

Earth Child of Spiritual Democracy ©2019 Joseph Rael (Beautiful Painted Arrow)

From *Becoming Medicine: Pathways of Initiation into a Living Spirituality*  
David R. Kopacz & Joseph Rael (Beautiful Painted Arrow) – 2020

## Chapter 14

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# SPIRITUAL DEMOCRACY

Spiritual Democracy is a living connection, allowing the flow of spirituality through our lives, embracing the divinity in all creatures and the divinity of the Earth. Spiritual democracy is the way we treat others when we learn to see the divine in all things and that we, too, are part of divinity. It is a sacred way of being.

Periodically, we forget that we are divine as we live in this world of matter and go through its trials and travails. We, as individuals, as well as we as people, need periodic renewal at the font of spiritual democracy. To seek renewal is to be a Seeker, yet so many “religious” people are becoming fundamentalists.

Father Gerald Arbuckle has written a recent and very topical book about fundamentalism. He sees fundamentalists as “boundary-setters . . . marking themselves off from others.” This heightened distinction between self and others sets the scene for potential discrimination and violence. Arbuckle describes a current “global epidemic of fundamentalism both religious and plural” that is a “form of organized institutional or civic religious anger in reaction to secularization, political changes, and globalization; it often intimidates or coerces people to achieve its ends.” A strong aspect of fundamentalism, then, is a resistance to change and a desire to keep things as they are. I understand Joseph Rael’s teaching that “we do not exist” to mean that we only exist when we are changing, growing, and evolving. When we are striving to persist, we become fundamentalists trying to stop the flow of change, which is the flow of spirit. Arbuckle writes that we all as individuals and all cultures and countries have the propensity for fundamentalism. Bringing the lens of an anthropologist and theologian, he traces out the global epidemic of fundamentalism, including its manifestation in the United States as “Trumpism,” which he sees as built on “fostering fear, hatred, and violence.”<sup>1</sup>

Spiritual Democracy is the opposite of fundamentalism—it is about opening our hearts to others and seeking to act in such a way that it encourages others to open their hearts. Fundamentalism is idolatry—the

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<sup>1</sup> Gerald Arbuckle, *Fundamentalism At Home and Abroad: Analysis and Pastoral Responses*, 9, 28, 81.

worship of a fixed thing. Spiritual Democracy is about allowing ourselves to be shaped and continually reshaped by *Wah-Mah-Chi*, by *Breath-Matter-Movement*.

### *Joseph Rael on the soul and Religious Freedom*

Joseph called me on the winter solstice and left a voice mail while I was at work.

*"Hi Dave, how is your day going today? I know it is going well because it is going well for me.*

*"I was looking at your writings and there is the quote 'The Founding Faith, then, was not Christianity, and it was not secularism. It was religious liberty – a revolutionary formula for promoting faith by leaving it alone.'<sup>2</sup>*

*"Religious liberty happens to every single human baby child when the human being swallows and drinks the milk from its mother's breast at feeding time. Thus the American soul is in the making stage.*

*"What I am saying is we have to start at the foundation of what makes a human being to grow up in that religious liberty. That is the only way it is going to work if we are really going to follow the real way that we become individuals. If we don't start at the beginning. . . .*

*"Where I learned this was from a nun who was teaching religion on the islands. She came and visited me and spoke with me in Pennsylvania. She said, 'Why did the Indians accept Christianity so easily?'*

*"I said, 'Just listen when you drink water, like take that bottle of water over there and drink and listen to the sound it makes as you swallow. You will hear the sound soul with every swallow.'*

*"Her eyes got real big and she said, 'So you already knew about the soul and the teaching of Christianity?'*

*"So I am telling you now as I am reading your paper that the idea of religious freedom was already being educated through the sound, and the being and vibration of every single swallow of swallowing-ness every time the baby was drinking its mother's milk. This is my contribution to the idea of spiritual democracy and religious freedom."*

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<sup>2</sup> Waldman, *Founding Faith*, xvi.

