



Parallel Community Newsletter September 2015

The Parallel Community is a linking network and a platform where people can express and develop their positive contribution for change – human, social, ecological, creative and spiritual.

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Caro Woods: A Pilgrim On Horseback

by PC Core Team member Nathascha Heijen



St. Mary's, Holy Island

Caro Woods writes: "In the Spring of 2015, I plan to ride and walk my Connemara Pony, Tommy, over 800 miles across the country

RDA. If you would like to make a contribution, please contact me at caro@carowoods.co.uk – Mobile: 07713-592935"



On a grey morning, Ba Miller and I went out to welcome Caro Woods at Marazion Beach on behalf of Parallel Community. We arrived in time to see her victorious arrival onto the beach, just after the Archangel of Parking showed us mercy and granted a free parking stay for a short time on a private parking while all the other parkings were full. We got out of the car and rushed over the sand to say "hello." Caro and Tommy were in good spirits, Tommy perhaps the friskier one of the two. Many coloured ribbons were woven into his mane and I wondered what they were for; I then found the answer on her website. They were "Healing Ribbons

from the Holy Island of Lindisfarne in Northumberland, to St. Michael's Mount in Cornwall, where I live. By linking these two Holy Islands, I hope to create a spiritual thread between them, and in the process, possibly reconnect with an ancient pilgrim route. It is also a road trip to raise £10,000 for the Riding for the Disabled Association."

"It will also unite the church dedicated to St. Mary on Lindisfarne with the church on St. Michael's Mount, so-called after the vision of St. Michael first appeared on top of the Mount to a group of fishermen in the bay below, in 495AD. Before I knew about this connection

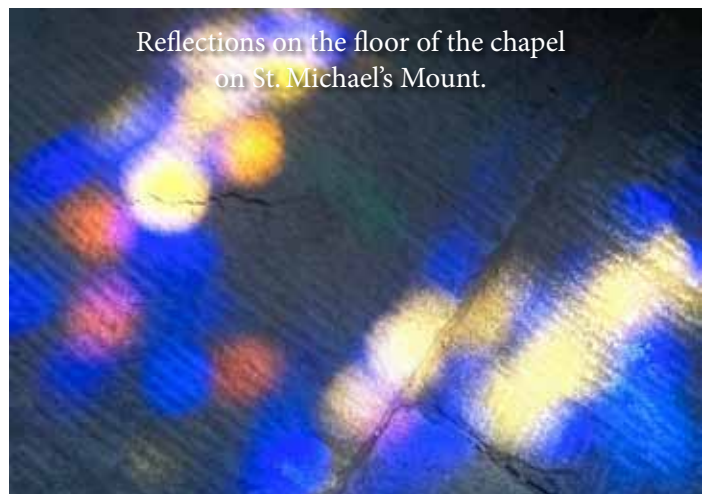
*May my mind come alive today
to the invisible geography
that invites me to new frontiers,
to break the dead shell of yesterdays,
to risk being disturbed and changed.
John O' Donohue, from "A Morning Offering"*

between the churches on these Holy Islands, these two Saints already held a special meaning for me. The Mary/Michael Pilgrim route is a spiritual ley line that links Carn Les Boel in Cornwall with Hopton in Norfolk, and one that I have walked various Western sections of at different times in 2014 (as well as the St. Michael's Way in Cornwall which forms the Cornish section of the Santiago de Compostela Pilgrim Route). The spiritual energy of these two Saints are quite different and distinctive in their own ways, the 'Mary' energy being a more gentle and benign version of the 'Michael' energy. Both have become important elements of this journey. We shall join the Route when we reach Glastonbury, where we shall trace its curving, serpent path back to St. Michael's Mount, our destination in Cornwall.

containing a specific request for healing, either of a personal or a general nature, on behalf of a friend or loved one, sent to Caro and woven into the horse's mane with the healing intention imprinted onto it." Such a lovely thought!

To learn more about Caro's journey, please visit her blog at www.pilgrimonhorseback.wordpress.com.

This journey on horseback will be a personal pilgrimage. In this, my 60th year, each day's ride will be a celebration of a year of my life. The aim is to create a body of work which explores the nature of long distance travel with a horse, as a form of meditation, reflection and personal transformation, as well as raising funds towards the important and valuable work of the



*In travelling between these sacred places one not only refreshes one's own spirit but assists in the work of reviving the latent spirit of the earth.
- John Michell*

Member Messages

If you want to contact any of these members, please write to info@parallelcommunity.com and we will send you their contact details.

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The vision of the founder of the Parallel Community, Hamish Miller, was for everyone to come together, envision and build a kinder world based on mutual trust, respect and love for each other and for our beautiful planet. For this purpose, we run two digital platforms where people can connect up: one is the 'Meeting Place' (www.parallelcommunity.ning.com) and the other is on Facebook (www.facebook.com/groups/parallelcommunity). We also publish a bi-monthly newsletter reaching approximately 2000 readers globally.

