Founder and Outreach Coordinator
The IPCR Initiative

XVII. The “1000Communities²” Proposal: Creating a Multiplier Effect of a Positive Nature

[From section “Educational Materials Outreach Package (Fall, 2008)”, accessible on The IPCR Initiative website homepage, at www.ipcri.net] [For complete 161 page proposal, see <http://ipcri.net/1000Communities2.pdf>]

Introduction

In 1984, the non-profit organization Chattanooga Venture [Chattanooga, Tennessee (USA)] organized a Community Visioning Initiative 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.

Many Difficult Challenges Ahead

We now live in very complex and challenging times. More and more people, in more and more parts of the world, are coming to the conclusion that all of us have important responsibilities associated with resolving a significant number of very serious challenges, which include (but are not limited to):

- a) global warming and reducing carbon emissions
- b) peak oil and reducing dependence on petroleum based products
- c) global inequities and the tragic cycles of malnutrition, disease, and death
- d) an increasing world population requiring more resources when many resources are becoming more scarce (*with a special emphasis* on the increasing number of people who are consuming resources and ecological services *indiscriminately*)
- e) cultures of greed, corruption, and overindulgence have caused a crises of confidence in financial markets, and are in many ways slowing the restructuring of investment priorities needed to respond to the challenges listed here (and other challenges)
- f) there still seems to be a majority of people on the planet who do not have a clear understanding, well-grounded in personal experience, of which basic elements of community life and cultural traditions lead to mutually beneficial understandings, which lead to cycles of violence—and why it is so important for people to achieve clarity on this subject.

The “1000Communities²” Proposal

One suggestion which could assist in bringing many solutions to light at the local community level is a 161 page proposal by this writer titled “1000Communities²”.

The “1000Communities²” proposal advocates organizing and implementing Community Visioning Initiatives in 1000 communities (communities—or segments of rural areas, towns, or cities—with populations of 50,000 or less) around the world

1. which are time-intensive, lasting even as much as 1½ years (18 months), so as to give as much importance to developing a close-knit community as it does to

- a) accumulating and integrating the knowledge and skill sets necessary for the highest percentage of people to act wisely in response to challenges identified as priority challenges
- b) helping people to 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
- c) assisting with outreach, partnership formation, and development of service capacity for a significant number of already existing (or forming) organizations, businesses, institutions, and government agencies
- d) helping to build a high level of consensus for specific action plans, which will help inspire additional support from people, businesses, organizations, institutions, and government agencies with significant resources

2. which expand on the concept of “Community Teaching and Learning Centers” (created by the “Teachers Without Borders” organization) so that such local community points of entry function as information clearinghouses, meeting locations, educational centers for ongoing workshops (on a broad range of topics related to the Community Visioning Process, and building the local knowledge base), practice sites for developing “teacher-leaders”, a location for an ongoing “informal” “Community Journal”, a location for listing employment opportunities—and provide a means of responding quickly (by changing the emphasis of workshop content) to new urgencies as they arise

3. and which suggest—as a way of emphasizing the need for an exponential increase in compassion for our fellow human beings—that communities (with the resources to do so) enter into “sister community” relationships with communities in other countries where there has been well documented calls for assistance with basic human needs.

If even a few....

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.” Community Visioning Initiatives can be very helpful in exactly these kinds of circumstances, as this community building tool encourages and facilitates the creation of a “constellation” of initiatives by which the best (*in view of the participants in the community visioning initiatives*) solutions to the most difficult (*in the view of the participants in the community visioning initiatives*) challenges can bubble up to the surface, be recognized as priorities, and therefore be brought forward as appropriate recipients of people’s time, energy, and money. Many people can realize the wisdom of deliberately focusing the way they spend their time, energy, and money. The result can be a deliberate increase in the “ways of earning a living” which are directly related to overcoming the challenges identified by residents as priority challenges. As the ancient Chinese proverb says: “Many hands make much work light.”

If even a few of these kind of Community Visioning Initiatives generated results similar to those achieved by the Chattanooga, Tennessee (USA) Visioning Initiative carried out in 1984 (“Vision 2000”)(see reference in first paragraph), 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.

