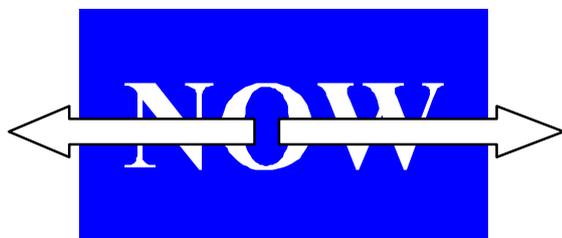


**Issue 170—August 2013**

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**Next Greville Street Meeting – Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> September**

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## **The Way of Self-emptying—Rabbi Rami Shapiro**

Kenosis comes from the Greek *kenos*, empty. In Philippians 2:7 St. Paul writes that "Jesus emptied himself (NRSV) or "made himself nothing" (NIV). Jesus emptied himself of himself that he might be filled with God. Paul urges us to do the same: "Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 2:5).

Kenosis is a way of seeing reality without the distortion of ego. It is a way to put on the mind of Christ and see the divine in, with, and as all reality. The "how" of self-emptying in the Christian context is called contemplative prayer or, to focus on its most popular form, Centering prayer. Centering Prayer should no more be limited to Christians than the use of the *I Ching* should be restricted to the Chinese. It is a powerful tool for deepening Step Eleven that anyone can use. As Father Thomas Keating, who along with Father Basil Pennington, reclaimed Centering Prayer for our time, writes:

Contemplative Prayer is considered to be the pure gift of God. It is opening mind and heart—our whole being—to God, the Ultimate Mystery, beyond thoughts, words, and emotions. Through grace we open our awareness to God who we know by faith is within us, closer than breathing, closer than thinking, closer than choosing— closer than consciousness itself.

Father Basil Pennington says Centering Prayer helps us "to get in touch with what *is*," and while the practice itself is meant to be done for a fixed amount of time—twenty to forty minutes—once or twice each day, the effect will in time inform the whole of our lives, allowing us to experience "constantly living out of the center, to loving out of the fullness of who we are."

Centering Prayer is deceptively simple. It is not intended as a substitute for other kinds of prayer, but rather, as Father Thomas writes, as a practice of moving "beyond conversation with Christ to communion with him."

I realize that to non-Christians such talk may be troubling, even off-putting. If that is true for you, you may choose not to experiment with Centering Prayer. But as a Jew who has practiced Centering Prayer for many years, I promise you that "Christ" in this context refers to the consciousness of God's presence and not to any fixed Christology. The mind of Christ is the Buddha mind, the awakened mind, the mind that reads the flow of the Tao in the passing moment. To commune with Christ is to rest in the presence of God, however you understand God.

Thanks to Andrew Hilton for this extract from Rami Shapiro's book – *Recovery-the Sacred Art: The Twelve Steps As Spiritual Practice (Art of Spiritual Living)* Rabbi Rami has a good blog at: <http://rabbirami.blogspot.com.au/>

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### **The Quantum Mind and Healing— Arnie Mindell**

*Christopher McLean sent me the following extract from Arnie Mindell's 'The Quantum Mind and Healing'.*

"One of my clients who had been suffering from fears of death did this experiment at home by himself. He told me that his awareness made him realize that his body was "tending to relax, and his jaw wanted to drop." Then, after letting his jaw hang down, he had a sudden fantasy. His head fell off his body, leaving an image of his body breathing freely and totally open to the wind which could easily enter. He said: "The meaning was obvious: Drop my head, my inner programs, and open up." He reported that, to his surprise, his fears of death were resolved when he realized that his "head," or his rational mind, was trying to die!" (*Arnie Mindell*)

Christopher added this:

*"Practitioners, they do not partake of the deathless who do not partake of mindfulness directed to the body. They partake of the deathless who partake of mindfulness directed to the body."* –

The Buddha, Anguttara Nikaya, 1.575-627.

### **Perception— David Bohm**

Following a recent Skype conference Sam Blight sent me the following link to a very interesting commentary on perception by David Bohm.

