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THE THIRD WAY

(Author's Note: This article was originally written in the early nineties for Magical Blend Magazine. To my knowledge, they never carried it. I found it in August of 2010 while searching through some papers. Although it is somewhat outdated, the principles and ideas it covers are even more relevant today than when written.)

P.M.H. Atwater, L.H.D., Ph.D. (Hon.) P. O. Box 7691 Charlottesville, VA 22906-7691

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Air troubles itself as light slashes the overhead sky vault. Boomers from deep pressure troughs ricochet back and forth against a flood of waterspeak, and I stand here, safe, dry, an observer to the extremes that play off what I had planned to be a summer solstice celebration. The phone has rung many times, jolting me to equal doses of horror and love, as did the Olympic Torch when it stopped near here earlier in the day. There have been so many world games, yet the fact that we host this year's Olympics leaves me teary-eyed with pride of country.

For a brief moment I catch news from someone's radio that homes have been lost, possessions destroyed, some cars half-submerged, power down. Yet where I am there is charmed space and I thank God once again for the special drain field that protects our small townhouse. That drain field and the way it was to be built filled the viewscreen of my mind one morning during meditation. We had trusted that the slope of land around us would be sufficient for drainage, but, well, our driveway was about to be paved, and, why not check with the contractor, just in case. "Never heard of such a drain field like that, lady," the man chortled, but he made real the meditation marvel anyway. Because of heaven's unexpected gift, our home and the land we share breath with can now embrace torrents of rain without crisis.

Years ago, when we lived in Williamsburg, Virginia, I was standing on the banks of the James at the very moment when, upriver, an older section of Richmond was being washed off the map. The day was bright with birdsong and soft grass caressed the wayside. In front of me, though, hardly at arms-length, huge trees, concrete abutments, debris of every sort imaginable, roiled and collided with thunderous force. I stood witness to the violence of Richmond's grief - from a place of peace.

Incidents such as this, where tragedy and blessing interweave the same "fabric," override the clock as I lost myself in a reverie unusual for me.

World War II imprinted my soul, for I remember so much of it - the air-raid warden who wouldn't allow a single match to be lit when sirens screamed, rituals of flattening cans so metal could be reclaimed, waiting lines blocks long for sugar and sheets, newsreels of Hitler banging his fist on the podium as masses of people burned in his ovens, making Q-tips for our soldiers while my mother rolled bandages, crying myself to school each day as I walked past homes with gold stars in their front windows - each star a memorial to a family member who had died in the war effort. One morning a particular house displayed six new gold stars. I

stopped when I saw the stars, then collapsed in wracking sobs. When the war ended it rained non-stop confetti and wadded-up newspaper balls, and every voice yelled and every horn honked. We had sacrificed much, and we had won. Tears still smear my face whenever I see the flag, and I vote, religiously.

As the horrors of war cast long shadows over my early years, my grandchildren now shutter to the horrors of peace - with names like Bosnia, Rwanda, Liberia, Sudan - and the streets and gutters of everytown as America wakes up to the ravages of a pop culture bereft of a history or a heart. Today, youngsters are sometimes more dangerous than adult criminals; Christianity and Islam more akin to Nazi Brown Shirts than to the original teachings of either Jesus or Mohammed. Who suffers most? Families.

One of those who telephoned was my husband, reporting in that he had been paid and that he will have an office to work from for another week. It seems our current crop of CEOs have forgotten what Henry Ford learned over a century ago: take care of your employees and they will take care of you; pay them enough so they can afford to buy what they produce, and they will be your best advertisement. Actually, downsizing is an exercise in emptiness unless management is included in the overhaul.

A daughter embroiled in divorce also phoned. Her pained voice detailed the notice she had just received - that custody of her children will be granted to their father, not because he is a better parent, but because he makes more money. The value of a mother's love, she was told, is no longer a consideration in court. The moment I hung up the receiver my other children rang in, each in turn, the lot of them recently moved to the San Jose area and happily so. "Mom," said one, "the earthquakes here are fun. You can roll with them once you figure out how."