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. A combination of Community Visioning Initiatives, “Community Teaching and Learning Centers” and “sister community” relationships can bring to light the many truly inspiring contributions of genuine goodwill in your community and region, and contribute much to the building of “close-knit” communities of people... communities with a healthy appreciation for each others strengths, communities with 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.

[Note: In light of the urgent need to increase collaboration between diverse communities of people, anyone may access all IPCR documents (including the above mentioned 161 page “1000Communities2” proposal) for free, at the website of The Interfaith Peacebuilding and Community Revitalization (IPCR) Initiative (www.ipcri.net). With Kind Regards, Stefan Pasti, Founder and Outreach Coordinator The IPCR Initiative P.O. Box 163 Leesburg, Virginia 20178 (USA)].

XVIII. A 15 Step Outline for a Community Visioning Initiative

[From Section 6 “A 15 Step Outline for a ‘1000Communities2’ Version of a Community Visioning Initiative” in “1000Communities2”]

Approximate Time Required: 1 year and 6 months (18 months)

The 15 Steps:

Step 1 Steering Committee Selection, Administrative Assistant Selection
(and Securing Volunteers for Advisory Board) (Approx. 8 weeks)

Step 2 Initial Preparation (Approx. 6 weeks)

Step 3 Preliminary Surveys (Approx. 6 weeks)

Step 4 Secondary Preparation (Approx. 4 weeks)

Step 5 Workshops, Meetings, and “Voting” associated with the question: (Approx. 4 weeks)

What are the challenges which require our most immediate attention? (Or... What are the challenges with the greatest potential to de-stabilize economic systems, community life, and basic survival in community, regional, national, and international settings?)

Step 6 Workshops, Meetings, and “Voting” Associated with Prioritizing the List of Challenges Identified created in Step 5 (Approx. 3 weeks)

Step 7 A Two Week Interval from the Publication of the Challenges Prioritized Summary List to the Beginning of Step 8 (Approx. 2 weeks)

Step 8 Workshops, Meetings, and “Voting” to Brainstorm Solutions to the Challenges Prioritized Summary List (Approx. 4 weeks)

Step 9 Workshops, Meetings, and “Voting” Associated with Prioritizing the List of Solutions Identified created in Step 8 (Approx. 3 weeks)

Step 10 Workshops, Meetings, and “Voting” Associated with Developing Action Plans to Implement Prioritizing Solutions (Approx. 6 weeks)

Step 11 A Six Week Interval for Completion of Lists to be Published and Completion of Summary Reports for Upcoming Presentations in Step 12 (Approx. 6 weeks)

Step 12 Summary Presentations and Job Fairs (Approx. 4 weeks)

Step 13 Evaluating the Process (Approx. 3 weeks)

Step 14 An Eight Week interval for Compiling and Summarizing the Evaluation Surveys—
and for Printing the Final CVI Summary Reports (Approx. 8 weeks)

Step 15 Sharing the Lessons, Carrying the Lessons into the Future

XIX. Brief Description of “The Twilight of One Era, and the Dawning of Another” Document

[Located where a Foreword or Preface might be—see “The Twilight of One Era, and the Dawning of Another”]

There are 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. Unfortunately, many of these “things”—in the forms of actions and initiatives (solution-oriented activity)—are not quite “coming through the mist as much as they should be”. This paper—“The Twilight of One Era, and the Dawning of Another”—provides both an introduction to the potential of Community Visioning Initiatives, and an introduction to the potential of The Interfaith Peacebuilding and Community Revitalization (IPCR) Initiative. These two approaches can inspire, support, and integrate many different initiatives at the same time, and thus create “constellations” of initiatives which can bring many of the countless numbers of “things” mentioned above “through the mist” and into the light.

This paper has been written, and is being shared, at a time when more and more people are coming to the conclusion that there is a need for problem solving on a scale most of us have never known before. Even if much disagreement remains about the nature of the challenges ahead, the potential described in this paper—associated with Community Visioning Initiatives, and The IPCR Initiative—can be actualized to such a degree that significant gains can be made in many fields of activity. Thus, while we—collectively—may not know for sure what era is coming to an end, and what era is dawning, for some time yet to come, this writer believes that there are ideas and resources enough for such a dawning to occur—and this paper is an effort to provide evidence in support of that belief.