Celia Savage

"At the root of everything we do is the idea of conscience: a deeper awareness of the effects on the world and others of our words and actions.

Here's an interesting thing that's come our way. It is a new project for raising awareness of the ills of modern life as we know it – environment, global warming deniers, bankers, all sorts – through the works of Shakespeare. They plan to publish a book, put on a performance of 'As You Like It' in Sherwood Forest and.. Here's a link to more information. www.kickstarter.com/projects/shakespeare/take-physic-pomp

Lesley Williams

I would very much like to meet and join with like-minded people. I've come from a holistic, spiritual background. My Mother was an alternative thinker, and a natural Medium. She started up healing and development groups in the early 50's and later became a Spiritualist. Coming from a Spiritual background, I've never found the earth a comfortable place to live in. After my Mother's death I trained in the early 90's as a Reflexologist and Reiki Master/Teacher; this did help to ground some energies. I moved to Cornwall in March. Cornwall is very familiar as my children are half Cornish. I am temporarily staying with one of my daughters in Launceston.

Brian, Toronto, Ottawa, Canada

I'm here to share my vision of a much better world, indelibly tied to three energies: love of nature, source and each other.

Nicole Michelle, Berkeley, CA, United States

I am an animating animist: both 2D & 3D animation.
Binder, Northampton, United Kingdom
Studying to be a Shamanic Practitioner

Docta, Berkshire, United Kingdom

Activist, Artist, Chef, Healer, Health & Nutrition, Legal Advisor, Martial Arts Instructor, Researcher, Teacher, Traveller (internal and external), Vegan, Waiter, Yoga Practitioner and Ancient Soul.

Andrew, London, United Kingdom

Sacred tailoring.

Nancy, Weaverville, NC, United States

I'm a dowser and want to use it to help others. Most people I encounter simply think I can locate water. I have recently joined the Appalachian Dowser's Society. I just watched Parallel Community on Gaiam and it called to me, very loudly I might add. Thank you for being here. I'm anxious to start reading

your archived newsletters.

Matthew Nolan, Rakaia, New Zealand

I understand our existing system well particularly financial/legal term and are looking for like-minded people to aid in being and bringing about change.

Lisa Hardi, Chester, United Kingdom

Reflexologist, Reiki practitioner, Aromatherapist, allotmenteer, forager, maker of jam and marmalade. Like writing and drawing. The day is too short to read everything I want to. Fascinated by crystals but still a bit unsure, love plant spirits.

Lez, Scotland, United Kingdom

Earth energies.

Jane, Llandrindod Wells, United Kingdom

I am a psychotherapist with particular interest in working out of doors; I also have experience of working with groups and organizations. I am a member of the Green Party and think politics is part of the answer as well as the problem!

Stephen, Liverpool, United Kingdom

Song, writing, guitarist, dowsing.

Rev' Les, Deal Kent, United Kingdom

Dedicated musician... folk fiddle, melodeon, English concertina, hammered Dulcimer etc. Play for local charity support... English folk music... spent years discerning the difference between religion and spirituality. Mystic.

Elmarie, Cornwall, United Kingdom

Interest in the environment, growing organic, non-GMO foods, (vegan lifestyle) (try not to use any chemicals at all where possible). I am an artist, I paint and draw, create mosaics, and some made with ceramic beachcombing findings. I love music and art, meeting people. I am a friendly and outgoing personality. I love to help people. Very interested in art therapy, ozone therapy, colloidal silver (and can make this). I would love to consider joining a community and living a life closer to what life should be more like.. Everybody on this earth should be living in communities.

Livea, Hot Springs National Park, AR, United States

Writing... more later.

Rosie, Dawlish, United Kingdom

Star seed. Gleaner of knowledge and information and disseminator of same to those who ask for and need it. Organiser

Nature All Consciousness

By Michael Baker



As a baby, then a toddler, a human being increases the level of consciousness of their surroundings. A Consciousness that is shaped by growing awareness of surroundings. The process of socialisation through childhood through home and school moulds the human perception of life in a particular way. That perception becomes increasingly a domination of

human as a survivor, a competitor. Needs quickly become replaced by "wants". This is a crucial stage of human development, one which with but few exceptions goes unchecked, because it creates a comfort zone for human life. For a number of reasons human education since Classical Greek times has centred on our domination or God-given right as a species. Awareness of the limitations imposed on our consciousness has been based around a narrow band of empirical science based ideologies.

