



laetus in praesens

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Towards Fruitful Patterns of Faith-based Governance

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Part B of *Future Challenge of Faith-based Governance* (2003)

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Addressing the fragmentation of the various faith communities

On the assumption that present trends -- reinforced by the faith-based leadership of the Coalition of the Willing in support of American world hegemony -- will result in a faith-based approach to world governance, the following points explore some of the challenges to be faced in the process of bringing about a viable [postsecular society](#). Such a society is one with a renewed interest in the spiritual life. It is postsecular rather than presecular because it renews the inquiry into the spiritual life by building on the hard-won rights and democratic freedoms of expression in the secular world (see also Patrick Glynn. *God the Evidence : The Reconciliation of Faith and Reason in a Postsecular World*, 1999).

Coherent faith-based governance of society cannot be expected until the incredible fragmentation and mutual hostility of faith communities is effectively acknowledged and addressed. Such fragmentation at present merely echoes the fragmentation and hostility of political and ideological factions even amongst those with closely related concerns (environment, peace, etc). As such both forms of fragmentation reflect a deeper unresolved condition of society. Privileging selected faiths (eg Christians) or selected factions (eg evangelicals) will merely exacerbate existing religious tensions. It would be no more a new approach than privileging a particular political faction and seeking to demean and discredit other legitimate political preoccupations.

A more objective approach is required to the inherent differences between religions before faith-based communities as a class can be trusted not to engage in the patterns of behaviour which have evoked such tragic consequences in the past. A key to such objectivity is to recognize the distinct psycho-cultural and spiritual needs met by different faiths. Through such recognition the vital contribution of faith-based subjectivity may perform the healing role to justify society's expectation of it.

Historical review of failures of interfaith initiatives and their learnings for the future

What factors have undermined ecumenical and interfaith initiatives in the past and inhibited the coherence of their contribution to decision-making and social governance? What are the learnings which might serve as a framework for more useful initiatives in the future?

Why have interfaith initiatives themselves been so fragmented at the international level -- despite their many international gatherings [[more](#)]? Cases to be considered, notably in their relationship to each other, include:

- [Forum on Large-scale Interfaith Networking](#)
- [Global Forum of Spiritual and Parliamentary Leaders](#)
- [Global Interfaith Network and Education Society](#)
- [Inter-religious International Meetings](#) (Community of Sant'Egidio of the Roman Catholic Church)
- [International Association for Religious Freedom](#)
- [International Council of Christian Churches](#) (ICCC)
- [International Council of Community Churches](#) (ICCC)
- [International Interfaith Organizations Coordinating Committee](#) (IIOCC)
- [Interfaith International](#)
- [Monastic Interreligious Dialogue](#)
- [Parliament of the World's Religions](#) ([Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions](#))
- [Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue](#) (PCID)
- [United Religions Initiative](#) (URI)
- [World Congress of Faiths](#) (WCF)
- [World Council of Churches](#) (WCC)
- [World Conference on Religion and Peace](#) (WCRP)
- [World Interfaith Association](#) (WIA)
- [World Interfaith Congress](#)
- [Worldwide Interfaith Network](#)
- [World Fellowship of Inter-Religious Councils](#)

Why, with apparently only one exception, has no government given full support to interfaith dialogue? The exception, itself extraordinary, is the Government of Kazakhstan as noted elsewhere (*Towards Spiritual Concord: Report of the First World Congress towards Spiritual Concord* (Alma Ata, October 1992)):

It is unprecedented for the government of a newly independent country to provide extensive official support for a large international non-governmental conference -- especially for a country in which "nongovernmental" initiatives are a new and questionable phenomenon. That the conference should be organized on behalf of an international body headquartered in the capital of the former ruling superpower increases the challenge of creative diplomacy. But it is even more difficult to imagine any government providing official support for a conference on "spiritual concord" -- and that this should be done in a country that is far from wealthy (as one of its first international conferences) is a further challenge to belief.

And yet, without external subsidies, the Government of Kazakhstan placed extensive facilities and resources at the disposal of the First World Congress towards Spiritual Concord recently held in its capital of Alma Ata (October 1992) with the explicit benediction of its President N Y Nasarbajev and his wife. The congress of 2,500 participants was organized by the International Association "Peace through Culture" (based in Moscow) in the record time of 3 months. This is a tremendous achievement by any standards, but especially in a country in considerable political and economic turmoil.

Acknowledgement of faith-based errors of the past

Given the example of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa, would it not be appropriate for faiths to acknowledge the pain they have caused each other? Can past errors and miscarriages of faith-based justice be appropriately acknowledged?

Is the maturity required for such acknowledgement not in fact the price to be paid for any greater role in governance of a multi-faith society? What guarantee can faiths provide that they will not revert to counter-productive behaviours once they are given greater power in society?

Acknowledgement of the "shadow side" of any collective human enterprise

Beyond the errors of the past, is there not a need for faiths to acknowledge their tendency to arrogance and denial -- a failure to understand the full significance of the insights that they place at the centre of their doctrine? It is this significance that might justify the seemingly contradictory beliefs held by other faiths.

Does their faith depend on the belief that there is not more to be understood? The poet John Keats is renowned for recognition of the essence of maturity in terms of "negative capability". This is the capacity of "being in uncertainties, mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact and reason" [[more](#)].

Are there not important learnings to be derived from the only recently documented abuses within faith communities -- but especially from the pattern of denial that preceded such acknowledgement?

Is the capacity for humility in relation to a collective endeavour not a further indication of the maturity required for any greater role in the governance of a multi-faith society?

Challenge of any encounter with "the other"

What insights might each faith offer into processes of dialoguing with those who hold views opposed to their own? How is such a relationship to be provided with a framework or dynamic of greater maturity than that of the dynamics typical of competing political parties in parliamentary assemblies?

How can faith-based communities move beyond their discriminatory attitude to women (as typical of many faiths) and homosexuality (as is now strikingly evident in the Anglican Communion) without betraying principles that they consider fundamental? Inability to do so would make any faith-based approach to the governance of society extremely problematic.

The challenge is much larger than these symptomatic issues. It concerns how to deal with an "other" who may be deliberately or inadvertently fatal to one's way of being or -- in American terms -- to the "American Way of Life". The attitudes associated with appropriate response to this challenge have perhaps been best described in the philosophy of the highest forms of Japanese martial arts. They have also been described in terms of "radical encounter". They are evident at the interface between "indigenous" cultures and "civilization" as articulated by Darrell A. Posey (*Cultural and Spiritual Values of Biodiversity*, 1999).

Humanity as a whole may well eventually face such challenges in responding to extraterrestrials (see *Communicating with Aliens: the Psychological Dimension of Dialogue*, 2000). The key would appear to be the elaboration of a framework capable of positioning the variety of perspectives so that their complementarity becomes apparent in terms of both reinforcement and vulnerability. It is such a framework that would enable groups holding incommensurable perspectives to move beyond blame and demonization. [see [Human Potential and Development Project](#) for the variety of understandings of human development from different perspectives].