## *Spiritual Democracy as Heart Medicine*

Steven Herrmann has written a book on *Spiritual Democracy*, which is where I came across this term. Herrmann, in turn, found the term in the work of Walt Whitman (1819–1892), the American ecstatic poet. The way Herrmann describes Spiritual Democracy reminds me of the path of the hero's journey that begins in separation and ends in re-union. We, as a country, went through such a journey in the Civil War. We separated from our brothers and sisters and saw them as enemies and then went through the Reconstruction of re-uniting the country. As a country, these old fault lines are active again in present day, sending earthquakes and aftershocks across our land and through our people, threatening to divide us once again from each other. "We as individuals and as humanity suffer from a lack of connection to other people . . . to the point where our very survival as a species is in question," Herrmann writes. The symptoms of this lack of connection are poverty, war, inequality and environmental degradation. The cure is Spiritual Democracy.

Adopting the big idea of Spiritual Democracy, the realization of oneness of humanity with the universe and all its forces, can help people feel joy, peace, and interconnectedness on an individual basis. It can also inspire us to undertake sacred activism, the channeling of such forces into callings that are compassionate, just, and of equitable heart and conscience, and give us some tools to start solving some of these grave global problems, while uniting people on the planet.<sup>3</sup>

We grow through recognizing our oneness. *Becoming Medicine* means taking the hero's journey from separation to union. This is what Herrmann says Spiritual Democracy consists of, "the realization of oneness of humanity with the universe." When we see ourselves in relation and as part of other people and the earth, we act in a different way than when we see ourselves as separate, isolated beings.

The entire spiritual journey is simply a continual struggle to return to our hearts. The heart, like the medicine wheel, holds four sacred chambers, and yet it is one greater whole that gives us our lifeblood and rejuvenates the "wretched, tired and poor" blood of our veins and transforms it into the vibrant vitality of our arteries. Every beat of our heart says *E pluribus unum* — out of many, one. This is heart medicine that is the goal of *becoming*

3 Steven Herrmann, *Spiritual Democracy: The Wisdom of Early American Visionaries for the Journey Forward*, xiii.

*medicine*. Herrmann speaks of the medicine of Spiritual Democracy:

Whitman's role as a poet in helping to spread Spiritual Democracy as a universal medicine might help us alleviate at least some of our suffering during a time of political, economic, and religious upheaval. His vision of religious equality for women and men is a living "seed" of "becoming" in the general populace that we would be wise to cultivate into a new myth for our times..... If Spiritual Democracy as Whitman envisioned is truly to "become the world," then the peace at the center of such a vision must radiate outward to speed up the process of bringing it about through sacred actions, day by day, minute by minute, by each of us and all of us. For ultimately, everything we do in time is patterned by peace, friendship, and brotherhood in Whitman's vision, and it can be realized by anyone in the perpetual now.<sup>4</sup>

There are multiple correspondences between how Herrmann describes spiritual democracy with our work in this book. Spiritual democracy and becoming medicine are similar *seeds of becoming* for growing peace and these are found through a shamanic journey.

### *The Inner Journey of the Democratic Shaman*

Herrmann writes about Whitman as a shaman and a prophet who goes through his own spiritual journey, returns, and then speaks and sings to share with others his visions. Herrmann describes Whitman's view that the spiritual is not necessarily found in religions or dogmas, but rather is found in an "overarching 'consciousness,' a spiritual conscience that is unitary, latent in every person."<sup>5</sup>

The search for this inner light is the journey of the shaman, the mystic, and visionary. The shaman is the vehicle that connects the different worlds of ordinary and non-ordinary reality, the known and the unknown, matter and spirit. Herrmann writes that his central premise of his book, *Walt Whitman: Shamanism, Spiritual Democracy, and the World Soul*, "is that we can only know what shamanism is through direct living experience and it is the shamanic archetype that gives Whitman his medicine-power to mediate between the two worlds of existence, the known and the unknown, the seen and the unseen."<sup>6</sup>

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4 Herrmann, 20.