Stefan Pasti
Leesburg, Virginia (USA)
October 25, 2009

XX. About The Founder and Outreach Coordinator of The IPCR Initiative

A. From the “IPCR Staff” section of “About the IPCR Initiative”, accessible from The IPCR Initiative website homepage, at www.ipcri.net

Currently, the sole organizational person for The IPCR Initiative is Stefan Pasti. Stefan Pasti is the founder of The IPCR Initiative, outreach coordinator, writer and editor for The IPCR Journal/Newsletter, and writer and designer for the current IPCR website. [This writer gladly and willingly contributes time, energy, and money to make the resources and documents of The IPCR Initiative accessible to those people who might benefit from them.]

Stefan Pasti (An Autobiographical Note)

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).

B. From the “About the IPCR Initiative” section of The IPCR Initiative website homepage, at www.ipcri.net

Special Note from Stefan Pasti (Founder and Outreach Coordinator) (Dated August 16, 2009)

As a way of providing more information about myself, I have made a series of journal entries on my Facebook page. These posts include excerpts from earlier writings, reflections on rare family keepsakes, a more detailed autobiographical sketch, etc.) A journal entry listing the titles in that series of posts is accessible at my worldpulse.com journal (see "Sharing of a More Personal Nature..." at <http://www.worldpulse.com/node/12372>).

C. Exploring the connections between spiritual currents and community building ideas

[Additional Notes Original to This Document]

My own personal spiritual background is an example of inspiration from many different sources and traditions. While I do say in my most brief “About the Writer” notes (in other IPCR documents), the most important influence in my life is the teachings of Sri Sathya Sai Baba; here I will add that my personal experience with those teachings has expanded my capacity to see good in the efforts of people from many different faith communities and cultural traditions—and has expanded my capacity to see

much potential for more good. This capacity to see good, and to see potential for more good, is one of the essential “roots” of what has become my “world view”—the way I “understand (and interpret) my experiences, and make judgments about what is valuable and important”.

Here I will provide two examples of what I mean by “expanded my capacity” to see good, and to see much potential for more good.

Example 1

While I affirm that the most important influence in my life is the teachings of Sri Sathya Sai Baba, and while I have given special attention to compiling quotation collections from Sri Sathya Sai Baba’s discourses, these teachings have made it possible for me to have a new appreciation for inspiration from many different faith communities and cultural traditions.

I have also read R.C. Prasad’s translation of Ramacharitamana, and I believe there are passages in that particular version which will provide uplift for the human spirit, for centuries to come. I have read something of the lives of saints in the Christian tradition. Some of my inspiration comes from Sufi sources (“But what protection hast thou built against those unseen arrows...”). My favorite Buddhist writings are from D.T. Suzuki. One book of his which is partly accessible through Google Books is “Zen Buddhism: Selected Writings of D.T. Suzuki”, which includes a most helpful introduction by William Barrett. Also, one of my worldpulse.com journal posts is “An Introduction to Kuan Yin: Goddess of Mercy and Compassion”. Included as an attachment with that journal post is a short pdf file, which has reference to the “Universal Gateway” chapter of the Lotus Sutra. There is also a Tibetan Buddhist Monastery near where I live, which has a very special prayer room. For more than 16 years now, there has been a prayer vigil for peace-- there has been someone from the Monastery Community in the prayer room praying for peace, continually, for more than 16 years. And the prayer room is open to all 24/7. It's surprising to me that more people do not go there. I discovered that the people of that community were most willing to let me sit in the prayer room anytime, and to carry on with whatever spiritual practice I wanted to-- even if I never participated in any of their scheduled activities. I have also been inspired by Native American sources (see “A Postscript to ‘The Spirit of the Sacred Hoop’” on the homepage of the IPCR website, at www.ipcri.net). And I’m familiar with Lao Tzu’s “Tao Te Ching”, and “The I Ching Workbook” by R.L. Wing.

There are connections between these kind of spiritual currents and the community building ideas presented in “The IPCR Workshop Primer”. I am most willing to talk with other people about how to apply these kind of spiritual currents to build community based solutions to the challenges of our times.

