

An Open Letter from  
David Spangler



A personal view of Lorian  
and  
the spiritual work of our time

Lately I have been feeling a need to share more fully with those of you who are actively associating with Lorian my personal perspective on the spiritual work in which we are engaged. This is a crucial time in human history. We are all participating in it, and we each have an opportunity to make a difference. I know that from the context of our everyday lives, we may wonder just what each of us as individuals can do since the challenges are so planetary in scope. But from a spiritual point of view, each of us is important and can make a meaningful contribution.

By sharing my spiritual vision and my sense of the work to which I feel we are called, I hope also to indicate why I feel what Lorian is doing is important and thus to affirm why your support of and partnership with Lorian is vital.

## A Vision

Most people know through my writings that I left college in 1965, where I was pursuing a Bachelor of Science degree in biochemistry, to begin working as a lecturer and teacher of spirituality. I was joined in this endeavor by a non-physical being whom I named John and who became my partner for nearly thirty years of inner work. I have always said that I felt a calling to do this, and this is certainly true. But I have only rarely shared where this sense of calling came from.

Again, as I've indicated in my books and classes, I've experienced contact and communication with inner, non-physical worlds all my life. But with a few exceptions, this contact was unobtrusive throughout my childhood. It was there, but it wasn't a big deal. It did not direct or influence my life in any major way.

However, when I was eighteen and finishing high school, I had a series of visions and contacts that were very powerful and that were a precursor to the increased relationship with the inner worlds that began to unfold for me while in college. One vision in particular was persistent. It was a contact with a being of Light who said that a new form of spirituality and spiritual practice was emerging and that as a consequence, a new spiritual Order would also emerge different from anything that had gone before. I was charged with a responsibility to serve and enable, as far as I could, this emergent spirituality and the Order that would grow from it.

At that time, I was told only that the new spirituality would focus on the individual and the sacredness of personhood as well as on planetary service. I was shown a symbol that would be a key to this new spirituality. That symbol was a cup or chalice. As for the Order, I was told that it would be based on freedom and that it would have little or no outer organization—it was not an institution that one could join. Its organization would be primarily one of inner connection and spirit. It would serve its participants as a resource, enabling them to serve the world.

After I entered college, the intensity of these visions was replaced by the intensity of my academic work. But in 1965, the vision of an emergent spirituality returned, and I knew that it was time for me to answer the calling that it offered. It was then that I left school and began my career as a spiritual researcher and teacher.

## A Work

Over the past forty-one years, my work has been guided by the vision of emergent spirituality and by the four tenets of freedom, individual sacredness, emergence, and planetary service that arise from it. For me, participating in the creation of Lorian in 1974 with partners and colleagues who had been with me at the Findhorn Foundation community in Scotland was a consequence of following that vision from many years ago. I saw Lorian as being squarely in that tradition of emergent spirituality (and in their day, all spiritualities begin as emergent spiritualities, arising from the conditions and inspirations of their time). Though other members of Lorian have their own stories and reasons behind their involvement, we all share this sense of working with a spiritual impulse new to our time. Creating and developing Lorian as a vehicle for this impulse has been a work that several of us have been pursuing for the past thirty-two years.

As a result of my ongoing communication with inner beings and allies, I have a specific sense of an additional spiritual work to which I and others in Lorian feel called. I think of it as the Seven Problems and the Four Opportunities.

The Problems are:

- The Problem of Freedom
- The Problem of Sovereignty
- The Problem of the Transpersonal
- The Problem of Holism
- The Problem of Healing and Rehabilitation
- The Problem of Home
- The Problem of Incarnation

These seven problems are really aspects of one challenge facing humanity. They overlap and contribute to each other, creating in effect a systemic problem. I think of this overall as the challenge of Incarnation. I believe that the emergent spirituality of my teenage vision is intended to address this challenge, which is why in recent years I have come to call it “Incarnational Spirituality.”

The Opportunities are:

- The Opportunity of Emergence
- The Opportunity of the Commons
- The Opportunity of Alliance and Partnership
- The Opportunity of Sacredness and our Deep Humanity

Like the seven problems, these opportunities overlap and support each other as well. And also like the problems, I see these opportunities being addressed by an emergent incarnational spirituality, which is the work of Lorian.