As a species, collectively we have as yet to learn what Consciousness means. As humans, we habitually use five senses to feed our individual consciousness through ongoing awareness of surroundings. But we fail to understand that all around us is consciousness; consciousness of plants, animals, birds, trees

as well as water and the planet herself. That consciousness is alive! Constantly giving out as well as receiving; and this has profound implications for us individually and most importantly, collectively. Not all consciousness operates within the bands of sight, sound, taste, touch & smell that we humans do. In reality, we are limited in the use of our senses in comparison to the full spectrum of EM vibration.

How we act and react with our natural environment does matter at a level we don't yet fully understand. The forces of Conscious Life are much more powerful than we can possibly imagine. Imagine for a moment, there is an unseen intangible Presence. I risk going down the God line but I wish to avoid this. This is simply an invitation to consider a new relationship with Nature, with the Planet herself; this is the most important thing to do right now. Realms of consciousness await our action... re action right now. Animals, birds, trees, insects, all that move across the land and waters have at some level an understanding of the choices we are making as human beings.

The tools that make for this to be readily available and encouraged, have become embedded in a society which is failing to step back and take a look at the options for history yet to be made.



in itself to see Satish 'walk his talk', responding to situations rather than reacting.

Wistmans wood was misty, warm and mysterious; one of Satish's favourite places in the world. He was like a gazelle in nimbly traversing the mossy rocks and to think he will be 80 next year. Three weeks before he had been there with his wife and friends and had lain in the West Dart River, just below the wood. On our day, the river was in full spate.

I constantly reflect on the day and all the coincidences that made it so magical. The rain meant that we had Wistmans Wood to ourselves, as once the sun came out, when we were nearing the car park, we passed a number of people heading for the woods.

Thank you SO MUCH, Ba, for including me in the walk. It has meant such a lot to me. I hope to see you soon and if you are near Whiddon Down, please don't pass our door. John Christian and I would be very sad if we had missed a chance

of seeing you. We are a good place for a break of coffee, tea, lunch or the night. That goes for any other Parallel Community member.

With fondest love from Janet Wright

A day on magical Dartmoor, to Wistman's Wood, was a wonderful opportunity to be with good friends and to meet Satish Kumar. In legend, the mysterious Wistman's Wood was the sacred oak grove of the Druids. Once the source of tales of haunting, the home of particularly venomous adders, as well as the diabolical "Wisht Hounds" who hunted unwary travellers and lost souls, this was a place long avoided by local people. Not today, however. In exhilarating weather our path through the wood was lit by Satish's bright aura and wise words. Such a humble and gentle man. And in the midst of all the complications we experience, he has a message about our journeying through life for us all to heed.

Jill Moss

Göbekli Tepe

Groups of seekers working in harmony to decode the mysteries of Göbekli Tepe and the inner work that was needed to conquer the fears projected by the media, of Islamic State violence if we ventured once more into this magical region

By Rose Shuttleworth

Radiant energy in this pristine landscape



Göbekli Tepe!

Göbekli Tepe before the protective cover was built



I first heard the name in August 2010 when a friend described the recent discovery of a remarkable site in South Eastern Turkey, that was apparently 8,000 years older than Stonehenge. It was a complex of extremely ancient circular temples, only one fifth of which had been excavated. The huge T-shaped stones defeated archeologists' understanding of how these giants could have stood independently. On the stones were carved detailed symbols and totem animals, using skills it had previously been



Göbekli Tepe on early visits

believed impossible for Cro-magnon man to have developed. The whole site had been intentionally buried around 8,000BC and had remained hidden until excavations

began in 1994.

Experts debated if this was the site of the original Garden of Eden. The region where the site was located had long been known to locals as Edene. What also still confounds the experts is the realization that the most complex, ornate portions of this unique site are the oldest. The later constructions show a significant deterioration to the quality of design and craftsmanship, when one would have expected a

Euphrates above Nevali Cori at sunset



steady growth of skill leading to this achievement.

These mysteries dogged me from my very first visit, when an inner voice informed me that this site was deeply connected to the stars and that I needed to bring sensitive Earth-Workers here in numbers to help decode Göbekli Tepe's original role and why it had revealed itself to the world again at this particular time in the Earth's history.



On the banks of the sacred Fish Lake – Kazim explaining the history

That first task took two years to achieve, but an in-between visit led to a very special opportunity, to stand at the base of one of the monoliths and actually touch it: a very powerful resonance! When I then asked inwardly what this site needed, I was knocked sideways by an immediate response; Acknowledgement and Activation!

In October 2012 Kazim and I led a group to Şanlıurfa and Göbekli Tepe, with the help of an extraordinary gathering of people from Turkey, UK, New Zealand and South Africa; and with remote support from committed allies in distant lands, we tuned to the site. Dragons and singing bowls worked with us and we got some understanding of the energies involved here.

Then in 2014 my inner voice indicated that a further group visit



The women in the group, the closest we could get to the sunken site of the Nevali Cori temple. Sunset ceremony!