Christianity exemplifies the challenge for many faiths. How can Christians move beyond the belief that non-Christians are necessarily enemies? Expressed otherwise, how to move beyond the implication that if a person is not possessed by Christ they must necessarily be possessed by Satan?

Peter Gabel (*Spiritualizing Foreign Policy*, *Tikkun*, May/June 2003) responds imaginatively to the challenge, of which the response to Iraq is symptomatic, regarding what might be understood as a faith-based foreign policy:

In *Tikkun* we have been trying to develop for many years now a new conception of spiritual politics that understands the world as a nexus of inherently social human beings linked to one another by more than the individualistic and material needs that have dominated prior political, economic, and social theories....We must now apply this understanding to the development of a new conception of "foreign policy" -- a term that I dislike because the Other is never "foreign." The term implies that we belong to a "we," represented by the nation-state, which is also "imaginary" to the extent that its function is partly to mask our isolation, to deny our alienation from the person next to us by insisting on our patriotic connection "in the sky." In spite of my dislike of the term, however, I will nevertheless use it here to try to help us imagine a new method of relating to the Other in the world that understands itself through the nation-state prism -- keeping in mind, however, that the "foreign policy" that emerges from our vision of spiritual politics requires that we never see the Other as "foreign."

Robert Wright, author of *Nonzero: The Logic of Human Destiny* (2000) makes the following point (*Two Years Later, a Thousand Years Ago*, *New York Times*, 11 September 2003):

Putting yourself in the shoes of people who do things you find abhorrent may be the hardest moral exercise there is. But it would be easier to excuse Americans who refuse to try if they didn't spend so much time indicting Islamic radicals for the same refusal. Somebody has to go first, and if nobody does we're all in trouble.

Is the capacity to engage in such challenging processes not a further indication of the maturity of any faith called to play a role in the governance of a multi-faith society?

Re-evaluation of Western and Christian criticism of other approaches to faith-based governance

There are many examples of faith-based approaches to the governance of families, communities or countries. But the assessment by one religion of the approach employed by another tends to be extremely simplistic. Basically if the approach does not conform to the prescriptions of the evaluator, then it is considered problematic.

How are faiths, whether acting together or individually, to develop a process of [appreciative inquiry](#) into the approach taken by some other faith? [[more](#)] In the case of many Eastern religions, the understanding of "reincarnation" and "initiation" can usefully be compared and contrasted with the evangelical focus on "born-again". In the case of Tibetan Buddhism, the relation of governance to reincarnation, notably through lamaic lineages, merits examination.

Can such appreciative inquiry extend to faiths which are extremely alien to outsiders? There are valuable learnings in this respect from the World Health Organization's exploration of traditional healers and natural remedies.

An interesting challenge in this respect is that of distinguishing the reprehensible dimensions of the Taliban or Hamas from those appreciated by the societies in which they function. The Taliban emerged in partial response to the chaotic conditions which reigned in Afghanistan where there was widespread corruption and theft; women were being raped and killed, and armed gangs roamed the streets. The order they brought was welcomed. Concern emerged with their strict application of the *sharia* to maintain that order. Hamas on the other hand is one of the few means through which social security is provided to the Palestinians under chaotic conditions. Their encouragement of resistance to Israel is primarily of concern to non-Palestinians. Curiously the notion of "collateral damage" in imposing or maintaining order is acceptable under one set of circumstances but considered problematic under others.

Humanity may one day be severely challenged when faced with efforts by extraterrestrials concerned to establish order according to their principles (see *Communicating with Aliens: the Psychological Dimension of Dialogue*, 2000), especially in the light of the precedents set

by UN Security Council Resolution 1441 (see *Interplanetary Security Council: Nibiru-sponsored resolution 1441 on Earth*, 2002).

Is there a case for developing a new methodology to reframe the evaluation of sects and cults given the increased role that faith-based communities would have in governance? How are distinctions to be made between what is acceptable to those involved but unacceptable to those who perceive the relationship as exploitative? How helpful is the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue's recent review of the New Age phenomenon (*Jesus Christ: the Bearer of the Water of Life: a Christian reflection on the "New Age"*, 2003)?

Who is it that needs to be indoctrinated and who is it that needs to be deprogrammed? Many communities, pejoratively labelled as "sects", provide interesting examples of faith-based governance. The Findhorn Foundation's use of attunement has been widely documented, for example. But the governance of independent religious orders over the centuries also offers many insights. These were an inspiration to the Institute of Cultural Affairs as an international development community based on an Ecumenical Order (see *Collective strategy-making: designing a strategic array*).

Such questions are especially important to a possible future role for intentional communities as a context for experiment into alternative lifestyles more appropriate to sustainable development (see *Renaissance Zones: experimenting with the intentional significance of the Damanhur community*, 2003).

Exploration of relevance of complexity studies to faith-based governance

As noted above, considerable effort has been devoted by think-tanks to exploring the relevance of the complexity sciences to the challenges of the world problematique. A focal point for these endeavours has been the [Santa Fe Institute](#). But, as yet, there are few studies of faith-based governance and none which benefit from the insights into the complexity sciences.

It has been argued elsewhere (*And When the Bombing Stops? Territorial conflict as a challenge to mathematicians*, 2000; *Reframing Relationships as a Mathematical Challenge: Jerusalem as a Parody of Current Interfaith Dialogue*, 1997; *Higher Orders of Inter-sectoral "Consensus": Clarification of formal possibilities*, 1991) that mathematics as the study of relationships has many insights to offer of relevance to governance in turbulent times:

- challenges of dividing / sharing territory claimed by two or more parties
- challenges of comprehension of complex, counter-intuitive situations
- transcendence of binary logic and polarized dialogue

Such possibilities, which are at the root of many problems of governance, depend upon features of mathematics that enable conditions of higher dimensionality to be explored. These are not just theoretical considerations, but are considered fundamental to the understanding required to identify and obtain new sources of energy (as in fusion research). The challenges of comprehension of subtlety are remarkably formalized by mathematician Ron Atkin (*Multidimensional Man: Can man live in 3-dimensional space?* 1981) and notably the structuring effects of [non-comprehension](#) and [incommunicability of insights](#).