Although I have not always identified them in such specific ways, these problems and opportunities have been a focus of my work since I left college forty-one years ago. They have been a background to the communications I have received from John and other inner plane beings over the years and are specific concerns of those particular beings whom I consider my sources and allies. It is evident to me that not all inner plane teachers and sources share this same vision of an emergent spirituality (much less of an incarnational spirituality) or identify the same problems and opportunities. But these have formed the constellation that has been my guiding light throughout my life. If there is such a thing as the work of David Spangler, these problems and opportunities, more

than any others, define it and give it its direction and thrust. They form the dimensions of my calling.

This is not the place to go into these problems and opportunities in depth. That would require a class or a book! But here is a brief summary of what I have learned and observed over the years.

## The Problem of Freedom

Freedom is more than a political, economic or social concept. It is the capacity of any consciousness to experience its own sacredness and its capacities for will, love and discerning choice. To turn towards the sacred and to embody it cannot be coerced in any way; it must be a free choice, a free act. Without freedom, humanity cannot evolve.

But freedom is not guaranteed. That is, it can be threatened and diminished, perhaps even lost. One way this can happen is through human action and fear, which can take innumerable forms from political and economic oppression to a feeling of a lack of safety. A second way is through the impact of competing visions of what a human being should be and of what we can evolve into. Freedom brings a heightened energy of creativity and power, and not all non-physical beings associated with the world believe humanity is ready or worthy of such evolution. A third way is through the inappropriate application of the idea of hierarchy and a failure in both the human and the inner worlds to fully appreciate the nature of humanity and the nature of incarnation. Incarnation can be seen by both physical and non-physical beings as a loss and an obstacle to freedom. The physical world can be seen by both incarnate and discarnate human beings as a prison or an illusion, or as a lower order that needs to be governed and guided by "higher" forces. An incarnational spirituality shows that this is not true and enables a person to know and express his or her unique identity and freedom of being, in this world as much as in any other. Instead of hierarchy, an incarnational spirituality offers a vision of an ecology of consciousness, of wholeness, and of a "co-archy," a state of mutual engagement, alliance, partnership, and creativity.

## The Problem of Sovereignty

Sovereignty is the right and capacity for self-rule and choice on the one hand and for commitment to the wellbeing of the whole—the sovereignty of the whole—on the other. It is intimately tied up with freedom, for without freedom there is no sovereignty. Sovereignty is the manifestation of our individuated divinity, the expression of our sacred Selfness or “I”. In ancient legends, sovereignty was granted to a ruler by the gods but it came with a price: that the ruler would also be the servant and husbandman of the land and the people. The challenge with modern images of sovereignty is that it focuses upon the individual and his or her rights to self-rule and independence and neglects the other side of the coin which is service. But this is not service as a duty; it is service as a living and loving gift of one’s sovereignty: the gift of one’s individual manifestation of sacredness to support and nourish all other manifestations of sacredness. If freedom is necessary for sovereignty, then sovereignty cannot rest until all are free and all are blessed.

Again, in today’s world there are many forces that would diminish our sovereignty. Some are deliberate, for they are threatened by individual power, freedom and creativity. Other such forces are systemic and part of the challenge of incarnation itself, particularly in our time when violence and fear generate psychic pollution to which we are all exposed and a consequent desire for conformity in the name of safety.

## The Problem of the Transpersonal

This problem is one of privileging the transpersonal above the personal and the inner, non-physical realms above the outer, physical world. It is the problem of a human conception of hierarchy projected onto states of beingness and consciousness that are essentially holistic, thus creating images of “higher” and “lower,” “better” and “worse.” Its effect is to see the transpersonal and the inner worlds as sources of all that is good, noble, holy and wise, while the physical, incarnate world is the opposite or worse, an obstruction to spirit. An effect of this problem is a tendency for incarnate individuals to give their sovereignty, freedom, and power

away to non-physical beings (or their human representatives in the form of priesthoods, gurus, and masters) simply because the latter are non-physical and therefore presumed to be “spiritual” and wise.

Oddly, this is not just a problem confined to the physical realms or to human imagination or expectation. The non-physical dimensions of the earth are actually of two types. One is what I would term the truly spiritual realms, the realms of soul and spirit, akin to our own souls. The other is part of the evolving substance of the earth, though it is a non-physical substance in this instance. In some ways, it is akin to the subconscious of the planet. Like our own personal subconscious, these dimensions can contain great insight, wisdom, creativity, and power, but they can also be influenced and shaped by the outer, “conscious” world and be a source of limitation and habit as well. The idea that the inner worlds are automatically “higher” than the physical and possess greater spiritual insight—or that the transpersonal is automatically better and wiser than the personal—can affect non-physical beings as well as physical ones, leading them to interfere with human activity in ways that even with the best motives represent an infringement on personal sovereignty.