View over dramatic Valley from Göbekli Tepe



could be needed so we sent out another appeal. A delightful group formed, all from UK and mostly from the West Country, many of whom were old friends. To my great joy, Ba Miller and some of the Trencrom Dowzers were amongst them. From my first visit to Göbekli Tepe, I had felt very strongly that Ba's dowsing skills were needed there.

Preparations ran smoothly until the September when IŞİT, the so-called Islamic State, (called ISIS by the Western Media,) emerged onto the international scene as the modern-day bogeyman. One female friend was so frightened by the gruesome possible dangers explained to her by her family, that she had to withdraw from the imminent trip. At the same time, my own UK family combined forces to terrify me of the dreadful consequences that I could risk, if I was foolhardy and irresponsible enough to lead a group to this region. So we did our homework, contacting friends living in the so-called "Danger area," and checked with all Turkish Government agencies for advice. We were laughed at for even asking!

The fear that had been projected from family and friends was shocking in its intensity. It took several days of very focussed inner work to clear it from my consciousness. Three friends who had visited Göbekli Tepe with us in the past, joined me for a day of sharing, to lay fear to rest and to build a loving base for our forthcoming involvement in the region.

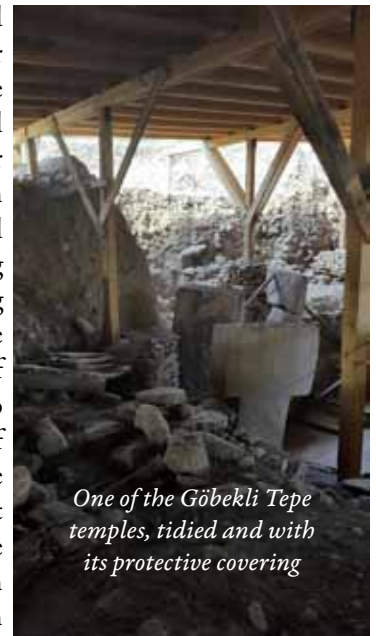
A few of the group from Cornwall became affected by the fear a few days later, but we were able to re-assure them, from the foundation of all the good work just completed. This was such a useful experience to pass on to others!

With the help of an injection of Rumi energy, absorbed during a visit to the Mevlana complex in Konya on our two-day drive to Urfa from the Mediterranean, we had a wonderful week with a very special and mutually supportive group.

The first evening meal in our Şanlıurfa hotel restaurant was accompanied by a meeting of locally-based Syrian elders and their supporters, gathered to try to set up a Free Democratic Government of Syria; and we all felt that we were truly at a major turning point in Earth's History.

When we visited Göbekli Tepe, the archeologists advised

us that the temple site had been created at an earlier major turning point on the Earth, when humans had changed from a Hunter Gatherer to an Agrarian Society. Ba later elaborated on this by contributing some truly mind-blowing information about the true origins of The Garden of Eden, and relating this to that same transformation of human society. This came from a book she had just read, 'The Genius of the Few' edited by Christian and Barbara Joy O'Brien and seemed to confirm what we each, independently, had felt to be in progress in this special place, right now!

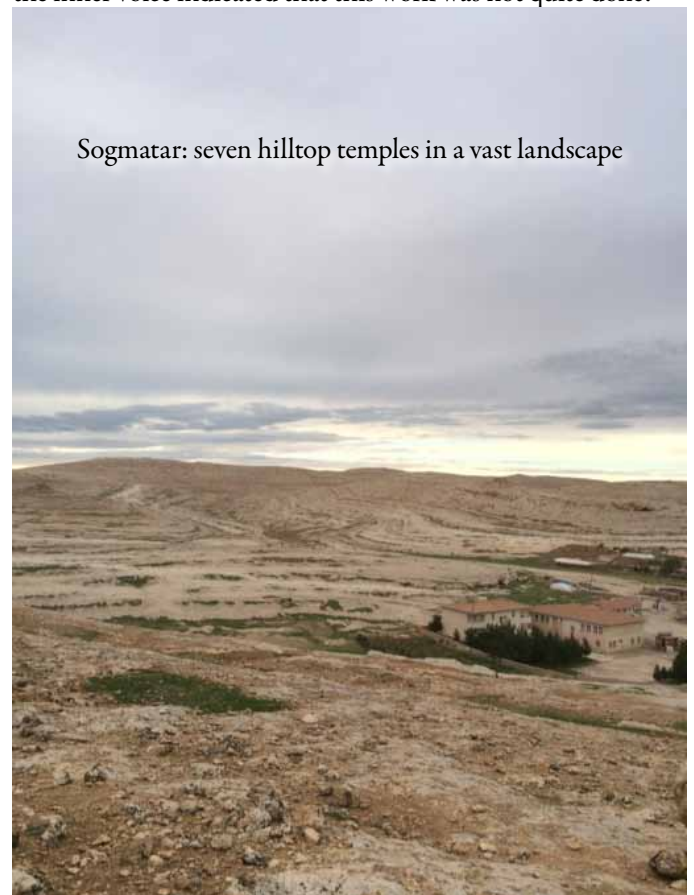


One of the Göbekli Tepe temples, tidied and with its protective covering

On the final day, Ba and Pauline Passmore returned to Göbekli Tepe alone, to dowse with a list of questions which they had formulated from our week's experiences.