Binary logic has characterized the Christian-inspired "war on terrorism" and the attack on Iraq: "If you are not with us, you are against us". Its limitations have become evident in the aftermath -- with many becoming increasingly conscious of grey areas and zones of ambiguity. It is ironic that the clear cut -- "binary" -- nature of the actual attack has been transformed into a high level of ambiguity in which the "good guys" have lost their pristine nature and the "bad guys" have, by contrast, come to exemplify some admirable qualities of human nature. The question is what disciplines would provide assistance in navigating such transitions and ensuring strategic coherence under conditions of ambiguity and turbulence? It would appear that it is with non-dualistic logic that a more fruitful response to terrorism needs to be articulated as discussed elsewhere (see *Transforming the Encounter with Terrorism*, 2002). Such learnings would appear to be highly relevant to navigating the multi-dimensional relationships characteristic of inter-faith dialogue as they bear on questions of governance.

The problematic relationship between the faiths might be considered as deriving from different intuitive understandings of the coherence of higher dimensionality. The question is whether mathematics can be used to reconcile such differences in perspective and identify transforms from one to another -- in the light of an underlying invariance that is a greater challenge to comprehension and communication. Such an approach offers some hope for clarifying the nature of the coherence underlying such faceted understanding of forms of complexity that do not lend themselves to simple description except through metaphor. It also offers the possibility of distinguishing patterns of understanding associated with the limitations of syncretism.

The challenge of faith-based governance may perhaps usefully be framed as one of ordering and comprehending sets of increasing complexity (see *Representation, Comprehension and Communication of Sets: the Role of Number*, 1978). The question is then how the integration of the multiplicity of faith perspectives is to be comprehended -- and how that comprehension is to be related to that of the divine. Such inquiries relate to comprehension through different paradigms and how these are interrelated and configured to take account of the apparent diversity of mindsets and the progressive appreciation of any one of them through experience and education (see *Evoking Authenticity: through polyhedral global configuration of local paradoxes*, 2003)

It is indeed an irony that three monotheistic religions that currently contribute most to world disorder, have important links to mathematics through their theology (see [discussion](#)):

- **Islam:** great importance is attached to geometric patterns, notably in the design and decoration of mosques. These patterns have symbolic dimensions. They derive from a particular branch of mathematics.
- **Judaism:** great importance is attached to aspects of the mathematics of number theory as offering fundamental symbolic insight into the subtleties of Jewish theology.
- **Christianity:** great importance has been attached to sacred geometry in the design of cathedrals and other religious edifices. Catholic mathematicians, such as [Patrick Heelan](#) offer profound insights into the challenges of changing classificatory

frameworks and relating incommensurable perspectives (see B.E. Babich: *The Fortunes of Incommensurability: Thought-Styles, Paradigms, and Patrick A. Heelan's Hermeneutic of Science*). ([bibliography](#))

Hinduism and Buddhism also attach great importance to the geometry of their edifices and to devices such as mandalas as a conceptual integrative tool relevant to the understanding of spiritual abstractions.

There is now increasing interest in mathematical theology, as usefully summarized by Richard S. Kirby (*God and the Future of Mathematics*, 2000). On one [dedicated website](#), mathematician Rev. Sarah Voss (author of *What Number Is God?*, 1995 and *Zero: Reflections about Nothing*, 1998) states:

The idea that God speaks mathematically is very old. The ancient Pythagoreans, for example, believed that "Number is all" and that "the harmony of the spheres" depended upon right relationship between those numbers. Only in the last few hundred years has the dissociation between the spiritual realm and the world of mathematics become a requirement for scientific excellence. Fortunately, this false separation is now coming to an end.

Does this suggest that the seemingly "intractable" relationships between faiths, between disciplines and between ideologies all derive from "bad mathematics" -- and the failure to make use of the appropriate mathematical insights already developed? Of relevance to the interfaith challenge and the coherence of any associated governance, Voss points to possibilities that are "ripe for examination", including:

A Cantorian perspective offers another option: The part may have the power of the whole. When we use Cantorian set theory as a metaphor for thinking about contemporary religious pluralism, we find a wonderful precedent for accepting what might appear to be unacceptable contradictions between religions. In other words, many different religious traditions may independently be "equivalent" to the one whole truth.

Elsewhere Voss (*Mathematical Theology*) identifies metaphors drawn from mathematics that are impacting personal and social organization (*Ten Ways Contemporary Metaphors Are Shaping Our Spiritual Lives*. Klein 2000 lecture, First Unitarian Church, Ann Arbor, October 2000):

- changing our metaphors for God
- challenging our human role in the universe
- helping us accept ambiguity
- revamping our understanding of the one and the many
- revising our thoughts about free will and determinism
- moving us toward pluralistic, multi-world views
- pushing the envelope on what consciousness is
- altering our expectations for after-life
- offering the hope of a more compassionate future
- encouraging faith perspectives that are always incomplete and in process

Her point is that "ideas drawn from mathematics greatly extend spiritual world-views. Such mathematical notions are suggestive, not conclusive. But in those suggestions lie the makings of new ways of interacting with each other, of healing, of understanding God. In a world that is often spiritually fractured and hurting, we can look to mathematical theology for the seeds of new hope". ([more](#))

In a separate paper, the possibility was explored of a degree of isomorphism between the dynamics of astronomical "black holes" and the psychodynamics of the end-times process of rapture that appears to be driving the Christian-inspired hegemony at this time (see *America as Eve-ill Empire: Evocation of Authenticity Elsewhere*, 2003).

Perhaps of greatest relevance to faith-based governance, is the possibility of using mathematical techniques to simulate the complexities of a multi-faith society that is obliged to engage in interfaith consensus-building to produce coherent strategies -- possibly of a higher order than previously considered meaningful or viable. Simulation has been extensively used in global modelling and strategic gaming to sharpen the focus of discussion of future governance options. There is a strong case for developing such tools to highlight the challenges in the case of faith-based governance -- especially when the faith dimension can be misused, whether deliberately or inadvertently, to distract from more tangible problems faced by society.

Recovering a sense of complementarity necessary to understanding of complex truths

Civilization has been exposed to two modalities of truth identified by Plato as myth (*mythos*) and reason (*logos*) which he understood as complementary. Myth predominated in earlier times as a means of providing coherence in the absence of reasoned explanations. As noted by Karen Armstrong (*Believers in the Lost Ark*, *Guardian*, 9 August 2003):

They complemented each other and were of equal stature; both were essential. Unlike myth, *logos* had to relate accurately to the external world: from the very earliest days, we used it to create effective weapons and to run our societies efficiently. But humans are also meaning-seeking creatures, who fall very easily into despair. When faced with tragedy, reason is silent and has nothing to say. It was mythology and its accompanying rituals that showed people how to acquire the strength to go on. As a result of our scientific revolution, however, *logos* achieved such spectacular results in the west that myth was discredited. By the 19th century, believers and sceptics alike began to read the biblical myths as though they were *logoi*....In the predommodern

perspective, *mythos* and *logos* each had its own sphere of competence. If you confused them, you had bad science... You also had bad religion. Until we recover a sense of the mythical, our scriptures will remain opaque, and our faith -- as well as our unbelief -- will be misplaced.