Then my mother called, launching immediately into a tirade about ecologists and green-peace Easterners who think they know what's right for the West. When I visited my home state of Idaho last year, I was shocked to discover the level of hatred and rage that exists against anyone who calls themselves an environmentalist. Wear a tee-shirt with wolves on it, as I innocently did, and you face instant recrimination.

Mother's complaint isn't really about ecology. It's about the double standards being crammed down Westerner's throats: out-of-staters so rich they can come in, buy up huge tracks of land, fence off once public fishing streams, and turn striking vistas into private reserves where they can do as they wish whenever they please; while locals are forced to spend hundreds of thousands of dollars for land-use measures that make little sense and do nothing to solve the dilemma of accelerating drought and vanishing profits. The problem is one of power over, instead of power to.

Abuse doesn't correct abuse, nor is tradition necessarily appropriate.

I have come to view war and peace, tragedy and blessing, as but opposing reflections from the same "mirror," a continuum of energy that can be swayed by the choices we make. Thus, the "pendulum swing" between Creation's need for motion and rest can appear more as a clash between "who's on first" and "how much can we grab," than the natural flow of ups and downs. Still, we are not at the mercy of the forces which propel us - unless we think we are.

The litany of phone calls I received nudge my musings back to the other side of death's curtain where The Voice Like None Other said to me: "Test revelation. You are to do the research. One book for each death." This injunction fueled my decades of near-death research and paved the way for me to learn that every question has an answer, every disease a cure, and that the solutions we seek lie inside the problems we think we have. To reach them, we have to let go of our need to reach them.

Consciousness by its very nature enhances and expands once we stop, relax, listen, maybe take a walk around the block or plant a tree. As we change "scenery," our focus shifts and we become more receptive. That's all

It takes to clear the way for information or guidance or insight to slip into place within the corridors of our mind. The unsolvable can be solved when and if we do this, allow creativity to create.

I have noticed that we the people, when faced with life issues (the manifestation of our attitudes and opinions, thoughts and feelings), tend to react in one of three ways: (1) We play ostrich and pretend it away; (2) We label it an enemy or a devil and attack; or (3) We confront the situation squarely and honestly, search for the truth behind the appearance, and take decisive steps to initiate a constructive solution. The first way creates victims, the second victors (conquerors), and the third responsive and responsible participants in life, committed to growth and learning.

This third way of dealing with life issues in the way in-between duality - in-between victors and victims, good and evil, darkness and light. The Third Way requires mediation and diplomacy skills, mindful attention, plus a willingness to consider that which is appropriate as a greater priority than self-centered interests. It takes time to learn and patience, and it necessitates cooperation and compromise, but it is the only way of living that shows any promise for a future that is worthwhile. The Third Way upholds dignity and value and wholeness. . . and wholeness is spirituality made manifest.

When we live in accordance with The Third Way, there is less tension. A certain amount of tension is necessary for existence to exist; we wouldn't be here without it. Too much tension, though, depletes initiative and restricts growth. The point of balance is forgiveness, as forgiveness releases tension and promotes patience. We can never transcend what we resist because of tension. We need to let go, to grow. We need to forgive.

Since the only real geography is consciousness, it is not where we are but what we have become that makes the difference. We do not exist in the earthplane so much to transform ourselves as to experience ourselves. Once we have discovered our true nature and our true worth, once we have slipped in-between the bias of our own perceptual preferences, we automatically transform from the experience. . . we become who we really are.

Love defines this awakening, for love is the force which stirs the great thought of The One True Mind, and infuses us with the divinity of soul. This love, God's love, is our birthright and our salvation.

It is up to us to take the first step in the process of awakening. We do this by inviting God into our lives through prayer or by simple request, and then actively listening to the fullness and the power of God's silent reply.

The Third Way is expressed in nature as The Golden Mean. This mathematical formula celebrates the unique relationship between two unequal parts of a whole, where the small part stands in the same proportion to the large part as the large part stands to the whole. Experiments to record and measure energy wavelengths produced by people who are in love have all evidenced the same configuration - The Golden Mean.

My many probes into the meaning and the purpose of life have convinced me that we humans strive to see things as we want to see them, rather than as they really are. We comfort ourselves with whatever bias we prefer, especially if that bias is shared and supported by others. Some people even risk their lives to prevent the dissemination of any material that might challenge traditional or treasured beliefs. I find this behavior odd, for if people would simply relax into the silence of soul, if they would meditate, either actively or passively, they would uncover marvels beyond mind or measure. Just being able to glimpse "the big picture" can free one to reevaluate whatever was once taken for granted and initiate significant change.