The solution to this is not to avoid the inner worlds but to gain a greater understanding and appreciation both for the sacred nature of our own incarnations and for the nature of the inner worlds. By standing in our own incarnate spirituality, we can form co-creative partnerships and alliances with inner beings based on mutual respect and love that are as liberating to them as they can be for us. One reason in Lorian we teach how to form alliances with inner beings is in order to address this Problem of the Transpersonal.

We need to remember that being spiritual and in touch with the Sacred has nothing to do with being physical or non-physical, personal or transpersonal.

## The Problem of Holism

The problem of holism is the challenge of recognizing connections and interdependencies. It is the challenge of appreciating and stewarding ecologies. At a physical level this is an obvious planetary issue, as global warming and other

environmental problems threaten the stability of the existing circle of life which includes ourselves.

But this is also an issue of learning to think and act in terms of the larger patterns of wholeness and coherency—the holisms—of which we are contributing participants. One of these holisms is the incarnate realm itself, which includes inner and outer, non-physical and physical, spiritual and mundane aspects as part of a whole system. This is tied into the problem of the transpersonal, for the projection of a hierarchical structure onto the realms of spirit can prevent us from seeing the holism that is actually there.

A holism, as I use the term, is not just a way of organizing data to reveal interconnections. It is an energetic and spiritual condition, like the focal point of a camera. A focal point has no physical existence but it is a mathematical reality and relationship which if ignored causes any pictures we take to be blurry. A holism is a spiritual reality and relationship. It is that “focal place” within a system in which one is in touch with the organizing principle and power that holds the whole system together and gives it coherency—in effect, keeps it from being blurry. One way to look at the modern world is to say that it is definitely blurry and out of focus, as evidenced by the fear, the violence, and the disruption of the circle of life that we experience. An incarnational spirituality can help us rediscover the holism of planetary life, both physical and non-physical, in ways that can enable each of us to be “points of focus” in restoring the clarity of the world.

## The Problem of Healing and Rehabilitation

The natural world and humanity are in great need of healing at both a physical level and at a psychic, energetic level. The outer impact of violence and conflict are apparent in the condition of humanity and the environment. But there are inner impacts as well. Energetic and psychic pollution and toxicity are a real problem. The world needs to be rehabilitated in the old sense of that word, meaning to be “re-clothed.” Specifically, the energy aura of the world and of humanity needs to be healed and realigned so that we can begin to be clothed again in our natural spirit and sacredness and not in fear and violence. In Incarnational Spirituality, we term this World Work and energy hygiene. Many beneficent beings

within the non-physical dimensions perform this kind of work, but it can be assisted and its benefits magnified through co-creative alliances with incarnate individuals. After all, we are part of the psychic, energetic, and physical substance of the world; we have an “inside track” to its healing. We are part of the system, not constrained to act from outside it. This gives us a unique power in furthering the healing and rehabilitation of our world.

## The Problem of Home

One of the dominant cultural paradigms of the Western world is that of the Journey or the Quest. We see life as a journey, and we feel a need to have destinations and goals in order to have meaning in our personal lives. Spiritually, we are often described as being on a journey back to God, or we are on a journey of progress and evolution towards some higher state, often called “enlightenment.”

The challenge of this paradigm is that it can lead us to devalue the idea of home. Home becomes a place to travel from or to, rather than a place to be. We don’t have a sense of belonging or of being a part of something larger that doesn’t demand us to change or to go somewhere. We remain in a restless state. We feel we are not alright as we are. We can feel alienated.

One reason we act towards our world with such apparent disregard for its wellbeing and integrity is that we may not feel this is our home. We are displaced and seeking where we belong. This is another reason we may value the transpersonal and the inner worlds above the physical and the personal, since we may feel that those realms are our true home, to which we are trying to return. We see the world as illusion, a dream, a prison, a temporary abode from which we will be freed or awakened or delivered.

If we can’t move physically to explore and find new territory, then we give ourselves the illusion of movement and change through consumption. The driving force behind the consumer ideology is not necessarily to *have* but rather to *become*, to keep changing, to keep moving into new territory as defined by new goods and gadgets.