This argument might be said to apply equally to the science of governance. Unfortunately it is "spin" which is being promoted to replace *mythos* at this time. It is unfortunate that understanding of complementarity is focused so narrowly on the nuclear technologies most closely associated with weapons of mass destruction. Complexity studies would also appear to be challenged in this respect.

The argument may however be fruitfully extended from four interrelated perspectives:

Biocultural implications of neurobiology: Antonio de Nicolas (*Neurobiology, Communities, Religion: A Bio-Cultural Study*, 1998) focuses on the implications of the five brains of humans: reptilian, limbic, right and left hemispheres, and the "interpreter module". These brains function either independently or in harmony, either as dictators or as balanced multiplicity, either as a democracy or as victims, and thus there is still room for further human development. They develop progressively and successively through childhood, although the development of any of them be inhibited and stunted. They also have their cultural counter-parts:

Thus we know of ancient cultures as being *maia* types, since the brain serving as the "pilot" was primarily the reptilian, as in the child after birth; or *mythos* types, since they primarily developed the limbic brain, as in children between the ages of one to eleven; or right brain mimetic, since they acted on the language of images of the right hemisphere of the neocortex, as in children between the age of four and fifteen (magicians, leaders, the demiurge); or left brain mimetic (theoreticians, ideologues, theologians, social scientists), since they acted primarily from the left hemisphere of the neocortex, as in children from the age of seven on; or *logos* types, those whose experiences are imageless, experts in the creation of substitution systems, not able to deal with any of the other forms of knowledge of the right brain hemisphere. These biocultural types are invariant in the sense that they represent individual and social possibilities of human realities and development, but unless these brains are exercised they do not develop in full, or if one is socially sanctioned over the others, then cultural imperialism and individual loss may follow.

The challenge for individuals and communities -- and notably faith-based communities interacting with one another -- is that they may find themselves to be using only one of the brains, or faced with others in that condition. In the case of the mimetic left-brain, this might give it the power of dictatorship or the arbitrariness of an emperor-king. As noted by de Nicolas: "Imperialism at its worst may be the result of arrested development in the culture of the individual".

Culturally-determined dispositions to particular mindsets: There exists a variety of studies of culturally-determined "biases" or pre-dispositions that condition preferences for forms of discourse and meaningful coherence typical in various forms of governance (see *Systems of Categories Distinguishing Cultural Biases*, 1993). Some, such as those of Geert Hofstede (*Culture's Consequences: international differences in work-related values*, 1984), have proven to be vital to understanding the challenges of decision-making in multinational corporations. That based on Magoroh Maruyama's four epistemological mindscapes (*Mindscapes, social patterns and future development of scientific theory types*, 1980) is especially relevant to the quality of coherence sought in faith-based governance understood to be appropriate in different cultures:

- *H-mindscope* (homogenistic, hierarchical, classificational): Parts are subordinated to the whole, with subcategories neatly grouped into supercategories. The strongest, or the majority, dominate at the expense of the weak values, policies, problems, priorities, etc). Logic is deductive and axiomatic demanding sequential reasoning. Cause-effect relations may be deterministic or probabilistic.
- *I-mindscope* (heterogenistic, individualistic, random): Only individuals are real, even when aggregated into society. Emphasis on self-sufficiency, independence and individual values. Design favours the random, the capricious and the unexpected. Scheduling and planning are to be avoided. Non-random events are improbable. Each question has its own answer; there are no universal principles.
- *S-mindscope* (heterogenistic, interactive, homeostatic): Society consists of heterogeneous individuals who interact non-hierarchically to mutual advantages. Mutual dependency. Differences are desirable and contribute to the harmony of the whole. Maintenance of the natural equilibrium. Values are interrelated and cannot be rank-ordered. Avoidance of repetition. Causal loops. Categories not mutually exclusive. Objectivity is less useful than "cross-subjectivity" or multiple viewpoints. Meaning is context dependent.
- *G-mindscope* (heterogenistic, interactive, morphogenetic): Heterogeneous individuals interact non-hierarchically for mutual benefit, generating new patterns and harmony. Nature in continually changing requiring allowance for change. Values interact to generate new values and meanings. Values of deliberate (anticipatory) incompleteness. Causal loops. Multiple evolving meanings.

Epistemology and music: Given the importance of sound and music as a major integrative factor across cultural boundaries, and given the size of the audience which music now has through radio and other media, the possibilities of this route merit further exploration, as discussed elsewhere (*Liberation of Integration, Universality and Concord through pattern, oscillation, harmony and embodiment*, 1980). Integration modelled on sound may be inherently more comprehensible to more people than integration modelled on sight. In an earlier study Antonio de Nicolas (*Meditations through the Rg Veda*, 1978) distinguishes four "languages" in the *Rg Veda* by their intentionality: images and sacrifice, existence, embodied vision, and non-existence. Such efforts to show the functional significance of sacrifice in relation to social integration need attention in a period when "nobody is willing to sacrifice" advantages acquired under the present systems in crisis.

The De Nicolas study inspired an exploration of the tonal underpinnings of the *Rg Veda* by a musicologist, Ernest McClain (*The Myth of Invariance*, 1976), which helps to understand the interrelatedness of perspectives and the mnemonic value of their expression through

vivid symbols (gods, dragons, etc). McClain clarifies the musical significance of the four languages and, in this context, their relevance to integration: "The four Rgvedic "languages" de Nicolas defines have their counterparts in the foundation of all theories of music:

- His "language of Non-Existence" (*Asat*) is exemplified by the pitch continuum within each musical interval as well as by the whole undifferentiated gamut -- chaos -- from low to high.
- His "language of Existence" (*Sat*) is exemplified by every tone, by every distinction of pitch, thus ultimately by every number which defines an interval, a scale, a tuning system, or the associated metric schemes of the poets, which are quite elaborate in the Rg Veda.
- The "language of Images and Sacrifice" (*Yajna*) is exemplified by the multitude of alternate tone-sets and the conflict of alternate values which always results in some accuracy being "sacrificed" to keep the system within manageable limits.
- The "language of Embodied Vision" is required to protect the validity of alternate tuning systems and alternate metric schemes by refusing to grant dominion to any one of them". (p. 3).

For de Nicolas: "The embodiment of Rg Vedic man was understood... as an effort at integrating the languages of *Asat*, *Sat* and *Yajna* to reach the *dhih*, the effective viewpoint, which would make these worlds continue in their efficient embodiment" (p. 136). The unique feature of the approach is that it is grounded in tone and the shifting relationships between tone. It is through the pattern of musical tones that the significance of the *Rg Veda* is to be found.