As more and more people do this, alter and expand their consciousness, the stories they tell about what they encounter help us all to see ourselves and our world differently. A transformation of consciousness is a healing into wholeness, a giant "shove" toward higher octaves of brain function, personal integrity, and

creative problem solving. People who go through such a change awaken to the power of their inner self and to the strength of community, not as an excuse or an escape but as a way to renew and rebuild.

Among those who espouse this more enlightened version of wholeness, and who teach third-way principles, is Machaelle Small Wright. With the aid of her partner, Clarence Wright, she established the Perelandra Garden and the concept of "energy gardening." Year after year, her outdoor "laboratory" validates that planting seeds and bulbs as separate items or in random rows in a garden plot is counterproductive. For consistently better harvests one needs to plant members of a whole in ratio to the energy of the whole. When plants are kept in balance with each other, plus the environment, the energy configuration that results maintains its own health regardless of threatening diseases or pests or unexpected changes in the weather (an example of The Golden Mean in action).

This same energy configuration shows up in matters of bodily health. Example: If a woman needs more calcium, you do not just give her more calcium. You balance her nutrient levels in ratio to the needs of her entire bodymind complex - and you do this by lowering protein intake (which uses up calcium), increasing carbohydrates (which enhance calcium levels), while suggesting that she explore any mental or emotional concern she may feel about the support structures in her life (calcium relates to bones, which relates to support structures). By doing this, the integrity of the whole is respected and brought into balance.

A man I've met who is a proponent of balancing the many parts with the whole and of creating higher rates of integrity is Dean Black, Ph.D. He uses the phrase "contextual healing" to identify the system of wellness that is based upon the body's native intelligence to heal itself once the needs of the larger whole have been addressed.

Another is John L. McKnight, a colleg professor who for over twenty years has been preaching the gospel of community. He claims that groups like United Way and the various government social welfare programs that funnel money into "servicers" (people who go into communities "at risk" to label deficiencies) have it all wrong. "We must train people to go into these communities to identify assets and capacities of the local citizens, then mobilize and empower them to solve their own problems themselves. By focusing on what's right with a community, we can make a dynamic difference." When McNight studied thousands of projects in two hundred such communities across the United States, he came up with specific details of how this can be done, of how The Third Way can work in today's society.

The principle of The Golden Mean applies as well to economics, manufacturing, and politics, and it is why communism failed. Communism's enforced status quo violates the very balance life insists upon.

As rain retreats and light-strikes fade into the gray canvass of sky, I am mindful that what seems idealistic and lofty about The Third Way is actually misleading. Commonsense defines the principle. . . the willingness to live as if life mattered. Each member of my family, my neighbors and myself, benefit greatly when we live in this manner - when we listen more and take the time to center ourselves before we respond or reply.

Tomorrow I journey to Swannanoa and the University of Science and Philosophy, a spiritual center located atop Afton Mountain in Virginia's Blue Ridge. Unquestionably, the grounds of Swannanoa cradle a rare power spot where, according to dowzers, an atmospheric "downspout" of columnar energy has joined in union with a "water dome" beneath the soil's surface. This "marriage" of sky power (symbolically termed "male") and earth energy ("female") can be found at each sacred site across the planet that continues to be energetically active. Originally used by the wise as places for worship, healing, and the development of "special gifts," such sites have mostly been ignored in modern times or had churches built over them.

Wetness splashes as I walk toward our backyard forest, yet the land feels unnourished; leaftouch and rootworks, numb. I am caught by the sense that where I live, all around me, each fiber and pulsebeat knows

what is to happen tomorrow. Huge machines come then to grind the forest into sawdust as make-ready for eighty more households and a scheme of roadways and sidewalks. One world dies so another may live, tomorrow. In effect, my journey to Swannanoa is a power spot trade-off. That's because the "webbing," that invisible criss-cross of interconnecting light threads that permeates all matter, has awakened. Every spot is now a power spot.