The answers to their questions threw light on the many mysteries which this site has thrown at us and, in spite of my feeling that this was the end of the quest, on retiring that night, the inner voice indicated that this work was not quite done!

Sogmatar: seven hilltop temples in a vast landscape



We shall see!

On the Other Side of the Road

(The plight of refugees)

by Marianne Griffin

I thought about how we ourselves would feel, if we were refugees and imagined how immigrants might feel, coming into our English towns. Someone who travels to Africa for charity work quite often said that their customs over there are quite different to ours. This led to a discussion around how their tribes look after their people, and how they make visitors welcome and when (and if) they arrive in Europe, they would have a big shock if they are not helped – or if put into detention centres, while seeking asylum here. Hamish said on one of his videos that Parallel Community would put people in touch with each other, so that one part of the world could learn from another part, and share skills. Hamish was quite “political” and made us aware of the needs of people, and how we could learn so much from native peoples like the Maoris and Aborigenes.

It was the start of Winter when we arrived at our temporary home; refugees seeking anonymity, blending into the city population, mere shadows merging in with the crowd. In our blue jeans and trainers, peak caps and sunglasses, we mingled with the students strolling along the pavements and through the food shops. With cursory glances all the time, our eyes were monitoring faces and body language, part of the post traumatic stress we were going through. As the days went past, then the months, and now the years, we are still living on the other side of the road of normal life. We go to bed feeling safe and warm, thankful for a roof over our heads and food in our bellies. But we wake up in the middle of the night shaking and sweating, hearts pounding, our minds churning through the horrors we have lived through in the form of terrifying nightmares: always being chased, being tortured, escaping through dark alleys, hunting for elusive house keys and venturing into lorries or lurching boats upon choppy seas.

In the morning, we wake up to a strange reality, peeping round the curtains at the strange anomalies of the British weather, one day being calm and sunny, the next being windy with a band of rain following shortly after, never the same. We watch the crowds moving along the streets; the purposeful men striding out in their black suits going to catch the train to work; the long haired students dressed in wacky fashions, chatting whilst heads stuck into their mobile phones, texting their friends; then the

motorbikes and scooters racing up the road to their college, the mothers driving their children to school, and the masses driving into the city to go to work. It is so strange to see so many in cars to go on short journeys and so few people walking there, and nobody riding bikes.

We try to hide our skin, for the colour will give us away. We must practise our religion in privacy, for a sanctuary of our own making is of spiritual comfort. What defines us as human beings? We are all basically creations from the same ancestors, yet we have different races, different cultures, different beliefs which all lead to the top of the mountain of our very existence. Yet here we are, strangers in your land, foreigners to you. We live on the other side of the road to you.

The question of language creeps in. We speak English, but as we know it. We speak with an accent that came from our birth place, English spoken as it sounds from the land of our mother tongue. We come into your country and add a new string to the music of your language. We add a new vision of what fashion can be. We excite your nose and palate with our homeland’s cuisine. We open your souls to a new kind of music, a new form of dance, a new source of self expression and creativity. Yet you look at us and listen to us, deciding that we are different and therefore not one of you. We are on the other side of the road.

Little do you understand what we have been through. And do you really care anyway? You believe that our problems have nothing to do with you. But we are all one global family. We came from stardust, and we return to stardust. In between we live on the same Earth, with all the other creatures, yet we have speech and we have spiritual belief: we all seek the purpose of our time on this planet, while we try to understand our destinies.

Why am I a refugee in your homeland? I seek peace, I seek quiet. I am but a feather floating through the air, a leaf floating down the river of life. We will all end up back in the big ocean, evaporating up into the air... souls returning to the land of angels.

So what shall we do today? Can we cross the road and join you?

Can we have a house to live in as well? Can we have jobs? Can we share life with you? Or will we always be banished to the outskirts of life? Will we always be given the leftovers of basic human needs? Maybe we shall find peace in the life of a global monk or nun, owning nothing, sharing all, respecting all life.

“We live under the power of Modern Consciousness, which means that we are obsessed with progress. Wherever you are is not good enough. We always want to achieve something, rather than experience something. The opposite of this is Spiritual Consciousness. By that I mean you find enchantment in every action you do, rather in just the results of your action.”

Satish Kumar



“We have to shift our attitude from ownership of nature to relationship with nature. The moment you change from ownership to relationship, you create a sense of the sacred.”