"Therefore, from a linguistic and cultural perspective, we have to be aware that we are dealing with a language where tonal and arithmetical relations establish the epistemological invariances... Language grounded in music is grounded thereby on context dependency; any tone can have any possible relation to other tones, and the shift from one tone to another, which alone makes melody possible, is a shift in perspective which the singer himself embodies. Any perspective (tone) must be "sacrificed" for a new one to come into being; the song is a radical activity which requires innovation while maintaining continuity, and the "world" is the creation of the singer, who shares its dimensions with the song." (p. 57)

It is perhaps no coincidence that this perspective is echoed in the spirit of flamenco as described in a review by Stephanie Merritt of Jason Webster's *Duende: A Journey in Search of Flamenco* (2002)

'Duende' is one of those words that is almost impossible to translate into English, because its meaning relies on a wide frame of reference that even many Spaniards would have difficulty explaining, so intimately is it rooted in Andalusian culture, particularly the music and lifestyle of flamenco. Perhaps the closest rendering would be 'spirit', but duende is far more than this -- it is the essence of flamenco, a moment of transcendence, almost possession, that is produced as the singer, dancer and guitarist merge into each other's rhythm. But its meaning spills over from the music into a way of life, as Jason Webster reveals in his memoir of a search for the elusive spirit of Spain and its music....It is impossible to convey the feel of *cante jondo* (the 'deep song') in any language.... [more]

Motivated social cognition: The above considerations provide a context for exploring the heavily researched controversial study, cited earlier, on *Political Conservatism as Motivated Social Cognition* (2003). In a second paper, responding to critics (*Exceptions that Prove the Rule*, 2003), the authors distinguish four types of political movement:

	Left-wing movements	Right-wing movements
"Young" movements	Progressive revolutions	Reactionary revolutions
"Old" regimes	Socialist / Communist	Traditional hierarchical

The trap to be avoided is the use of labels to stereotype particular movements as absolutely undesirable when there may be conditions, however temporary, in which a particular form may have a necessary function in the evolution of social governance. The above papers have however already been seized upon by conservative politicians as totally unacceptable.

A framework of this kind points to the need to distinguish different "languages" that are together appropriate to the complex art of governance. As indicated above, no one language is sufficient and all are necessary. What these languages are, and how many may be necessary, is a matter for the future. This question has been explored elsewhere (*Four Complementary Languages Required for Global Governance*, 1998) caricaturing a set of four basic languages as: Pozzy, Neggy, Luvvy and Tuffy, with suggestions for a further four (Tekky, Artty, Wizzy, and Leggy) -- suggesting the possibility of a "periodic table" of such languages. These have been used as a framework for assessing the challenges of the global civil society movement (*Global Civil Society: strategic comments on the path ahead*, 2003) in relation to the form of economic globalization favoured by conservatives.

Constraining projections and the missionary impulse

Faith-based governance has to find ways to reconcile the competitive missionary tendencies and commitments of some faiths -- whilst constraining their impact on others that are less aggressive and may not welcome such exposure, especially if the process is reinforced by the state. The challenge of course is that for the bearers of the "good news" it is a duty -- for the recipients it may simply be offensive. There is considerable danger that the problematic dynamics of product and service marketing may be replicated with respect to faiths -- as is already only too evident. As with the rejection of blatant commercialism, this may reinforce antipathy to faith-based insight.

Attention also needs to be given to the displacement, transformation and projection of the missionary impulse into other social endeavours

as surrogates, whether deliberate or inadvertent. At their most extreme, these may take the form of crusades or jihads -- through which missives and missions are transformed into missiles "to carry the message" (see *Missiles, Missives, Missions and Memetic Warfare: Navigation of strategic interfaces in multidimensional knowledge space*, 2001). Such framings then reinforce protectionist projects such as the "star wars" shields against the missiles of others -- as well as their own ideological missions (see *Entering Alternative Realities -- Astronautics vs Noonautics: isomorphism between launching aerospace vehicles and launching vehicles of awareness*, 2002).

Beyond exclusiveness and exclusion

The vexatious issues of exclusiveness embodied in many religions and mindsets need to be more effectively addressed as a prelude to faith-based governance. Failure to do so would otherwise merely ensure that inequities with which secular governance has struggled are simply carried over in some way into the faith-based context -- from which many emerged in the first place.

The problematic assumptions of "Chosen People" -- those ethnic groups or nations -- that consider themselves specially favoured above others by God -- need to be carefully reviewed [more]. This issue has been repeatedly stressed by Johan Galtung as the key to international peace.

This issue is especially challenging in relation to any understanding of "excellence" as a key to governance -- a focus notably cultivated through its "networks of excellence" by the European Community. It is evident in the assumptions made in the USA regarding the superiority of Ivy League strategists, or in the UK concerning their Oxbridge equivalents, etc -- in a period when actors, and those subject to criminal investigation, are often preferred by the public for the highest offices of government.

In a faith-based environment the corresponding challenge of "excellence" becomes evident when it is associated with spirituality of the highest order -- or rather with assumptions regarding the significance of indicators purportedly pointing to such spirituality. Spiritual elitism -- and the manipulation of the associated power -- is a classical problem for faith-based communities.

The question is how to distinguish under faith-based governance the wisdom that may well be associated with higher orders of spirituality from arrogant assumptions of superiority that are so readily cultivated in the pursuit of excellence -- and so readily ignore the wisdom of people who do not claim such superiority.

Dissociation from the hegemonic agenda

The classic reasons for ensuring separation of church and state need to be reviewed to determine exactly where the traps are and where are the windows of opportunity with respect to future governance. Their relation might be fruitfully seen in the light of the complementarity between *mythos* and *logos* -- or in the light of the variety of brain types or mindsets (as noted above).

The major difficulty is the American hegemonic agenda and the complicity of the other Christian-inspired members of the Coalition of the Willing. Given the problematic ways in which faith-based involvement in policy-making has been introduced by Christian leadership, and the opportunism of those faiths specially privileged by that leadership, there is a real challenge that any faith-based approach to governance may be completely discredited before it has a chance to demonstrate its creative contribution. This is especially probable if the mindsets of the past are reactivated to engender patterns analogous to the wars of religions -- such as Catholic vs Protestant, with the new "protestants" being those who dissent from the hegemony. For example, those associated with the UN's Global Compact are already attempting to frame opponents of economic globalization as "rejectionists"

The question is what could be the unifying insight brought by a faith-based perspective? How could its unifying features be distinguished from hegemonic aspirations -- which sit so comfortably with many religions? How could it be the product of genuine interfaith dialogue and insight rather than of the dominance of a particular faith or coalition of faiths -- an interfaith version of the Coalition of the Willing that may indeed be the hidden agenda of George Bush, Tony Blair and colleagues? How could they resist the temptation to facilitate and support the emergence of such a spiritual hegemony, believing profoundly as they do that this would be in the best interest of the world according to their privileged communication with God?