Example 2

On the homepage of The IPCR Initiative, there is navigation to an IPCR webpage titled “117 Related Fields of Activity Related to Peacebuilding, Community Revitalization, and Ecological Sustainability”. The “Links” section of this website (the IPCR Initiative website, at www.ipcri.net), provides starting point links associated with each of these “fields of activity”. The following quote is from the “About Beyond Intractability” webpage (at <http://www.beyondintractability.org/about/about.jsp>): “Efforts to limit the terrible destructiveness commonly associated with intractable conflicts ultimately depend on the ability of people in a full range of conflict roles to successfully play their part in a broad peacebuilding effort.” The “117 Related Fields of Activity...” and the IPCR Links section provide a way of experiencing the above mentioned expanded capacity to see good, and to see much potential for more good.

There is much that can be done to generate goodwill and promote peace that has not yet been done. Having this conviction, and seeing the potential for more good in many spiritual traditions and many related fields of activity, has led this writer to explore ways of actualizing such potential. The result of those explorations is made accessible at the website of The IPCR Initiative, at www.ipcri.net

Appendix

A. About the “Special Moments of Inspiration...” Book Project

1) Brief Summary

Stefan Pasti (founder and outreach coordinator, The IPCR Initiative) is also the project coordinator for a project titled "Special Moments of Inspiration and Insight: A Reader from Books and Documents in the English Language". This project is an effort to explore the potential of the Internet in creating educational resources. A draft "Table of Contents" has been created, and 45 excerpts from a variety of genres are accessible. The current [“Table of Contents” \(with excerpts included\)](#) can be accessed by the preceding link, above in the "... Spiritual Inspiration..." section, or from one of the webpages at the "Special Moments..." website (see <http://specialmomentsbook.net/TableofContents.html>) For more information, visit www.specialmomentsbook.net

2) The Internet: New Opportunities for Compilers of Collections

[From the “Special Moments of Inspiration....” website homepage, at www.specialmomentsbook.net]

As a result of the expansion of the Internet, there is now the opportunity both to draw inspiration and insight from a much greater part of the whole of human experience—from thousands of years of inspiration and insight—and the opportunity to share what has been gathered together with a significant segment of people now living on this planet Earth.

What resources might we draw from, and what pieces of the collective human experience might we gather together, to share with others? What goals might we hope to achieve by bringing together excerpts from many different circumstances, expressed in many different forms and genres?

3) Summary of This “Special Moments of Inspiration and Insight...” Project

[From the “Special Moments of Inspiration....” website homepage, at www.specialmomentsbook.net]

The seed idea of this “Special Moments of Inspiration and Insight...” Reader is to gather together excerpts from books (in every category and genre) and documents in the English language, which in some way shine a light on some virtue, way of being or thinking, or some significant experience, which reveals an essence of the human spirit necessary to live a good life and contribute to the greater good of the whole. The excerpts which are selected will be organized into categories which grow out of the input received, and become the structure for an e-book—which will be accessible for free, for both downloading and printing into hard copy.

As a starting point, this writer has created a “Table of Contents” which references excerpts which may be used (a significant number of excerpts will require permission from copyright owners)—and which is provided to suggest examples of excerpts which might achieve the goals of the project (see more details about goals, see "Introduction" in "About This Project" section of this website). That “Table of Contents” currently contains references to more than 150 excerpts from classics in Young Readers’

Classics, History, Exploration, Fiction Short Story, Fiction Novel, Fiction Plays, Fiction Humor, etc. from more than 63 different sources—and titles and artists associated with more than 44 popular songs and old time sing along songs. As another starting point idea, this project is also seeking copies of hand-made illustrative art to provide representative images, depict scenes, and highlight important elements of the content as a way of emphasizing the value of home-spun wisdom. The project is collaborative in the sense that, although there is an initial outline and specific examples provided by this writer as a starting point, there is every hope that input, suggestions, and specific recommendations will result in many excerpts which are far more compelling and inspiring than the ones in this starting point presentation.

4) As a Contribution to Social Cohesion

a) From the Foreword to “The IPCR Workshop Primer”

The IPCR Initiative is dedicated to assisting fellow human beings, wherever they may be, who are also trying to fill in the blank in the statement below:

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.

[Commentary Original to This Document]

The “Special Moments of Inspiration...” project is included in this Executive Summary 2010 document as another example of an effort to “fill in the blank” in the above statement.