Over twenty years ago, my inner mentor, John, said that if steps were not taken, we—meaning the Western world—would find

ourselves threatened by the challenge of those whom he called “the homeless ones.” At the time, in the context of the conversation we were having, I took him to mean those in the Moslem world who had become refugees and had no sense of home. Certainly, in that context, his words have proven prophetic. But in a larger sense, to the degree that we ourselves feel homeless in ourselves—not part of this world or not part of our own incarnations, seeking what is always beyond us, always journeying for something better, something more, something else—we become the homeless ones whose actions threaten the earth.

An incarnational spirituality helps us revision ourselves as being at home in this world, at home in our humanity, at home in our bodies, at home in ourselves. One of its key concepts is that we don’t have to go anyplace else to be spiritual or to be close to the Sacred. There are still important journeys we can take and quests to explore, but not at the cost of losing our sense of belonging and of Home.

If by “home” I mean “being connected,” “belonging,” “being centered,” “being where my “I” is,” and so on, then home becomes a quality of being and a state of mind I can take with me anywhere; and if by “quest” I mean the effort to discover, to broaden, to grow, to build upon what I already have and already am, then questing becomes a statement of carrying my home out into the world to share it and to expand it.

We are trained through myth and drama to give value to things like “the hero’s journey” or the “Quest.” These are exciting adventures, filled with challenge and potential fulfillment. They structure our sense of narrative—the way we tell stories to each other and in particular how we tell our own story to ourselves—in a manner that suggests we need a problem, a conflict, and a journey to find meaning. If we don’t overcome something, we may not have a sense of value or that we have achieved anything.

I love viewing the hero’s journey in all its many varieties in movies, like Star Wars and Lord of the Rings. But as a spiritual concept or as a way of narrating and organizing my life, I find it potentially obstructive and devaluing. I don’t have to be a hero to have value in my life or to be sacred.

The idea of the hero’s journey, particularly as we have westernized and popularized it, is part of the problem of Home. The value of the housewife or househusband, or the mother or the

father, who simply tend the hearth fires and build the home and nurture the growth of individuals within the family, often is diminished. The important work, we feel or are told, is done elsewhere, where the quest is, where the heroes are. Home, if it has value at all, is what you come back to when the quest is won and the journey complete.

We can find echoes of this in esoteric traditions where various valuable spiritual paths are described, like the path of the mage, the alchemist, the initiate, or the priest, and then, almost as an afterthought, mention is made of the “path of the householder.” It’s as if we have to give some value to householding and hearthbuilding but the real spiritual work—the exciting stuff—is elsewhere. Building a family is sometimes seen as the stage we have to get through in order to graduate to the true spiritual work.

But this is such a profoundly diminished view of what home is. Home is the expression of the sacred skill of Holding. It’s not just a place; it’s a way of interacting with the world that is Grail-like. If we see Home only as our place of retreat and recreation, or as a starting point for the more meaningful experience of a Quest or Journey, and do not see it as a chalice of blessing we bring to others whom we meet daily, then we lose something; we lose a part of our sacredness.

## The Problem of Incarnation

The previous six problems can all be summed up in this one: the problem of incarnation. As an inner plane colleague once remarked, “The challenge of humanity is not that you are too incarnated and too much part of the earth; it’s that you’re not incarnated enough.”

If by incarnation we mean more than simple embodiment—the condition of having a physical body—then this statement makes sense. Incarnation is a condition of connectedness, engagement and participation. Our bodies are the manifestation and expression of our consciousnesses engaged with the material world . They enable us to be at home in this dimension as an expression of our being at home in the larger holisms of creation itself on all its levels, physical and non-physical.

A truly incarnated species would not be disconnected from

itself and from its world in ways that lead to violence and disruption of the cycles and circle of life. This is not a judgment per se against humanity; incarnation is not an easy task. I believe it can be fairly said that we are still learning what it means and how to do it. But it is a task from which much of our culture and religious or spiritual philosophies and stories lead us away. We are taught to get what we can because this material existence is all there is to life. Or we are taught that the world is just an illusion, a dream, or a place to pass through on the way to someplace better where the “good stuff” really is.

An incarnational spirituality leading to greater acts of incarnation on our parts is without question a challenge to ideas and expressions of human dominance and specialness. While on the one hand it definitely enhances the experience of our spiritual sovereignty—the presence of individuated sacredness and the power of the unique self—on the other hand, it requires us to express that sovereignty with awareness of, love for, and a willingness to serve the sovereignty—the sacredness—within all life. This challenges the whole premise of human dominance over nature.