**<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mst3f0I5vH0>**

This is part of a full length talk. I haven't yet found the complete video of the talk but there is a transcript at <http://bohmkrishnamurti.com/beyond-limits/>

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## **South Africa, Then and Now from Dave Knowles**

### *Observations from a Recent Holiday*

“Then” was when our family lived in Johannesburg between 1982 and 1985 and I was working for an American computer company on an expatriate contract: Nelson Mandela was still in custody on Robben Island and apartheid reigned. “Now” refers to the recent visit by my wife and myself in April & May of this year to old friends in Cape Town and Kwa-Zulu Natal: Nelson Mandela had been the first black president of a now democratic post-apartheid South Africa, “the Rainbow Nation”, though one struggling with an alarmingly increasing crime rate and a staggering road toll. These last items had made me rather anxious before the trip, wondering what dangers we were unwittingly flying into. Rationalising that our friends seemed to be comfortable living there and were happy to be our guides and also thinking of the wonderful experiences we had had when we lived there and the sadness with which we left the country, I found myself (with some amazement) on the outbound plane with Christine (my wife) at my side and heading for Johannesburg.

So, what did I find when I arrived in the Rainbow Nation? Well, my initial dire predictions of being mugged in Johannesburg airport did not transpire and we caught the connecting flight to Cape Town, even though with only a minute to spare! We looked with enjoyment at Table Mountain revolving under the wings as we approached the airport and then had the added pleasure of renewing old friendships with our Cape Town hosts who met us at Arrivals. We had last met about 29 years ago in Johannesburg so there was a lot to catch up on which we started on as we drove the vaguely-remembered roads between the airport and Constantia. (We had driven once to the Cape for a holiday when we lived in Johannesburg.) So much of the initial hour was spent re-acquainting ourselves with pleasurable memories but we were brought up to an abrupt reminder of less pleasant intimations by the notice on our hosts’ security gates warning that “Armed Response” was to be expected by any unwanted intruder. But that was it for any connection with the current crime rate situation. We just saw police attendance at a supposed break-in in the neighbourhood and my closest connection with the road toll was the realisation when we were driving from Durban to Pietermaritzburg with other old friends that I was glad he was driving and not me!

An immediate positive observation made on a visit to Constantia Village, our hosts’ local shopping centre, was the readiness and friendliness with which our hosts greeted and were greeted by whoever we encountered, regardless of skin colour and supposed

“race”. This contrasted with my memories of mutually pretending not to notice each other which seemed to be the norm when we lived there. And there was certainly no manifestation of the ugly habit of a former boss of mine of taking for granted that blacks were somehow sub-human.

These positive manifestations and the re-exploration of South Africa’s riches of scenery, animals, and cultures persisted throughout our holiday, making it one of the most enjoyable and memorable holidays we have had in a long time. The icing on the cake was the affirmation of old friendships and the discovery of new common interests with them.

What I brought back home aside from gifts, memories, and photos was a new interest in the politics of South Africa and the remarkable work of Nelson Mandela in forging the new nation. As a result of this I can recommend 2 books wholeheartedly:

- *Martin Meredith – Mandala: a biography (not only his life, but the broader political climate)*
- *Derryn Campbell – Awesome South Africa (a wonderful mix of humour and little-known tidbits about South Africa)*

Oh! And a third:

- *Alan Paton – Cry, The Beloved Country (a marvellous book which I have only read belatedly – about the country “then”, read with knowledge of the “now” – so poignant!)*

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## **The Puritans and the Church in the Time of Thomas Traherne – Hilary Rosankiewicz**

*Reprinted from The Traherne Association Newsletter 55: April 2013*

During the reign of Elizabeth (1558 to 1603) many Protestant exiles from Mary's Catholic reign returned from Europe and the reformed churches, only to find their wishes to reform the Established Church were blocked by Elizabeth. She was anxious to keep a middle way for the church, but they found too much toleration of practices associated with the Catholic Church, notably the Book of Common Prayer, the use of non-secular vestments for services, the sign of the cross in baptism and kneeling to receive Holy Communion.

When James came to the throne (1603 to 1625) from Scotland, where he had been brought up by Presbyterian guardians, a Millennium Petition signed by 1,000 Puritan

Ministers was presented to him calling for moderate church reforms, to replace Popish superstition, to have a preaching minister appointed to every parish and not just one who read the service from the Book of Common Prayer, and to replace episcopacy with a presbyterian system of elders at each church. James agreed to a conference in 1604, but after this he viewed a loss of bishops as a loss of his own power. All he allowed were a few changes to the prayer book, and he supported the Puritan project for a new authorised translation of The Bible.