Given the efforts to produce a Global Ethic by one thread of interfaith dialogue at the international level (see Leonard Swidler. *Toward a Universal Declaration of a Global Ethic*, 1997; Hans Küng. *A Global Ethic for Global Politics and Economics*, 1997):

- how are its promoters to avoid the opportunities to seek its imposition worldwide, despite its many unresolved issues?
- how are efforts of those promoting faith-based governance to avoid coopting such particular initiatives in support of their own strategy?

The major danger lies in the association of faith-based politics with the "end-times" scenarios that are central to certain Christian fundamentalist strategies -- familiar to George Bush -- and widely documented on the web, including the triumphalist establishment of the Kingdom of Christ on Earth. Not only is there the charge of the Great Commission (mentioned earlier), but also the need to respond appropriately to specific scenarios outlined in the book of *Revelations* interpreted literally. The American global hegemony envisaged by George Bush might even be understood as a "shadow" variant of the Kingdom of Christ that his evangelical supporters aspire to impose upon the world.

Michael Ortiz Hill (*Mine Eyes Have Seen the Glory: Bush's Armageddon Obsession, Revisited*, 2003) points out that the book of *Revelations* is much beloved by Muslim fundamentalists who, like their Christian compatriots, also thrill to redemption through apocalypse. And, although Jewish fundamentalists do not believe in *Revelations*, they have nonetheless made common cause with the Christian Right. He cites Ian Lustick (*For the Land and the Lord: Jewish Fundamentalism in Israel*, 1988): "It's a very tragic situation in which Christian fundamentalists, certain groups of them that focus on Armageddon and the Rapture and the role of a war between Muslims and Jews in bringing about the Second Coming, are involved in a *folie a deux* with extremist Jews." Hill concludes: "The Judeo-Christian-Islamic tradition is being led by its fringe into the abyss and the rest of us with it".

The particular problem for governance is that those imbued with the significance of "end times" prophecies are as likely to welcome disaster as a valuable sign as to seek to develop remedial strategies -- because of the prophesied establishment of the Kingdom of Christ following disaster. Indeed remedial strategies would be seen as an unnecessary waste of energy -- when catalyzing such disasters might ensure more rapid fulfillment of the prophecies. Furthermore, they will readily label as satanic any leader who first emerges -- understood as the prophesied precursor to the good times after his defeat. To expedite fulfillment of certain prophecies ("to hurry up God"), alliances may be made with particular faiths that may lead to massive regional destabilization -- as with Jewish fundamentalists anxious to destroy the Dome on the Rock (Al-Aqsa) mosque in Jerusalem in order to reconstruct their Temple.

Given the necessarily hidden nature of some of these agendas, faith-based governance would then involve a degree of non-transparency that would feed rumour and conspiracy theories of every kind. Nor should it be forgotten that many religions have a sense of the future through a pattern of prophecies that may embody or reframe those most evident to the Christian leadership of the Coalition of the Willing.

With respect to terrorism, as one Catholic writer confirmed: "I have seen the enemy and it is us" (Joan Chittister, *Pogo may have been right*, *National Catholic Reporter*, 17 June 2003). The same may well be true of the "end times" scenario.

Responding to the challenges of misrepresentation in faith-based governance

From the earliest reliance on faith-based tools of governance, there has been a difficulty with the deliberate, or inadvertent, misrepresentation of signs and indicators of spirituality in support of those seeking to reinforce their power. This process, exacerbated by the many claims and counter-claims (notably by tele-evangelists, as documented by the [Trinity Foundation](#) through the *Door Magazine*), severely reduces the credibility of those that rely on them. This is most evident in relation to the "end times" predictions on which the evangelical Christians supportive of George Bush tend to focus.

David Lorimer, in reviewing the initiative of Father Bede Griffiths (see *Bede Griffiths: an introduction to his interspiritual thought*, 2003) in bridging between East and West, stresses the latter's concern:

The danger for Christianity is that it has translated experiences into words and words into thoughts so that people begin to think that these words and thoughts are themselves the object of faith when we should let them go and move beyond them. Thus faith has become identified with assent to a body of dogmatic claims rather than a direct encounter with the living god. This also means that theology itself is pursued as a function of the same rational mind that pursues science...Theology should be open to the world of transcendent reality if it is to be more than philosophy, while only wisdom can transcend the rational mind and know truth directly at a level where knowing is being. the movement is always to a place beyond form, image and concept. (*Network Review: journal of the Scientific and Medical Network*, 82, August 2003, p. 54)

From this perspective, there is a strong case for reviewing the processes of tele-evangelism in the light of their tendency to mislead the unwary -- as documented in the *Door Magazine*. Perhaps the dynamics of the interaction could be explored with tools such as [Transactional Analysis](#) that have so fruitfully highlighted the nature of dysfunctional game-playing in interpersonal interaction. Such insights would equip people to handle transactions with purveyors of ideas -- in the same way as they become equipped to respond to purveyors of products and services. This would also help people to develop in advance the appropriate skills in response to efforts at "programming" by manipulative sects [[more](#) | [more](#) | [more](#)]. The question is how to enable people to distinguish meaningful faith experiences from those which some perceive as a consequence of "programming". Such issues are especially important in a context of faith-based governance -- where pressures to conform to certain patterns of behaviour and belief may be extreme (as with White House morning prayer groups).

A special challenge for Christians is that the qualification "born-again" is attributed to (or adopted by) a range of people who may exhibit behaviours that are the contrary of what the term is believed to indicate. It is however increasingly used to imply "above criticism" -- especially that coming from non-believers. Will Christians feel called upon to develop some form of "authentication" or "certification" procedure to distinguish "authentic conversions" (the genuine "born-again") from the fake -- claimed by those fraudulently acting under the guise of such conversions? [[more](#)] What about the vexatious issue of "conversions of convenience"? Are there stages beyond "born-again" to be considered, as suggested by Robert Price (see *Beyond Born Again: Towards Evangelical Maturity*, 1993)?

It is appropriate to note that for some, becoming "born-again" is simply a matter of repeating a prayer and despatching an e-mail [[more](#) | [more](#) | [more](#)]. This is dangerously reminiscent of the manner in which academic degrees have been depreciated by certain diploma-awarding institutions, especially in the USA. Indeed one website, [Conversion Central](#), provides facilities for online conversion from any religion to Hinduism, as well for mass conversions of others. The future will undoubtedly see a website facilitating online conversion between any religions. How would this process be facilitated or regulated under faith-based governance?

A particular concern is that faith-based governance may reinforce tendencies towards superficial "conversion". The processes of the UN's Global Compact in persuading multinational corporations to subscribe voluntarily to a set of values -- caricatured as "blue washing" by critics -- may be seen as equally superficial. But, as with becoming "born-again", it may be used to argue for "remission of sins" in the arena of public opinion and be framed as a desirable exercise in public relations.