My own personal vision is that incarnation *is* the spiritual work of our time. This is the work to which I was called as a teenager; it *is* the emergent spirituality for a humanity increasingly caught up in—and threatened by—a world of human imagination and purpose disconnected from the larger holism of incarnation embodied in the world around it. The other problems I have listed are really aspects of our inability to be fully incarnate. Their solution comes from learning how to correct this situation. It comes from learning how to incarnate, how to be a loving and connected participant in the wholeness of the world. The failure to do so may result in a world which in a worst case scenario becomes uninhabitable for any human incarnation at all.

These seven problems—or, if you prefer, the single problem of incarnation—are spiritual problems that have physical world consequences. They are certainly not the only problems humanity is facing. But they are critical because they address an underlying systemic problem. They represent the loss of freedom, the loss of sovereignty, the loss of a co-creative relationship with the inner worlds, the loss of a sense of connectedness and of the power of the

whole, the loss of health, and the loss of a sense of belonging and of caring for what we have. There are different ways in which these losses can be restored, but an incarnational spirituality addresses all of them at once.

Some of these problems are obvious, and other teachers have addressed them. Some of them are not so apparent. As far as I know, I have been unique in identifying some of these problems and in seeing all of them as a single, interrelated dysfunctional system. And as far as I know, I have been unique in seeing incarnation as a solution to this dysfunction. I cannot take credit for this, as my own insights have come through interaction with non-physical colleagues for whom these problems are very real and very concrete and who are seeking the help of humanity in correcting them. And my insights have been broadened and deepened by engagement with my physical colleagues as well.

We are not just faced with problems, though. The times in which we live are also presenting us with many opportunities. The four I list here are those to which my inner contacts have emphasized in particular.

## The Opportunity of Emergence

A blessing of our time is that it *is* a time of emergence, a time when a confluence of historical, technological, social, psychological, and spiritual conditions and energies exists that opens portals and pushes aside obstacles to allow newness to appear in our world. Yes, the older patterns, the traditions, and the habits of humanity are challenged, but they need to be as we move into a very different world than the one inhabited by our ancestors. This challenging of the familiar is not comfortable, but the presence of the opportunities it can bring is exciting and liberating.

It is a sign of our times that we can talk about and experience emergent spirituality, that we can conceive of change, imagine transformation, and seriously consider the unfoldment of a new world. The idea of the New Age signaled this, and while that term may have fallen afoul of images of mediocrity and narcissism, the idea is an important one. It speaks to our creative ability to shape our future and our capacity to discover a wisdom within us that can perform that shaping well.

We are blessed with resources for change. We are blessed that in our time the possibilities of creating a better world are not just wishful thinking but are real opportunities.

## The Opportunity of the Commons

The Commons is a shared space. It does not compete with nor eliminate private, individual space. However, it is also a space of responsibility that calls the individual into engagement and participation. I think of it as the space where *co-incarnation* takes place. It is a “co-ology.”

Incarnation is not a private venture. If, as Hillary Clinton wrote, it takes a village to raise a child, it takes a world to support an incarnation. None of us would be who we are—indeed, we would not even *be*—were it not for the contributions from parents, siblings, family, friends, colleagues, enemies, and humanity in general, or for the contributions from plants, animals, the land, the air, the water, or from the inner worlds, from spirit, from the World Soul, from our soul and others, and from the Sacred. We are all co-incarnating each other in one way or another.

This means that we are participating in a Commons, which is the condition within which co-incarnation, co-creativity, cooperation, and communication can take place. The Commons is the “Co-” place, the “co-archy,” the “co-ology”. But it is more than just a meeting place. In a New England village, the Commons was land that all participated in maintaining in good order and condition. It was supported by the individual and it supported the individual in return. The Commons is a condition of shared responsibility and a willingness to care for the needs and well-being of the others who also participate in the Commons. The Commons requires something from us. It is not a passive state.

In our time, we are privileged to be given many images of our planetary and human Commons, such as seeing the earth from space. Our growing understanding of the concepts of ecology make us more aware of the planet as our Commons.