One of the “ten most difficult challenges” (listed in the “Ten Point Assessment of the Most Difficult Challenges of Our Time” is as follows:

Sorting out what are real challenges and what are sound and practical solutions is becoming more and more difficult, as there is now, in many parts of the world, a multitude of ideas of all kinds coming to the fore in personal, family, community, and cultural life—all at the same time.

Communities of people making efforts to plan for and implement Community Visioning Initiatives, and create local “Community Teaching and Learning Centers” as a response to the many difficult challenges ahead are almost certainly going to experience a shortage of relevant common points of reference which are meaningful, relevant to overcoming the challenges of our times, and which help with social cohesion—believing in themselves as a community with an relevant identity.

The questions above (see #2 The Internet: New Opportunities for Compilers of Collections, p. 60)

What resources might we draw from, and what pieces of the collective human experience might we gather together, to share with others?

What goals might we hope to achieve by bringing together excerpts from many different circumstances, expressed in many different forms and genres?

are another way, different from the constellation of initiatives represented by The IPCR Initiative, of nurturing and supporting a social cohesion which can help communities of people to communicate better, and arrive at the belief that together they can overcome even the most profound challenges.

In addition, communities of people can use “Community Teaching and Learning Centers” (see Section IX of this document, p. 26) to compile excerpts from books and documents, and create for themselves an informal or formal version of this “Special Moments of Inspiration...” project.

5) How to Access what is currently accessible

Excerpts which are currently accepted as part of the project—and cleared for publication (either because the source for the excerpt is in the public domain, permission has been secured from the copyright owner, or some kind of appropriate use/fair use approach has been exercised) will be made accessible in the “Table of Contents” section of the www.specialmomentsbook.net website.

Specifically, the first part of “Table of Contents” document will provide a quick glance at the current draft “Table of Contents”—and include links to the accessible excerpts. The replica “Table of Contents” in the second part of this document will include, in their designated places, excerpts which have been made accessible. There will also be a pdf file with a list of excerpts which have been made accessible.)

Here is a link to the most current version of the “Special Moments of Inspiration...” Table of Contents (including excerpts):

(http://specialmomentsbook.net/Special_Moments_of_Inspiration_Table_of_Contents.pdf)

6) A few excerpts from the current “Table of Contents”

a) “The function of work should be to practice our ideal of life.” (Excerpt 31)

(Pathway for Appropriate Use: Fair Use Approach Exercised)

Source References: Biographical information excerpt from “Brief Life Sketch of J.C. Kumarappa (1892-1960) at the website of the Kumarappa Institute of Gram Swaraj (KIGS) www.kigs.org [At the KIGS homepage, click on picture of J.C. Kumarappa, to go the “Brief Life Sketch...”; then see paragraph 8] Excerpts from “Why the Village Movement?” from “Why the Village Movement?: A Plea for a Village Centred Economic Order in India” by J.C. Kumarappa Akhil Bharat Sarva Seva Sangh Rajchat, Kashi 1960 (the edition I have included the 1939 edition foreward by Mahatma Gandhi, and was printed on handmade paper)

“The function of work should be to practice our ideal of life.”

“In 1935, the India National Congress formed the All India Village Industries Association (AIVIA) for the development of (the) rural economy (in India), with Gandiji as President and Kumarappa as Secretary and Organiser. Between 1935-1939, Kumarappa established the AIVIA headquarters at maganwadi, developed various experiments of rural technologies, and helped others to reorganize village industries all over the country. (At Maganwadi), he edited a monthly journal, “Gram Udyog Patrika,” and wrote a book ‘Why the Village Movement?’ for AIVIA”.

