

# Soul-Link, Inc.

*"... fostering an awareness of and response to the sacred in nature, human nature, and events of every day life."*

Volume III Issue 2  
Spring 2005

## SOUL LINK RETREAT

### *Religion:*

### *Help or Hindrance on the Spiritual Path?*

Religion, in one form or another, has been around as long as the human race. Its teachings, beliefs, rules, and rituals have nourished many of us from an early age. For some, this continues to be the case. For others, institutional religion has become problematic. Rather than furthering the development of their souls, religion has become prohibitive or even stifling. Our retreat will be an opportunity to share your thoughts and feelings on this topic, and to embrace wherever you happen to be in relation to religion.

**Date:** May 14, 2005

**Place:** First Congregational Church (Tejon & St. Vrain)

**Time:** 8:30 (registration), 9:00 - 2:30 (retreat)

**Cost:** \$20 pre-registration, \$25 at the door. Lunch included.

**Information:** 776-2672

### *The Purpose of Religion*

Many people whose lives are characterized by faith, integrity, and compassion, find little or no meaning in religion, religious practice, or church affiliation. "I am spiritual," they might say "but I'm not religious." Institutional religion can seem peripheral at best and hypocritical at worst in relation to living out our everyday attempts to be responsible, caring, spiritually attuned people.

Some of the most outspoken proponents of institutional religion seem to be more captive than free, more narrow than open, more dead than alive. But true religion is a life-giving phenomenon that is meant to nurture our souls. It is a dimension of the human experience that can speak to the heart of who we are and what life is all about. Because this is true, it is important to grapple with the truths proclaimed by religious institutions even when they cease to make sense to us; there is usually a baby in the bathwater.

*continued on page 2 . . .*

SOUL LINK  
Together on the Spiritual Path

#### **Soul-Link Board**

Marty Fernandez  
Jim Francek  
Eva McGeehan  
Patrick Smith  
Tom Stella



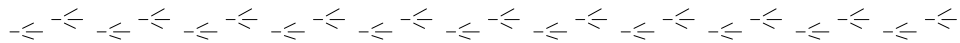
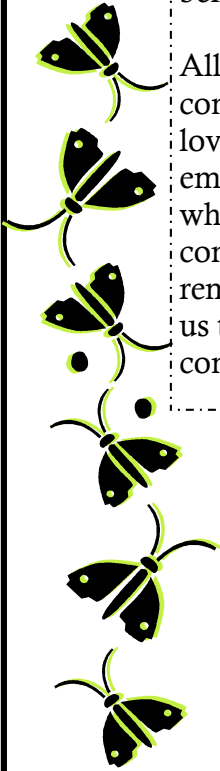
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[www.soullinkonline.org](http://www.soullinkonline.org)

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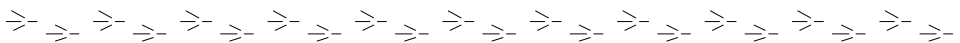
Since the focus of healthy religion, one that has not lost its spiritual moorings, is God understood as incarnate in nature and human nature, religious practices can have meaning only if they address the reality of our true self, our relationships, our everyday lives. Religion cannot, and need not be a Sabbath only affair whose purpose is to help us get through life unscathed by sin. It must be about passion more than piety, celebration not just obligation, life as well as liturgy. It must be a positive force, both alive and enlivening, that speaks to and about the mystery of our being, and the being of Mystery.

All of the great founders of religious movements have been both passionate and compassionate people. They loved what they believed and they lived what they loved. The spirit of their teachings, which have to do with the transcendent and the eminent, the spirit and the soul, heaven and earth, address the height and depth of what it means to be human. Religion that is not diluted by ecclesiastical or societal convention is a significant dimension of the human experience because it serves to remind us of, and give expression to what is most basic to life. It can rebind (re ligare) us to God understood as one with creation, to our true selves, and to the human community.



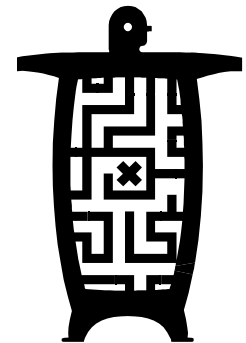
## *A Retreat with Thich Nhat Hanh*

Thay, as Nhat Hanh is called by his disciples, will lead a retreat for those who wish to live a more peaceful, relaxed, and mindful life. He is a Vietnamese Buddhist known for his simplicity, his involvement in the peace movement, and as a teacher of walking meditation. See "Coming Events" for details.