The conversion process through which a person becomes "born-again" -- as understood by the leader of the Coalition of the Willing -- has been highly dramatized by evangelists. The challenge for all concerned lies in the danger of misrepresenting this transformation of consciousness. Whereas other remedial change processes notably focus on a "12-step" transformation (as with recuperation from substance abuse), any implication that it is a "1-step" process may raise questions as to whether claims are genuine rather than shallow and illusory. Such questions have long been a concern of spiritual directors -- whether within the Catholic Church or in other faiths. The involuntary nature of genuine transformation through grace has been a focus of the theologian Paul Tillich (*You are Accepted*) -- a

transformation which remains subjective and is not open to authentication by others. Misrepresentation may be especially important when it demeans the assiduous spiritual practice of those of other faiths who are conscious of the many stages ("initiations") through which insight may need to be embodied.

A particular problem lies in the great stress placed by Christian fundamentalists on literal interpretation of the *Bible* "word for word" -- which surveys have indicated to be a belief shared by half the American population. This difficulty becomes most apparent in the case of the limitation to 144,000 of the number of seats available in heaven [more]. To the extent that these seats are effectively promised to (or claimed by) existing members of evangelical Christian groups, efforts to evangelize others around the world -- on the promise of such a seat -- could be considered problematic under any trades description act regarding misrepresentation in advertising ! Arguments by fundamentalists that this number should **not** be interpreted literally then need to be applied to other areas where literal interpretation is considered by them as the **only** valid truth.

Clarification and transparency is also required in relation to covert faith-based initiatives such as those relating to efforts to accelerate the "end times" scenarios linked to the Temple Mount in Jerusalem -- notably with regard to the Red Heifer [more | more | more | more | more].

If governance is to be faith-based, at what point will the challenges it faces in a turbulent world call for its leaders to be judged on the quality of their faith -- especially when it becomes increasingly evident that their governance is failing to respond to the challenges effectively?

Reframing interfaith dialogue

In a context of faith-based governance, the marked weaknesses of interfaith dialogue are likely to fatally undermine any of its strengths on which hopes might otherwise be placed. Token or "feel-good" interfaith coherence will not resist the centrifugal dynamics of the realities of governance. The learnings of interfaith dialogue [more] need to be presented in ways that acknowledge the challenges of misrepresentation and misunderstanding and indicate the processes through which higher quality dialogue might be achieved in support of higher orders of consensus (see *Learnings for the Future of Inter-Faith Dialogue*, 1993). In particular there is a need to allow for and work with doubt and disagreement in new ways: No doubt -- No dialogue! Leadership under faith-based governance calls for management of disagreement and doubt, not the imposition of answers.

Given the insights into more coherent patterns of relationship available from mathematics (see above), it should be possible to reframe interfaith dynamics without marginalizing minority perspectives. Unifying insights may take on new dimensions through recognition of new levels of dialogue. Metaphor may play an even greater role in the communication of such coherence (see *Guidelines to Dialogue through Metaphor*, 1993)-- assisted by multimedia support for learning and comprehension beyond the linear constraints of text. Spherical configurations of perspectives may echo the globality of the planet that is home to them (see *Spherical configuration of interlocking roundtables: internet enhancement of global self-organization through patterns of dialogue*, 1998)

But given the importance in both symbolic and communication terms, special attention will be required to reconcile the contrasting aesthetics of the environments in which faith-based governance is expressed. As history has demonstrated, the aesthetics of plenary assembly rooms and their processes have been a significant factor in the mutual alienation of different faiths (see *Aesthetic Challenge of Interfaith Dialogue as Exemplified by Meditation*, 1997)

Sustainable development and the relevance of faith-based preoccupation with virtues and vices

Many faiths point to truths embodied in checklists of virtues and vices with respect to personal action -- and, by extension, with respect to collective action. Elsewhere it has been argued that -- interpreted **dynamically**, rather than as **static** conditions -- these provide clues to the embodiment and navigation of new paradigms called for by considerations of sustainable development (see *Navigating Alternative Conceptual Realities: clues to the dynamics of enacting new paradigms through movement*. 2003). That paper included the following table:

Movement		Yoga	Buddhism			Christianity	
Appropriate	Inappropriate	Afflictions	Hindrances (pañcavarana)	Fetters (hindrances)	Perfections (paramita)	Vices	Virtues
Envisaging new contextual relationship	Failure to envisage new relationship	Egoism (<i>asmita</i>): This is the false identification of separateness, aloneness, or egoism.	Ill will (<i>byapada, pradosa</i>)	Self-delusion, false views: failure to distinguish one's boundaries appropriately (<i>drishti</i>)	Generosity, giving (<i>dana</i>): unconstrained relationship to environment	Despair: undermining hope and the ability to undertake a manoeuver	Hope: appropriate to the successful achievement of any innovative manoeuver
Detection of alternative environmental support	Failure to detect features of any alternative context			Conceit, pride, self-regard (<i>abhimana, nga-rgyal</i>)	Truthfulness (<i>sacca</i>): unconfused assessment of possibilities and capacities	Pride: excessive self-focus and insensitivity to context (literally "before a fall")	

Attraction-to new environmental support	Distracting attractions hindering movement	Attraction to appearances (<i>raga</i>): This is the attraction or attachment to the appearance of objects is the specific false identification that tells us that objects of attraction will bring about happiness.	Sensual desire, (<i>kamachanda, abhichya</i>)	Sensuous lust and desire, craving for the objects of sense (<i>karma-trisna</i>)	Loving-kindness (<i>metta</i>): attentive relationship to the space left and that to which one intends to move; right means (<i>upaya kausala</i>)	Lust and lechery: disrespect for the process, but also for its significance for others	Love and charity: appropriate attitude to execution of the process itself, but also in relation to others
Reaching- for new environmental support	Failure to reach out to new framework		Restlessness (<i>uddhaacca</i>)	Excitability: restlessness (<i>amuddhatya</i>); contrition, worry or compunction (<i>kaukritya</i>)	Patience, tolerance (<i>khanti, ksanti</i>): sense of timing in anticipation of when to move	Anger and wrath: undermining concentration and focus on execution of the manoeuver	Will and temperance: appropriate to engaging in a challenging manoeuver
Establishing contact with new environmental support	Failure to make contact with any new support	Fear of death (<i>abhinivesha</i>): This is the fear of death and the clinging to life as it is known.	Torpor (<i>middha</i>)	Greed for fine material existence, craving for refined corporeality (<i>rupa-trishna</i>)	Equanimity (<i>upekkha</i>): ability to respond to obstacles without becoming attached to them	Envy: excessive focus on others, distorting own initiatives	
Grasping new environmental support	Failure to grasp any support securely			Ill will, anger, hatred (<i>pradosa</i>)	Resolution (<i>adhithana</i>): determination to move (<i>pranidhana</i>)		
Displacement of centre (Repulsion from old position)	Inability to move centre from all pattern of support to new	Repulsion (<i>dvesha</i>): This is repulsion, hatred, and aversion.	Sloth (<i>thina, styana</i>)	Greed for immaterial existence, carvaing for incorporeality (<i>arupa-trishna</i>)	Renunciation (<i>nekkhama</i>): ability to let go and shift to a new framework	Apathy and sloth: inability to "get one's act together"	Competence and justice: appropriate discipline for structuring a manoeuver
Detachment from old support	Inability to detach (or let go) from old support			Clinging to ritual: habitual adherence to old framework or pattern (<i>upadana</i>)	Energy, vigour, bravery (<i>viriya</i>): ability to engage in movement		
Coordination of movement	Uncoordinated movement	Ignorance (<i>avidya</i>): The primal and all-pervading ignorance.	Doubt, uncertainty (<i>vicikiccha, vicikitsa</i>)	Ignorance, dullness, delusion (<i>avidya, marig-pa, avijja</i>)	Morality, discipline (<i>sila</i>): maintaining sense of integrity through the process of movement	Excessive consumption of resources, especially energy (avarice)	Loyalty and faith: appropriate attitude to peers, predecessors, successors and "tradition"
			Worry, contrition, compunction (<i>kukkucca, amuddhatya, kaukritya</i>)	Doubt: uncertainty about appropriateness of shift, scepticism, lack of belief, perplexity (<i>vicikitsa, thetshom, vicikiccha</i>)	Wisdom (<i>panna, prajna</i>): ability to coordinate disparate movements in response to changing circumstances		