When his son Charles became king (1625 to 1649 when beheaded) he appointed William Laud as Archbishop (1633 to 1641). Laud returned to a concentration on the altar and not the pulpit, and emphasised his love of ceremony, and these ideas were incorporated into the Canons of 1640 including an oath of obedience. This led to resistance by the Puritans and the impeachment by Parliament of Archbishop Laud for high treason, subverting true religion and assuming Pope-like powers. He was imprisoned in the Tower of London in 1641 and beheaded in 1645. In 1646 The Long Parliament abolished episcopacy, replaced it with a presbyterian system and voted in a Directory of Public Worship to replace the declared illegal Book of Common Prayer. The Bishop of Hereford, George Coke, was ejected from his office and stripped of his official income, but was allowed to retire to a property he owned near Eardisley. He died there in 1646.

In April 1649 an act was passed to abolish Deans and Chapters, their income to be forfeited to the state. Herbert Croft was Dean of Hereford Cathedral from 1643 to 1649. He had inherited his brother's estate and so was able to retire quietly to the countryside.

In 1653 Oliver Cromwell became Lord Protector of the Commonwealth. In March 1654 he issued an ordinance to establish commissioners to ensure that candidates presented to benefices should meet a minimum standard, and another group to have power to remove any unfit ministers from their offices.

The Anglican church in Hereford had over 200 parish and cathedral clergy and of these 49 were ejected to be replaced by independent preachers. Some were accused of being "very scandalous in life and conversation and unfit for ministry" or "a common frequenter of ale houses and a swearer much suspected of incontinency". To these was often added "also active and incendiary against parliament". This was the reason given for the ejection of Roger Breinton, Rector of Staunton-on-Wye and Credenhill. Three of the Bishop's sons were ejected from their livings in Herefordshire.

Many evicted clergy weathered the storm, one opening an Ale House, and others were permitted to be village schoolmasters or tutors in private houses.

To replace the clergy evicted from the Hereford city churches and the cathedral, preaching ministers were appointed with stipends of £150 per year and rent free houses at the cathedral. Those appointed were Dr George Primrose, who came from a Scottish medical family, graduating from Edinburgh before studying at a French Huguenot seminary, and William Lowe and Samuel Smith, who were Cambridge graduates. William Voyle, an Oxford graduate, was appointed to St Peter's church and later joined the other three at the cathedral. The cathedral became a meeting house where sermons and unaccompanied psalm singing were heard. Ministers preached the gospel every morning between 7.00 and 8.00 and gave a weekly lecture on Tuesdays. Thomas Traherne graduated from Oxford in 1656 aged about 20 years and, although underage for becoming a minister, he was appointed to the living of Credenhill on December 30 by the four above mentioned preaching ministers.

By 1660 the Puritans, deeply dissatisfied with the state of the church under Cromwell, were supportive of the return of the monarchy and the restoration of Charles the Second in the hope of furthering religious uniformity. Charles proclaimed in the Declaration of Breda in April 1660 that he would restore the Church of England but pursue toleration for non-adherents, and that he hoped to reform the Book of Common Prayer in a way acceptable to the Puritans. However, when in April 1661 the Savoy Conference was held between twelve bishops and twelve representatives of the Puritan party to discuss reforms drawn up by Richard Baxter, the proposed liturgy was largely rejected. The Cavalier Parliament of 1662 passed the Act of Uniformity restoring the Book of Common Prayer as the official liturgy.

Charles recognised that he needed an episcopal church to support his monarchy and so by 29th May 1660 the first Dean and Chapter appointments were being made or restored so that bishops could be elected.

By 8th August 1660 Herbert Croft returned to be Dean of Hereford Cathedral and the cathedral vacancies were quickly filled, largely by men with local connections. They were all in place to elect as Bishop of Hereford Nicholas Monck (brother of the General who helped bring about the Restoration). He died within a year and never visited Hereford. Dean Croft became Bishop of Hereford in 1661, remaining until he died in 1691.

Thomas Traherne, unlike his four original supporters, sought episcopal ordination and did so earlier than required. He was ordained both Deacon and Priest (although not allowed to do these together) by Bishop Robert Skinner on 20th October 1660 at Launton in Oxfordshire. Bishop Skinner had been made Rector of St Mary's Church, Launton in 1632, and then in 1636 was made Bishop of Bristol until translated to become Bishop of Oxford in 1641. He was one of Archbishop Laud's allies and was very anti-Calvinist. When Laud fell from power Skinner was also imprisoned in the Tower, but was released on bail to live at Launton again where it is known he secretly ordained priests. He regained his living as Bishop of Oxford at the Restoration of Charles and continued to ordain priests including Thomas Traherne. He wrote in 1662 that he had secretly ordained 400 to 500 priests during the Commonwealth period. In 1663 he became Bishop of Worcester, remaining there until his death in 1670.