## *Walking the Labyrinth*

A labyrinth is a circuitous path leading to a central point. It is symbolic of life's journey with its twists and turns, and the spiritual, inward pilgrimage that brings us face-to-face with our sacred self. Lauren Artress, author of *Walking a Sacred Path: Rediscovering the Labyrinth as a Spiritual Tool*, will be leading a workshop on the labyrinth at First Christian Church – see "Coming Events" for details. There is a labyrinth at First Christian, one in the meditation garden (off of Cascade) at Penrose Hospital, and an indoor labyrinth at First Congregational Church.



## *Books, Books, Books*

### *Religion In Exile: A Spiritual Homecoming*

by Diarmuid O'Murchu, The Crossroad Publishing Co.

This book offers some penetrating and original insights into the changing and evolving spiritual awareness of our time, one that is rapidly outgrowing the time-honored but exhausted vision of formal religion. It is a disturbing but profoundly inspiring contribution to the evolving spiritual consciousness of our time.

### *Varieties of Religious Experience*

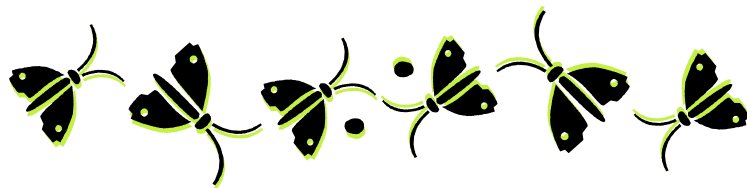
by William James, A Mentor Book

In this classic work, James studies such religious phenomenon as conversion, repentance, mysticism, saintliness, the hopes of reward and the fears of punishment. He brings to his study of religion the viewpoint of a philosopher and psychologist.

### *Thou Art That*

Edited by Eugene Kennedy, New World Library

This is the first volume in New World Library's Collected Works of Joseph Campbell. Here Campbell explores the common symbols of the Western religions. For Campbell, our central confusion lies between literal and metaphorical interpretations of religious stories. He re-examines the rightful function of Judeo-Christian symbols as keys to spiritual understanding and mystical revelation.



## *Coming Events*

May 1, Spiritual Support Group. (S.L. House, 2:00)  
All are welcome. Contact Sheilah Shapiro at 495-8111.

May 4, Soul Link Board Meeting (S.L. House, 5:30)

May 9, June 3, July 11, Aug. 8, Sept. 12 Potluck discussions (S.L. House 6:30)

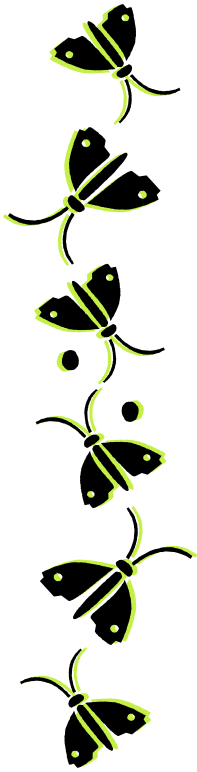
June 12, Film Group (S.L. House 2:00)  
Film: "Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter. . . And Spring"

June 17-18 A Labyrinth Workshop (First Christian Church— 633-8888 information/registration)

Aug. 29-Sept 3: Touching Peace, Finding True Freedom with Understanding and Love. A retreat with Thich Nhat Hanh (Estes Park Center for information [www.greenmountaincenter.org](http://www.greenmountaincenter.org); [mfmaster@vermontel.net](mailto:mfmaster@vermontel.net))



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## *Quote Corner*

"Primitive religions weren't believed, they were danced." *Anonymous*

"Randomness scares people. Religion is a way to explain randomness."  
*Fran Lebowitz*

"People never do evil so completely and cheerfully as when they do it  
from religious convictions." *Blaise Pascal*

"Religion is a way of walking, not a way of talking." *W. R. Inge*

"My wife was an atheist, and I was an agnostic. We couldn't agree on  
which religion not to bring our kids up in!" *Woody Allen*

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## *Religion: Help or Hindrance on the Spiritual Path*

*Saturday, May 14, 2005*

*Mail-In Registration Form—Clip and return with registration fee  
no later than May 9, 2005*

Please complete information below, and send it along with your payment of \$20.00 per person (includes lunch).

**Mail to:**

**SOUL-LINK, INC.**  
**2413 N. Cascade Ave.**  
**Colorado Springs, CO 80907**

Name(s) of person(s) attending \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number \_\_\_\_\_ Drop-ins are welcome the day of the retreat.

The registration fee "at the door" will be \$25.00 per person. We hope you will invite a friend to join us for this time of reflection and conversation. For more information, call 776-2672.