Satish Kumar

Experiencing the Apollo and Athena Lines

Sarah Hoskin Clymer



The Apollo Line enters St. Michael's Mount

Cornwall is my ancestral and spiritual home, and I come here to walk the sacred paths, experience the ancient stones and holy wells, and engage with the Cornish cultures, people and land.

Through Facebook I saw that Nathascha was co-leading a group with Ba Miller to experience the Athena-Apollo Lines in western Cornwall on what was scheduled to be my first full day in Cornwall this past summer. Perfect timing!

After meeting in Penzance, we drove out to the western end of Cornwall and walked down to the Zennor Head where the Athena line enters into Cornwall. I felt myself "land" in the ancient world of Cornwall as I smelled the sea air, walked through the heather, saw Gurnard's Head to the south of us where the Apollo Line enters Cornwall, and sat at the very spot where the Athena Line enters. The portal in the stone behind me felt like the eye of a needle that created a focussed target for her energy to concentrate and intensify as it entered Cornwall from Ireland and across the vast open sea.

At the three sites that we visited that day, Zennor Head (Athena Line), Madron Well (Apollo Line), and St. Michael's Mount (Athena and Apollo Lines as well as the Mary and Michael Lines too), Ba dowsed each of the lines to demonstrate where and how it flowed; and Nathascha led us through a inner meditation so that we could connect with the energies of each site and each energy line.

I experienced the Athena energy as fresh and cleansing. It smelled like fresh laundry that had been dried in the breeze. Nathascha pointed out that the energy is fresh off the sea, having just come through the large distance of sea between Cornwall and Ireland. I felt happy in her presence, grounded, centred. When I called the energy up inside me, I opened and softened; the energy filled my belly, and I could feel the energy gently moving within me like a soft breeze.

We then drove to Madron Well and Chapel, and as we walked back to them along a narrow path we offered bits of delicious date that Nathascha had brought for us to offer to the faerie energies along the way.

We each got to dowse the Apollo energy that moves through Madron Chapel, coming in on the southeast corner. The chapel is held by a beautiful old tree who looks like she has been there for a long time. The chapel and springs within it were known for

healing eyes, and visual issues. This energy was more difficult for me to feel. What I did become aware of is that Apollo asked me to get to know him, and that he wants to serve and facilitate the sacred, inner marriage within me.

From Madron, we drove down to Marazion where we caught a little boat over to St. Michael's Mount. We walked up the "Pilgrim's Step", a very cobbled path way up to the west side of the Mount, to get as close as we could to the point where all four lines, Apollo, Athena, Michael and Mary, converge in a single spot on the Mount. Again, Nathascha offered us a meditation.

My experience was quite expansive and altering. I heard Nathascha say "sacred union" and "Sacred human" - not always sure which was which, but I knew upon hearing it that there was a message for me: As we each invite, embrace and embody the sacred, inner marriage within each of us, we become the "Sacred Human". This is the key to opening up and allowing our sacredness to come forth, to be an integrated and embodied aspect of who we each are.



Cloutie tree at Madron Well

I loved my day with Nathascha and Ba and getting to experience these energy lines with them. I so appreciated being given the opportunity to connect with my own inner experience and response to the energies at each site. Even better, what started out as a cloudy day cleared into a sunny and bright afternoon, and as we stood just above the point where all four lines converged on St. Michael's Mount, I marvelled as I looked west over the bay to Penwith and north up to Trencom Hill, knowing that I would continue my personal journey on the paths of western Cornwall over the following week.

Looking back, I now realize that I felt even more aware of the ancient and timeless energies of this land as I walked, and experienced an even deeper sense of belonging to the sacred energies of the land.

Thank you, Nathascha and Ba, for a truly wonderful, wonderful day and experience.

Much love to you both,

Sarah

During the Summer Solstice 2015, Parallel Community had the honour to welcome Jim Willis from the US who presented the workshop 'From Religion To Reality; One Ring To Bind Them all' in Marazion Community Centre. Below is Jim's story of our time together and, for all those who were not able to attend, a brief synopsis of his fascinating workshop!

From Religion to Reality: One Ring To Bind Them All

by Jim Willis

The evening before

John and Frances Watts had invited some of the core Parallel Community team over for a meet 'the new guy' and get together. What a wonderful evening! Good food and good company in good surroundings. I had a chance to meet some people who had become very important to me. Nathascha Heijen had helped set this whole thing up so I knew her from our email conversations. Through the magic of television Ba Miller had spent many evenings in our home with her husband Hamish, so meeting her was like meeting a TV star. Although Hamish is no longer with us in body, Ba makes up for our loss and hers by simply being Ba - effervescent and delightful. She's in her 80's and I never had her energy in all my life. What a wonderful person. The conversation went on late into the evening and we talked about things people just don't talk much about over here. We covered metaphysics, history, poetry, literature, religion, language and so much more. Frankly, it makes me despair, sometimes, about the quality of conversation I have experienced in my life even though I am a member of the clergy and have had the opportunity to sit and talk with some very learned people. To be honest, it seems to me as if most people today simply do not have the capacity to stick to a subject, let alone the broad learning needed to get very deep into anything. In short, people don't read any more. Without reading, and a lot of it, even intelligent people cannot obtain the broad knowledge needed to look deeply at anything. We think that because we can look stuff up on the Internet we can call ourselves knowledgeable. Rubbish! Facts do not equal wisdom.