Thomas Traherne on 18th August 1662 subscribed to the Act of Uniformity and so was able to continue as Rector of St Mary's Credenhill until he died in 1674. It is not clear whether he sought ordination from Bishop Skinner to support his entitlement to his living or whether he did so out of doctrinal conviction.

*Hilary Rosankiewicz*

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### **Letters to Carl – June 18, 2004**

*This is the fifteenth of the Schloss letters I am serializing in the NOWletter. All the letters are archived at the link below where individual letters or the complete volumes can be downloaded as PDF files..*

**<http://www.capacitie.org/schloss/articles.htm>**

*Hardcopies of the books from LULU.*

Letter 16 – June 20, 2004

Dear Carl, Again, to pick up where I left off with Voegelin's justifiable unwillingness to exercise absolute closure where he saw none, either in the name of Plato or of Paul. Whereas almost simultaneously, as I was to discover, precisely the opposite was happening with Douglas, the experiments foreclosing on an infinite opening, on the infinite opening, though who but the fortunate few could have been aware of it at the time? Nevertheless—and it's a tribute to Voegelin's integrity—he did leave available the possibility, however remote, of some further, if not ultimate differentiation, this last in his view being an utter impossibility, since, inhabiting as we do the Metaxy as he called

it, the In-Between where, caught between the devil and the deep blue sea or, as we would say, between the prospect provided by the third and/or the first person, he could only conclude that, contrary to what we know now, better yet, to what we *see* now, there was no Where in sight from which we could possibly extract a safe and secure purchase other than on the faith that it was there. Which, despite some earlier, “mystical” episodes of my own and the consequent conviction that the tension between the historical and the trans- or a-historical I (as I then called it) could not be resolved except a man be unborn again, I more or less bought into, whether out of distrust of my own visual capacity—I simply didn’t believe my own eyes—or just plain stupidity disguised as weariness I’m still not sure.

In any case, in the rather sharp, if respectful, exchange between Voegelin and Altizer that followed the publication of the last volume of *Order and History*, though I was impressed with some of the enthusiastic points Altizer made as certainly being closer to my own way of thinking—namely, his strenuous objection that so little consideration had been given to the significance of the modernity that from Blake through Hegel and Nietzsche right through to Joyce had been mother’s milk to me—and though it took the experiments to show me that, for all his almost aboriginal Christian orientation, in fact because of it, he was on the right track, still playing it cautious, snug (and smug) in my virtuous neutrality, I continued to find myself favoring Voegelin and this despite his severe strictures, to say the least, towards my own particular favorites, namely Hegel and Nietzsche with their thrust to advance beyond philosophy, beyond the mere love of wisdom, towards absolute knowledge. Who knows? Whatever it was for him (hence his unusual harshness), it may well have been Oedipal on my part. Fortunately, as far as I was concerned the discussion, such as it was and in which, though no party to it, I was to appear as a not so innocent witness, proved academic to say the most because, though hardly qualifying as a jesting Pilate, in my search for truth I, too, would not stay for an answer. Instead, it was just about this time—and remember I hadn’t yet come upon Headlessness though that wasn’t too far in the future either—that I stumbled on or, more exactly, rediscovered the Kyoto School, only on this occasion it was to be in earnest. What is it they say? “When the pupil is ready...” I can remember saying to myself, “A plague on both your houses.” (Meaning Voegelin and Altizer). “My troubles are over.” (As you may have gathered by now, for better or worse I took this stuff seriously). And, of course, in a sense, in its very real Alpha sense, my troubles *were* over. Nishida, Tanabe, Nishitani, Abe—enough had been translated even then to make for a feast and a real living for a loner like me.

