

A Gathering of the Contemplative Alliance

A Call to Inner Reflection for Societal Transformation

**Des Moines, Iowa
October 20-21, 2011**

A program of the Global Peace Initiative of Women

In November 2008 approximately 250 members of different contemplative communities, across religious traditions gathered in Aspen, Colorado in response to the urgent challenges facing the nation. Out of that meeting emerged the idea for a Contemplative Alliance. The goal was to explore how the wisdom and compassion born of deep contemplative practice could help shift the collective mindset of the country from one of separation and polarization to one of unity and common ground, so that we can address the pressing economic and environmental issues we face.

Over the last few decades many Americans have taken up in a serious fashion some form of meditative practice. For many, religious affiliation has become less important than the spiritual principles that are embedded in all great religious traditions. There is a shift underway in America that has not yet been adequately captured in the public space because it is subtle and inner. It is still in formation but it is emerging and it holds great significance for our future.

Many people now see the fragility of our political and economic structures. We are in crisis with no well articulated vision for what lies ahead. And yet there is much positive energy and action on the ground in communities across the nation. Despite what we may see and hear through the airwaves, a new spiritual movement is in formation. It is unifying and based on a deep sensitivity to the environment and to evolving our economic system into one that is sustainable and inclusive.

Three successive meetings of the Contemplative Alliance have been held and a multi-faith Steering Committee formed. The October meeting in Des Moines, Iowa, is designed as a deep listening and exchange -- to share thoughts on how we as a collective contemplative body of Americans can draw upon and bring forth the spiritual resources of our collective practices to help the country at this time. This will be the first of many listening circles around the nation.

Enclosed is the Vision Statement and list of Steering Committee members. We invite you join us in Des Moines and to become part of this movement.

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