Bumper sticker knowledge produces bumper sticker wisdom. Some things simply can't be understood and expressed in less than 1,000 characters. Hand-held devices produce hand-held wisdom. Putting things succinctly is important, to be sure. But understanding succinct, pithy statements takes breadth and depth of knowledge. "Aha!" only comes at the end, when a critical mass of reading and studying come together. And without the "Aha!" we are doomed to mediocrity.

What a joy it was to sit with a group of people and not talk about the weather!

The workshop

In the midst of experiences such as these it was easy to forget that the real purpose of my visit was still to come. I had a workshop on world religions to present. It was to be a three hour affair, held on the afternoon of the summer solstice, to be followed by a celebration at Ba Miller's home, Treviscoe. Three hours, of course, is not enough time to condense something that



used to take me a whole semester when I taught at the college level. But a semester wasn't enough time either. So here's a quick encapsulation.

The basic idea was to address three questions:--

- . What are we (as a species)?
- . Who are we (as individuals)?
- . How shall we then live?

To get at these questions we returned to the roots of seven major world religions, all formed within the last 5,000 years, each of which has since moved far afield from their founder's initial ideas. Each was formed around an exploration of one of these questions, and they come in pairs: Judaism/Hinduism, Buddhism/Christianity, Confucianism, Daoism/Islam.

To offer a kind of framework and to internalize the concepts involved, we linked these religions to the sevenfold human chakra system:

Chakra 7 Location: Crown, Transcendent Unity

Chakra 6 Location: "Third Eye," Mind/Body Union

Chakra 5 Location: Throat, Surrender

Chakra 4 Location: Heart, Love, Compassion

Chakra 3 Location: Belly, Individuality

Chakra 2 Location: Pelvis, Duality

Chakra 1: Location: Base , Physical Unity



Now try to picture the chakras in another form (above). Chakras 1 and 7 both become base chakras, but 1 is set in the material world, 2 is set in the spiritual world, and so on. What we wind up with is a mental picture of a human being with one foot in two different perception realms, one material, or physical, and the other spiritual, or metaphysical. The energy from these two realities combine to flow upward to form the human heart, unique in all of creation.

Judaism/Hinduism

Here is the interesting thing. Judaism and Hinduism both began at roughly the same time in history, some 5,000 years ago. Both addressed Question 1: "What are we (as a species)? Judaism based its answer on the material side of the illustration. In the energy of the base chakra we are born to be tribal and family oriented. But Judaism evolved to bring together all the gods of Animism into a single God, a Cosmic Unity. Moses is credited with hedging this religion round with laws and statutes that said, in effect, "We are all children of One Reality. We are God's chosen people. Act like it! Know ye not that ye are Gods?" Hinduism approached the problem from the other side of the diagram, the metaphysical. "God is a great, profound mystery (Brahman). Words cannot describe it. But you (Atman) are one with that mystery. "Thou art that!" This is totally counter-intuitive to our senses. Where we now divide and separate, these religions originally confronted the disorder and chaos of the world and declared it to be a profound unity, of which we are a part. They were not the first, of course. But they were the first of the patriarchal world religions to do so.

"What are we (as a species)?" We have one foot in the material world, like the animals and every other living thing, but we are able to contemplate and experience our divine nature as well. We are one with the Cosmos.

Buddhism/Christianity

Moving on to the next two chakras we confront two more religions that began within 500 years of each other. Both addressed Question 2: Who are we (as individuals)? Both recognized that we live in what I have come to call "The College of Duality." Our life is a constant recognition that for every up there is a down, for every hot, a cold. Man/Woman. Good/Bad. According to our senses, life comes at us in pairs of opposites. That's simply the way we perceive it. We cannot escape it. Buddhism taught that, here on the material plain of life, we have to accept the opposites and find the path, via what Buddha called the Middle Way, through to that point beyond which embraces them both. Where most western interpretations of religion tend to say we must accept the good and reject the evil, Buddha said that was not possible. Life consists of two sides of a coin. To reject that truth is silly.

Christianity said the same thing, but operating from the spiritual side of our diagram, it expressed it in a different way. Early Christians taught that both pairs of opposites are now combined, absorbed, into an inexpressible unity. "There is no more slave or free, Jew or Gentile, male or female. All are one in (the) Christos." They called it the hypostatic union, the virgin birth, God and Human, of one substance, earth and heaven, spirit and body.