Time is accelerating. The atomic clocks in Boulder, Colorado, made to keep perfect time without any influence save the atomic energy that powers them, have had to be reset upwards - nineteen times since 1972. The base frequency of earth or the Schumann resonance (earth's "heartbeat") has risen from long centuries of registry at around 7.8 cycles per second to a new reading of 9.6 cycles per second in just the last two years. While earth's pulse quickens, her magnetic field strength continues its 4,000-year slide. It's currently half of what it used to be. Some professionals point out that a combination such as this, the steady lessening of magnetic field strength with a sudden jump in vibratory rates, signals the beginning of a magnetic reversal or pole shift.

Whether they are right or wrong about their theory, this same combination of factors is a sign of something else: the earth becoming a giant initiation chamber. Literally, our wondrous blue marble is being enlivened. Holy ground is no longer confined to sacred sites. Just by staying where we are we can co-participate in our own evolution, while sharing in the acceleration of change engulfing our planet. We can worship, heal, develop our "special gifts," and be utterly transformed by the mere act of experiencing and expressing the fullness of who and what we are - Children of the Most High, Projections from The One Mind, Creations of God's Grace.

We do not have to go anywhere to be everywhere!

As the countdown continues to the millennial "gateway" and beyond, I find it fascinating that the "energy doors" of war and peace, tragedy and blessing, must be traversed before the last vestiges of "me first" meet the new glimmer of "we together." Philosophical musings like those I have been engaging in seem arrogant in times as these, for, survival is always primary; an empty belly and a broken heart still hurt.

Dying three times as I have, however, and each time experiencing the near-death phenomenon, has removed death's sting.

Yes, I respect the laws of existence and what it means to wear a body and produce a personality and engage in relationships. I thoroughly enjoy the scenic opportunities the earthworld provides, and accept my portion of stewardship for its continuance. I fill many of my moments with prayers for the earthbound and the heavenbound, as I affirm that our passage through the immense changes to come will be accomplished with the least amount of disruption possible. I share my light and my laughter, and I endeavor to reflect the goodness I see.

Yet survival is a moot point for me as I know death, and I know that death ends nothing but our attachments and the roles we play as actors and actresses on the stage our dreams fashion.

Death does not limit our experiences, only our concept of life does.

Tomorrow is forever today, in a spiral of love unending.

Darkness descends to the fire fly dance. Stars flicker. Bats take flight. I merge and become one with the fire flies and the stars and the bats and the soft embrace of darkness. Forest or sawdust, life or death, the song is the same.

What we see is determined by where we stand.

What we think is determined by how we feel.

What we do, by what we know.

Wind brushes my branches as I breathe in and breathe out the great breath of The One who created me.
Tomorrow. . . I breathe. . . again.

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Note: For a fuller treatment of third-way principles and the inner workings of creation and consciousness, refer to Atwater's book, *Future Memory* (Hampton Roads, 1999; earlier with Birch Lane Press, 1996).

References:

Machaelle Small Wright - Perelandra Center for Nature Research, P. O. Box 3603, Warrenton, VA 20188. Twenty-four-hour message phone (540) 937-2153. Ask for catalogue and activity schedule.

Dean Black, Ph.D.- Tapestry Press, P. O. Box 653, Springville, UT 84663. Business phone (801) 489-9432. For orders 1-800-333-4290. Request catalogue of his many books and tapes, plus his lecture schedule.

John L. McKnight - Northwestern University, 2040 Sheridan Road, Evanston, IL 60208. Department phone (708) 491-3518. He gives classes on the methods he has adapted. Please read: *The Careless Community: Community and Its Counterfeits*, Basic Books, New York City, 1995.

Swannanoa - University of Science and Philosophy, P. O. Box 520, Waynesboro, VA 22980. Founded by Walter and Lao Russell in 1949, the Palace itself has now reverted back to its original owners with the death of Lao. Scientific experiments based on Walter's cosmology produced a major breakthrough - the transmutation of nitrogen gas into helium-4 and lithium-5. This work continues, but with other scientists in charge than before. Educational opportunities once held at the Palace are still available online, and so are the various books and papers of Walter and Lao Russell. Scroll through www.philosophy.org for more information; contact usp@cosmiclight.org.

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