But incarnation is a form of Commons as well, as I suggested above. It is not just something we do on our own; it is something we do together. The Commons is the balance to Sovereignty, and vice versa, and from a spiritual standpoint, the Commons embraces

the inner worlds and the sacred as well as the outer world we see everyday. The Commons is another term for the holism of life in which we all participate.

The opportunity in our time is that we can see and experience the reality of this planetary Commons, not to mention the immediate Commons that link us as individuals in our neighborhoods, towns, cities, and bioregions, for ourselves. It is not just an abstract idea. We see the consequences of ignoring it playing out before us, and we can learn how to participate in this Commons in new ways. In a sense, that is what incarnational spirituality is all about: becoming a contributing citizen to the Commons that unites us all, human and non-human, physical and non-physical.

The Opportunity of Alliance and Partnership

The idea of the Commons when extended towards the inner realms opens up new opportunities as well. Communicating and working with the inner worlds has always been part of my life, and it certainly is no new phenomenon in human history. Indeed, before I began working with John, I had several friends who were channels who regularly offered sessions and “readings” from non-physical beings. Those beings who communicated through my friends frequently took on a parental or teaching role, sometimes going so far as to refer to their listeners as “children.”

In many ways, this attitude of benign paternalism was an example of what I have described as the problem of the transpersonal. However, when John and I began working, he took a different approach. “I do not come as a teacher,” he said at the beginning, “but as a friend and as a partner.” In all our interactions, he encouraged me to have faith in my own sovereignty and wisdom so that we might engage with each other as equals. I learned from experience that there were many potential spiritual allies that were not available if they felt forced to enter into a paternal relationship in order to communicate with an incarnate person. (On the other hand, there were those who were all too happy to take on that role!) From John and others, I learned the power of forming alliances, which allowed energies to emerge and flow between us that would not be available if one of us felt inferior to or diminished by the other.

Over the years, I became aware that there was a deeper purpose behind our communications. That was to create conditions

between the physical and non-physical worlds that would enable us to experience and express the holism that lies behind this seeming division. I suppose this could be seen as analogous to building bridges of communication and awareness between one's conscious and unconscious minds so that one could benefit from the holism of mind that lies behind both.

This perspective, plus a general sense that the inner worlds are seeking a much closer partnership with incarnate human consciousness—as evidenced, for example, in the example of Findhorn in which a partnership between humans and the spirits of nature created a miraculous garden—led to Lorian teaching alliances as both a paradigm and a technique of interdimensional contact. To me this is an integral part of an incarnational spirituality, and it is an opportunity I feel that is available to us in this moment of history.

## The Opportunity of Sacredness and of our Deep Humanity

Within the first week of contacting and beginning to know John, he said that our work together would go much more easily if I had a practice of attunement to the Sacred. Such attunement, he assured me, was necessary if the work with the inner planes was to succeed, for the Sacred was at the foundation of forming alliances and was the bedrock in which the experience and power of sovereignty were rooted. This was my personal equivalent to the primary mission of Findhorn which was—and is—to teach attunement to the Sacred—the “still, small voice of the God Within.” Dorothy, Eileen, and Peter, the three founders of the Findhorn Foundation community, always considered this attunement to the Sacred the most important thing the community had to offer and saw it as the context that enabled the more dramatic contact with the Devas and Nature Spirits and the phenomena that followed from it.

In advising this, however, John did not attempt to instruct me about the nature of God. That was something I needed to discover for myself through developing an ongoing and ever-evolving, ever-deepening relationship with the Sacred. What he did do was to create a context in which I could experience the Sacred in a variety of ways, so that I did not constrict it to a single image or

definition.

What John provided was an opportunity for me to experience sacredness as the natural and essential nature of my incarnate self. I came to know that I did not have to go anywhere or become something different in order to know my own sacredness. The Sacred was not a goal to be achieved nor a presence whom only a few could know after an arduous spiritual quest. It was available to everyone as the very paper on which our lives were being written.

In my own work over the years—and as an essential component of Incarnational Spirituality, based on the idea that incarnation is itself a sacred and holy act—I have sought to extend to others the same opportunity to experience sacredness that John and other inner beings have extended to me. In so doing, I find it opens a portal to what I have come to call our “Deep Humanity.” This is that condition in which we experience and stand in the holism of our life, a holism that is beyond physical and non-physical, beyond personal and transpersonal, beyond us and them, me and you, beyond human and non-human. This is not exactly an experience of oneness with all things but rather a sense of our co-creative and co-incarnational power to participate in and with all things as partner, servant, lover, and recipient.