“In India, the system of education followed in the past was a training ground for life. A student chose his master and lived his everyday life under his masters watchful eye and imbibed the spirit of his guru. This was the case, not merely with spiritual training, but in every walk of life.” (p. 177)

“Work absorbs most of our waking hours, and many of the problems connected with work and our dealings with our fellow man are what determine the nature of our life. Therefore, it behooves us to sit up and take note of what our work makes of us.... The Village Industries Association, which seeks to restore work to its proper place in the life of the nation... (thus) has not only to change the present day ideology in regard to work—a matter which cannot be done in a day—but it also has to provide new methods of work.” (p. 65)

“The function of work should be to practice our ideal of life.” (p. 183)

“Duties of consumer: when buying an article of everyday use, one has to take into account the full repercussions of one’s transaction:

- a) one should know where the article comes from
- b) who makes the article
- c) from what material
- d) under what conditions do the workers live and work
- e) what proportion of the final price do they get as wages
- f) how is the rest of the money distributed
- g) how is the article produced
- h) how does the industry fit into the national economy” (p. 77)

“Village Industries: (p. 159)

- a) those that manufacture indispensable articles needed in villages and for villagers
- b) using processes within the easy reach of villagers
- c) with the help of tools and implements falling within the financial capacity of the villagers carrying on the industry
- d) utilizing local raw materials
- e) with the aid of human or animal power
- f) meeting the demand of local or nearby markets
- g) not causing displacement of labor or unemployment among wage earners

Cottage Industries: (p. 160)

a) whole time occupations that do not require factory buildings with elaborate or special equipment
(Ex: shoemaking, tailoring, etc.)

Home Industries: (p. 160)

a) carried on by members of family (Ex: spinning, fruit preserving, canning, beekeeping, candlemaking, etc.)”

[Additional Notes]

“... every article in the bazaar has moral and spiritual values attached to it... hence it behooves us to enquire into the antecedents of every article we buy.... (Yet this) is an arduous task, and it becomes almost impossible for ordinary persons to undertake it when the article comes from far off countries. Therefore, it is that we have to restrict our purchase to articles made within our cognizance. This is the moral basis of Swadeshi.” (p. 72-73)

“If the goods come from a source which may be tainted with exploitation (either of sweat labor or of the political, financial, or economic hold over other nations, or classes, or races) then the buyer of such goods will be party to such exploitation, just as the person who buys stolen articles... creates a market for stolen goods.... Therefore, anyone who buys good indiscriminately is not discharging his/her full responsibility.... We cannot absolve ourselves of all blame by merely pleading ignorance in regard to the source.” (p.78)

“Are we prepared to shoulder this grave responsibility and pander to our palate or shall we content ourselves with a cup of nutritious milk drawn from a well kept cow at our door? These considerations are not far-fetched but actual. Anyone who looks on life seriously and as a trustee cannot afford to ignore these far-reaching consequences of his/her actions.” (p. 78-79)

“If we feel it is beyond us to guarantee the concomitant results of all our transactions, it necessarily follows that we must limit our transactions to a circle well within our control. This is the bed rock of swadeshi... The smaller the circumference, the more accurately can we gauge the results of our actions, and (the) more conscientiously shall we be able to fulfill our obligations as trustees.” (p.79)

“A business transaction does not begin and end with the transfer of goods and payment of money; in addition, it involves the consideration of one’s duties to one’s fellow men.” (p.155)

“It is easy to profess to love God in the abstract, but it is difficult to show one’s love of God in one’s everyday dealing with one’s neighbors.” (p.59)

“We do not live unto ourselves, and the more we realize the repercussions of our actions on our neighbors and strive to act according to the highest we are capable of, the more shall we advance in our spiritual development.” (p.73)

b) “The misery with them all was, clearly, that they sought to interfere, for good, in human matters, and had lost the power for ever.” (Excerpt 39)

(Pathway for Appropriate Use: Book is in Public Domain)

Source Location: Google Books version; Public Domain Only filter

Source Reference: “The Christmas Carol” by Charles Dickens Little, Brown, and Company (Copyright 1920, by The Atlantic Monthly Press, Inc.) (p. 36-37) (Originally Published in 1843)

“The misery with them all was, clearly, that they sought to interfere, for good, in human matters, and had lost the power for ever.”

When they were within two paces of each other, Marley's Ghost held up its hand, warning him to come no nearer. Scrooge stopped.

Not so much in obedience, as in surprise and fear: for on the raising of the hand, he became sensible of confused noises in the air; incoherent sounds of lamentation and regret; wailings inexpressibly sorrowful and self-accusatory. The spectre, after listening for a moment, joined in the mournful dirge; and floated out upon the bleak, dark night.

Scrooge followed to the window: desperate in his curiosity. He looked out.