And I must say that in the twenty years or so since I first discovered them in the *Eastern Buddhist Quarterly* and later in their books, at least those available in English, I've never deviated, not for one minute, from an awareness of my, of our, infinite debt to them. They built the bridge that was to prepare me, intellectually at least, for that vision of the near side which is Headlessness. But I don't have to tell you. You mentioned only a few weeks ago that you were deep into Nishitani's *Religion and Nothingness*, whether for the first time I don't recall. But I do know that, aside from dipping into it more than occasionally, often referring to it almost like an encyclopedia or dictionary, I've actually read it cover to cover at least two or three times (my copy was so dog-eared and marked-up I recently had to order a new one). It's an absolutely seminal book, one that along with Freud, Einstein, Wittgenstein....But I don't want to get into that game even if, like some of my best friends, it means your preference might happen to run to that rotten bastard, Heidegger, coward that he was. (And if you don't believe me, read what Voegelin, who could decipher his gobbledygook in the original, has to say about him). Nevertheless, at the risk of becoming combative and playing favorites I would certainly put Douglas at the "head" of any list, though, coming from me, some might see that elevation as an *al Dante* form of retribution, he getting no more than he deserves.

More to follow when the spirit moves.

*George*

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*"In spiritual religion (alias via negativa mysticism or the Perennial Philosophy), it is that rediscovery of the obvious, that humility in front of the evidence, that coming to our senses, which at long last confirms, rectifies, completes, earths, and vividly actualises the intuitions of the exalted Seers who are apt to look down upon the world below -- the common and unclean world of sights and sounds, of tastes and smells - as beneath their notice." (Little Book of Life and Death', page 137).*

*Douglas Harding*

### **What canst thou say? George Fox**

*The following passage is from "The testimony of Margaret Fox concerning her late husband," from The Journal of George Fox, 1694. In this excerpt, which contains the famous "what canst thou say?" query, Margaret Fell is describing George Fox's "sermon" at the Ulverston steeple-house. It was the first time she had heard him speak.*

...And so he went on, and said, "That Christ was the Light of the world, and lighteth every man that cometh into the world; and that by this light they might be gathered to God," &c. I stood up in my pew, and wondered at his doctrine, for I had never heard such before. And then he went on, and opened the scriptures, and said, "The scriptures were the prophets' words, and Christ's and the apostles' words, and what, as they spoke, they enjoyed and possessed, and had it from the Lord": and said, "Then what had any to do with the scriptures, but as they came to the Spirit that gave them forth? You will say, 'Christ saith this, and the apostles say this;' but what canst thou say? Art thou a child of the Light, and hast thou walked in the Light, and what thou speakest, is it inwardly from God?" &c. This opened me so, that it cut me to the heart; and then I saw clearly we were all wrong. So I sat down in my pew again, and cried bitterly: and I cried in my spirit to the Lord, "We are all thieves; we are all thieves; we have taken the scriptures in words, and know nothing of them in ourselves."

### **More Tristram Shandy—Laurence Sterne**

...I have an article of news to tell you, Mr. Shandy, quoth my mother, which will surprise you greatly. — Now my father was then holding one of his second beds of justice, and was musing within himself about the hardships of matrimony, as my mother broke silence. '— My brother Toby,' quoth she, 'is going to be married to Mrs. Wadman.' — Then he will never, quoth my father, be able to lie diagonally in his bed again as long as he lives. It was a consuming vexation to my father, that my mother never asked the meaning of a thing she did not understand. — That she is not a woman of science, my father would say—is her misfortune—but she might ask a question. — My mother never did. — In short, she went out of the world at last without knowing whether it turned round, or stood still.--My father had officiously told her above a thousand times which way it was, — but she always forgot. *From The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman*

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## **TAT Aug.30–Sept. 1 workshop**



Will Rogers quipped: "Never miss a good chance to shut up." WoodyAllen said: "God is silent. Now if only man would shut up." Good advice?

We hear from some spiritual testimonies that silence of various types and varying descriptions was an important part of their paths. Our keynote speaker wrote in *Pouring Concrete, A Zen Path to the Kingdom of God*, that "silence ends the search."

Participate in discussions and workshops aimed at investigating silence and other aspects of the spiritual search. The 2013 TAT Fall Workshop will be held over the Labor Day weekend, Friday, August 30th through Sunday, September 1st.

Location: Claymont Society, Charles Town, WV  
 Details and registration: [www.tatfoundation.org](http://www.tatfoundation.org)  
 Registration deadline: Friday, August 23rd

## **Addressing the Sacred through Literature and the Arts Conference**

*2 and 3<sup>rd</sup> August*

There was a delegation of three NOWletter subscribers at the conference. We were particularly interested in a workshop session by James Charlton entitled *The Immanence of Transcendence: Thomas Traherne's Non-dual Sacred Vision* which turned out to be the best introductory commentary on Traherne I've experienced. I'm hoping to include all or part of James's presentation in a future NOWletter.

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