## Lorian and the Work of Incarnational Spirituality

I have written at some length here of my perception of the spiritual work of our time, at least as I have learned to perceive it. In one way or another, I have been addressing these problems and opportunities all my working life. But I have always known that I am not alone in this. When I had my original set of visions as a teenager about an emerging spirituality, I saw a vast company of people, both physical and non-physical, engaged with this process. I have always felt part of a team, though I have not always known who my teammates are.

One reason I feel I have been successful as a teacher over the years is that when I have spoken about these various issues, people feel a familiarity with what I am presenting, as if I am only remembering and speaking what they already know. And they are right. A person does not create an emergent spirituality out of whole

cloth. One learns to step aside and let what many of us know to be true come forward with as much clarity, honesty, and integrity as possible. We then come to that knowledge together both as something exciting in its newness and comforting in its familiarity. That is when we know that we are teammates.

The challenge of incarnation is a problem that no one person can solve, and an emergent incarnational spirituality is a practice that no one person can define or teach. Each of us from the wisdom and experience of our own incarnations has something to offer, a contribution to make. We are all essential to finding solutions—or as my friend William Bloom puts it in a new book of the same title, “Solutions.” It is and must be a group endeavor.

That is why Lorian is important. It is the seed of a growing group of people working together to serve this emergence. It is a unique institution in pursuing this particular emergent spirituality and addressing these particular problems. It cannot and does not claim to have all the answers, but it is a focal point for the emergence of a spiritual paradigm and energy that, as they blossom and are added to in the hearts and minds of many, can be a source of answers. No other organization to my knowledge is working with the inner worlds in the way Lorian is. No other is dealing with sovereignty or belonging or the nature of holisms, or spiritual development and practice, or World Work, or simply the larger issue of incarnation itself in the way Lorian is. Not that Lorian has the whole picture or all the answers; it doesn't. But it is fulfilling a particular calling of service as well as it can, and that needs to be clearly stated and affirmed.

Already, the co-creative addition from our growing faculty and friends of perspectives, insights, talents, and experiences different from my own has made Lorian's work with an emergent spirituality much richer and possessing greater depth than when I was working alone. The wide range of principles, practices, and skills already emerging to engage these seven problems and four opportunities, as well as others, can be seen in Lorian's Incarnational Mandala, a map of what Incarnational Spirituality covers at the moment.

But it's important to realize that this is an emergent spirituality, one that is still evolving and developing. A similar mandala drawn a year from now or two years from now could look very different. And hopefully it would reflect the informed and

attuned contributions of many more people than the eight or nine of us who are currently engaged with Lorian in a full-time or part-time basis as staff, Board, and faculty. For one thing, this emergent spirituality of incarnation cannot just flow through classes, no matter how good they may be. It must and will take on a wider life, communicating itself through the arts, through acts of service, and through means we may not now imagine or expect, in cooperation and partnership with other spiritual and service organizations who follow their own callings in seeking to heal and transform our world.

## An Apology and an Appeal

I am writing this letter in order to share my personal perception of a spiritual work unfolding in our time. I apologize for it being so long, but what I wanted to say cannot be conveyed in sound bites or simple phrases. It is a complex work, and it demands much from those who take it on. I doubt that it can be a popular work as it moves against many traditional currents in modern popular spirituality. It's not that it's for just a few. It's the heritage of all of us. But it demands thought and consideration and work from us, for it demands a shift in how we view and conduct ourselves as incarnate persons. Even when the words seem familiar, something we've always known, actually applying and embodying them takes work. And as we work with this emergent spirituality, we come to discover maybe it wasn't as familiar as we first thought.

If what I have written strikes a chord with you, then I ask for your help. The greatest help you can give is to stand in your own sovereignty, discover your sacredness, and be a force in your life that upholds and nourishes the processes of incarnation, both within yourself and around you. In this way, you can begin to solve the seven problems I have listed.

If you are not sure what to do next, that is why Lorian exists. We exist to serve this emergent spirituality of incarnation and to make it accessible. And to do so, we need your support, your blessings, your understanding, and your help in any way you can provide it. We are here to enable you to support yourself in your sovereignty, your freedom, your attunement, your sacredness, and your incarnation, so that you may be a blessing for yourself and for our world at this crucial time.

Thank you for reading this long letter and letting me speak my mind to you.

With blessings,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'David Spangler', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

David Spangler