The air was filled with phantoms, wandering hither and thither in restless haste, and moaning as they went. Every one of them wore chains like Marley's Ghost; some few (they might be guilty governments) were linked together; none were free. Many had been personally known to Scrooge in their lives. He had been quite familiar with one old ghost, in a white waistcoat, with a monstrous iron safe attached to its ankle, who cried piteously at being unable to assist a wretched woman with an infant, whom it saw below, upon a door-step. The misery with them all was, clearly, that they sought to interfere, for good, in human matters, and had lost the power for ever.

c) “My Mother’s Report Cards” by Elizabeth McQuigg (teacher) (from 1937) (Excerpt 40)
“She speaks so happily and affectionately of her family and her home relationships....”

(Pathway for Appropriate Use: Documents are made accessible by this writer, Stefan Pasti)

Source Reference: “My Mother’s Report Cards” (1937) by Elizabeth McQuigg (teacher) [Note: Text below is from two typewritten report cards from when my mother was 8 years old (in 1937). At that time, she was living in Paw Paw, Michigan (USA). I don’t remember having seen these report cards before my mother passed away (in February, 1981). I found them in a storage box with other papers, in the days between when she passed away and the funeral services.]

“My Mother’s Report Cards” by Elizabeth McQuigg (teacher) (from 1937)
“She speaks so happily and affectionately of her family and her home relationships....”

February 22, 1937

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Hagen,

Hilda continues to do very satisfactory work and to be a fine room citizen.

She is friendly and fair-minded and generous. She never takes more than her share of time and attention and she quickly gives her turn and shares her materials with others when it is necessary to do so.

She is self-confident and unafraid in trying new experiences. She was one of the few girls interested in working at the Work Bench and she went about her problem independently.

She has reported the student council proceedings faithfully and competently.

She keeps her desk and materials in good order.

She is faithful and responsible when she volunteers for room duties.

She is extremely natural in her expression and actions.

She is not afraid to ask questions, and she doesn’t accept things without thinking them through for herself.

She has a wholesome attitude toward success and failures. When she was making valentines for the contest she remarked, “I think I worked the hardest but I didn’t make the best valentine.”

She found a story on the library table which was helpful in our study of Winter Birds. She brought material for the Feeding Table. She did her share in contributing ideas to group discussion and sharing in the responsibilities of this study.

The speed and accuracy of her work in Arithmetic is superior. Her enjoyment of Number is very evident.

She is doing very good work in Spelling.

She can express her ideas clearly and interestingly. Her voice is expressive and her expression animated.

Her Reading Work Book was neat and accurate and attractive in appearance. She has a large sight vocabulary and her comprehension ability is above average.

Miss Kuite reports that she is doing excellent work in Music.

Hilda enjoys listening to stories. She has a well-developed sense of humor, she remembers details of stories that are told or read, and she memorizes quickly and easily.

She has ideas and ability in her Art work.

Yours Very Truly,

Elizabeth McQuigg

June 1, 1937

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Hagen,

Hilda has done a fine year's work and has been an outstanding member of the group through-out the year.

She is always in such good spirits and she has such nice self-confidence and self-assurance. You can be sure that when Hilda undertakes anything that it will be carried out successfully.

She gave so many good suggestions for the little play that the children made up for Assembly and she did a great deal through her enthusiasm and interest in carrying it along.

She has a great deal of initiative and is always drawing or writing or finding something related to some class interest.

She has very definite leadership ability and yet she is always just as cheerful a follower as she is a leader.

I have never seen her speak or act unkindly to anyone.

She is a deservedly popular member of the group.

She speaks so happily and affectionately of her family and her home relationships and we feel that these influences are very largely responsible for happy self-confidence in her school relationships.

Hilda's achievement in subject-matter is superior.

Her Reading ability is very satisfactory. She holds her book correctly, always has her story well prepared, has a good posture, and reads in an expressive voice. She is very appreciative of humor.

She has an almost perfect record on her tests in Arithmetic and Spelling.

She works quickly and easily with Art materials.

She writes well and copies accurately. She has made the transition to smaller writing successfully.

It has been a pleasure and inspiration to work with Hilda this year.

My sincere thanks for your interest and cooperation through-out the year.

Yours Very Truly,

Elizabeth McQuigg