"Who are we (as individuals)?" With one foot in the material world and one in the spiritual world, we experience both sides of the duality but, in reality, embrace them both. Whether we realize it or not, we are spirit and body, mind and matter, alive in multiple perception realities, in order to experience here in the material world that which we cannot totally experience there in the spiritual world. This is why I call it the College of Duality.

Confucianism, Daoism/Islam

Chakras 3 and 5 address Question 3: How shall we then live? Confucianism and Daoism, arising at the same time in history in the 5th century BC, approached the problem from two different directions. Confucianism taught that we need to work within the system, that the solution to human woes consisted in following the traditional infrastructure, but doing it better. We need better politicians, better family structures, better workers, better government. Daoism taught the complete opposite. The 'system' was the problem, not the solution. We needed to get rid of it and start over. Where Confucianists said, "My country, right or wrong," Daoists said, "Burn, baby, burn!"

The Chinese of that day, displaying great tolerance and understanding, adopted both philosophies. It was said that many became philosophical Buddhists, political Confucianists, and religious Daoists. This is third chakra energy at its best! But making the kinds of decisions that need to be made in this life is often difficult and fraught with peril. Islam, recognizing that truth, simply said that we must submit to our higher power and allow Allah to guide us through the labyrinth. The word "Muslim" means "to submit." Third chakra energy is about



individualism. Fifth chakra energy is about allowing spiritual energy to have its way, melding in our physical minds. Both speak of submission: one to material power and strength, one to spiritual guidance.

“How shall we then live?” As creatures of body and spirit we need to do what we can and trust Spirit for the rest. It’s as simple, and as complicated, as that.

The Human Heart

These energies, flowing from the material, physical world we experience through our senses and the spiritual, metaphysical world we intuit through our unconscious, merge together to form the human heart. In its physical form, the heart pumps blood to keep our material bodies going. In its metaphysical form, the heart is the seat of compassion and love: that which separates us and makes us human. When we seek compassion, we say, “Have a heart!” A loving person has “a good heart.” When we fall in love, our beloved has “captured our heart.” In short, if the human race is to survive we need to make an evolutionary leap forward. This leap needs to be a change of heart. (This was the theme of my book, *Faith, Trust & Belief: A Trilogy of the Spirit*.) This, then, is the essence of the workshop that I presented on Sunday. I was very gratified by the response. My approach to teaching is a bit cerebral. I am a left-brained academic and I don’t hide the fact. My gifts seem to be geared toward understanding about, rather than strictly experiencing, and I live for synthesis. Indeed, I believe the hope for humanity lies in marrying understanding to experience. The ancient ones experienced and intuited more than we do. Of that I’m certain. But after a long period during which we, as a species, developed



our intellectual, technological knowledge (while simultaneously disparaging their experience, sad to say!) we seem to be emerging into a new reality that combines the two sides of our brain. The Physical and the Metaphysical are merging in the human heart.

The Solstice Celebration

That evening I had been asked to participate in the summer solstice celebration at Treviscoe. What a delight! There was food, fun, good folks, learning and inspiration. My part was small. I just wanted to be there as part of the group. But even here, Spirit was at work. A few years ago a woman named Diana Rhodes had written a poem for the dedication of this very place. She recently passed on, but Nathascha had sent me a copy of the poem so I would have an idea of the spirit of the occasion. When I read it, I asked if it would be appropriate for me to set the poem to music. After receiving an affirmative reply I set out to do so. I soon discovered, however, that no matter how hard I tried, the only music that came to mind was an old melody that Bette Middler made popular years ago: ‘The Rose’. I just couldn’t get that tune out of my head. Eventually I gave in and decided to sing the poem to that melody. It lacked the original touch I wanted to provide, but nothing else seemed appropriate. It was only after I sang the song that evening that I began to understand that the whole situation had been quite out of my control. A woman stood up and recounted that a few years back Diana, while up in Wales, had taught the poem to a group of people gathered for a similar celebration. She had them sing it. And the melody she used was, of course, ‘The Rose’. It seemed that her Spirit had reached all the way across the Atlantic Ocean and compelled me to use this melody for her words. Needless to say, I was very moved. When it came time for the story session, I told the story of the *Wise Woman’s Quest* that serves as an Afterword in ‘*The Religion Book: Places, Prophets, Saints and Seers*’. What I did not tell them was that this story originated from a vivid dream I had upon completion of the text for the book. I had been feeling pretty proud of myself. The *Religion Book* is quite an accomplishment and summed up pretty much my whole religious study up to that point in my life.

After months of anticipation and preparation, just like that, Cornwall was now in the past. But I’ll never forget it. Good friends. Good experiences. Great scenery. Good times. New insight. A week to remember!