As discussed in that paper, a new focus on faith-based governance could help to identify a form of dynamic coherence that might be essential as an underlying pattern through which the relationships between "virtues" could be sustained in order to avoid the traps to governance associated with "vices". In this sense the so-called "faith" dimension provides a form of higher-order dynamic keystone for a strategic construct (see *Higher Orders of Inter-sectoral "Consensus": Clarification of formal possibilities*. 1991). This points to a need to clarify the variety of ways in which understandings of "unity", "consensus", "integration" and the like can be understood -- giving as much weight to the need for "closure" as to the recognition of Keats' "negative capability" or Buddhist "emptiness".

Such a description might well be positively received by those in faith communities. Their challenge is to ensure that any such insight is understood in terms of creative emergence rather than as the imposition of a particular rigid doctrine and terminology -- a form of misplaced concreteness. Whilst they may always wish to be able to say "we told you so", their challenge lies in the manner in which they preclude discovery of underlying subtle coherence from a variety of valuable perspectives of which they may be ignorant -- some of

them unsuspected.

Ken Wilber offers useful insight into the fallacies that may delude the unwary into premature assumptions concerning the nature of transcendental experience on which faith-based governance would ideally be based (*The Pre/Trans Fallacy*, 1998). For Wilber, since both prerational states and transrational states are, in their own ways, nonrational, they appear similar or even identical to the untutored eye. He identifies two possible fallacies. Either all higher and transrational states (including mystical or contemplative experiences) are *reduced* to lower and prerational states, or alternatively all prerational states are *elevated* to some sort of transrational glory -- reading a deeply transpersonal and spiritual status into states that are merely indissociated and undifferentiated and actually lacking any sort of integration at all.

The merit of a faith-based approach to governance is that it gives significance to the experiential dimension of coherence that provides the connective tissue to a variety of other valuable mental constructs that have proven, by their very nature, unable to bridge across their methodological differences of perspective. The faith-based approach offers a direct experience of the "pattern that connects". These implications are explored elsewhere (*Psychology of Sustainability: Embodying cyclic environmental processes*, 2002; *Interrelationships between 64 Complementary Approaches to Sustainable Development*, 2002).

The point is most succinctly made by Koichi Matsuura in the conclusion to his inaugural address as Director-General of UNESCO, 15 November 1999:

An ancient tradition, dear to all civilizations, is that there exists a subtle link between the inner harmony of human beings, and the balance of the natural world around us -- as if we projected thereon our own inner turmoil, or inner peace. One of the guiding principles of our Japanese ethics is just such harmony, which we call *wa*, our own pronunciation of the Chinese character *he*. This strong belief in harmony has endured with us to this day. As Director-General, I should like to impart the spirit of *wa*. In accordance with *wa*, tensions should be resolved, not through conflict, but through harmony -- and not only amongst one another, but in attunement and sensitivity to the very flow of the natural order around us. [[more](#)]

The term *wa* connotes a feeling of oneness with nature and people -- celebrated in the Japanese tea ceremony. It acknowledges sensitivity to the changing rhythms of the seasons, and to harmony with these changes as a source of ever deepening pleasure. This harmony with nature quietly leads one to an understanding of the evanescence of all things and the unchanging in the changing. In group dynamics it refers to behaviour in social situations which may become tense, or to behavior that allows for smooth working and interpersonal relations. Stresses in the social environment may be echoed in natural ecosystems and vice versa.

It would appear that such insights may be the keystone on which the patterns of behaviour fundamental to sustainable development can be rendered comprehensible, viable, and sustainable. The possibility has been explored elsewhere (see *En-minding the Extended Body: Enactive engagement in conceptual shapeshifting and deep ecology*, 2003) and notably with respect to the UN World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg (*My Reflecting Mirror World: making Joburg worthwhile*, 2002).

Ultimately the key to faith-based governance may be, in the spirit of John Keats, the recognition that any understanding of "God" is better experienced by some as a **question** for an emergent future rather than as an **answer** imposed by the past as preferred by others. Or perhaps the mindset polarizing conventional relationships between such questions and answers might be reframed in the light of Kinhide Mushakoji's tetralemma (*Global Issues and Interparadigmatic Dialogue*, 1988) that would explore a four-fold approach: answer, question, question and answer, non-answer and non-question [[more](#)]. This would recognize the challenges of the "answer economy" mindset (see *Development as Discontinuous Societal Learning: Cyclic transformation of the global answer economy*, 1982). It would also be in sympathy with John Ralston Saul's concluding concern with the "virtue of doubt" and the excessive importance attached to "answers" in modern governance :

The secret, then, is that we must alter our civilization from one of answers to one which feels satisfaction, not anxiety, when doubt is established... If ours is the advanced civilization we pretend it is, there should be no need to act as if all decisions were designed to establish certainties. Grandiose issues should not need to be reduced to the simplistic state of for or against and then decided in a set period.... A civilization of answers cannot help but be a civilization of swirling fads and facile emotions.... That is the narrowing effect of a civilization which seeks automatically to divide through answers when our desperate need is to unify the individual through questions. (*Voltaire's Bastards: the dictatorship of reason in the West*, 1992)

Paradoxically, however, this is an answer rather than a question. It reinforces the need to reframe question-answer in new ways.



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