5 Herrmann, xvii.

6 Herrmann, *Walt Whitman: Shamanism, Spiritual Democracy, and the World Soul*, xxi.

The shaman's ability to move backward and forward in time also allows him or her to return all the way back to Source, back to the Garden of Paradise, the beginning of time – and then to connect the present with the beginning of creation, which leads to a re-birth by connecting a current of life energy, leading to a re-birth and re-discovery of who we are and what our mission is here. Mircea Eliade wrote that the shaman “abolishes the present human condition and, for a time being, recovers the situation as it was in the beginning. Friendship with animals, knowledge of their language, transformation into an animal are so many signs that the shaman has re-established the ‘paradisaal’ situation lost at the dawn of time.”<sup>7</sup>

Herrmann's view of Whitman as a prophet of democracy and a shaman of bodily and spiritual ecstasy draws on Whitman's use of incantatory rhythms in his poems leading to altered states of consciousness in which the ecstatic bliss of Oneness is experienced. His words are sound-medicine. Herrmann writes about the American Indian influence on Whitman's work and references several books on Whitman that pick up this theme.<sup>8</sup> In moving deeply into one's self, one finds a relationship to the land and to all who live upon it. Herrmann sees outer “sacred activism”<sup>9</sup> as beginning with the inner journey of finding the star within us that, like walking the medicine wheel, can orient and guide us on our inner and outer journeys. Following the inner journey to the Source of Oneness comes the outer journey of sacred activism.

Each of us, it seems, is guided by such a star and it varies in its fixed orbits, in different fields of sacred action, in every person's life. A central existential task is to discover what that star is and to make its light, the inner fire of human love, burn brightly against the darkness, as a calling to live by Sacred activism is a spiritual practice for bringing about planetary changes through a receptivity to, and response to, experiences of a mysterious energy, force, or power, which move through the human body, psyche, and entire cosmos in an effort to bring about alterations of consciousness, cultural transformation, and ultimately: world peace.<sup>10</sup>

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7 Mircea Eliade, *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*, 99.

8 Notably George Hutchinson's *The Ecstatic Whitman: Literary Shamanism & the Crisis of Union*, James Nolan's *Poet-Chief: The Native American Poetics of Walt Whitman and Pablo Neruda*, and Ed Folsom's *Walt Whitman's Native Representations*, Herrmann, 51.

9 He credits Andrew Harvey for originating this term.

10 Herrmann, *Spiritual Democracy*, xvii–xviii.

After the American Civil War ended there was a time of coming together after violent separation. It was a time of coming full circle back to the founding ideas of American democracy. Whitman served as a nurse on the front for the Union. He was not a fighter in the physical world, more of a lover and a poet. He saw up-close the wounds of war and he then sought to heal them through his vision of a world at peace. He realized this peace had to be found within people – unifying body and spirit, as well as in the outer world – unifying all humans and all of creation in brotherhood and sisterhood.

### *The American Soul*

Jacob Needleman wrote *The American Soul: Rediscovering the Wisdom of the Founders* (2003). As a philosopher, he speaks of the “idea of America” and the “inner meaning of democracy.” He feels that there is an urgent need to rediscover the power of the realm of ideas and particularly the idea of US America<sup>11</sup> and the idea of democracy because he sees a nation that is losing touch with its philosophical and spiritual roots through an over-emphasis on individualism and materialism. He writes that the root of materialism “is a poverty of ideas about the inner and outer world. . . . Materialism is a disease of the mind starved for ideas . . . the neurosis of materialism leads us into despair.”<sup>12</sup> Similar to the idea of *Becoming Medicine*, Needleman, sees the interconnection of the individual search for spirit and meaning with the outer activism of being good to our brothers and sisters of the world. Needleman writes, “Although our inner nature is cosmic, our finite life is on earth; our duties are to both the immortal presence within and, while on earth, to our temporary role in the social order. Our task is simultaneous inner freedom and full outer engagement.”

The path of *becoming medicine* is this simultaneous cultivation of inner depth and outer engagement. Medicine must be prepared in a loving and sacred manner, but then it must be given wherever there is pain and suffering. Needleman sees materialism and excess individualism as a social disease and he sees the inward search for inner democracy as leading to the treatment of social ills through outer democracy. “To a significant extent, democracy in its specifically American form was created to allow men and

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11 As we get into this section, several authors speak of “America” as a term referring to people of the United States of America. This term is imprecise it could also refer to all the inhabitants of North and South America. We will use the terms “US America” or “US American,” when possible.

12 Needleman, 6–7.

women to seek their own higher principle within themselves.”<sup>13</sup>

Needleman speaks of the “promise” and the “crime of America.” The *promise* is the *idea of the United States of America*, a second, inner, spiritual history “that flows from the efforts of more inwardly developed men and women to introduce truth and wisdom into the life of humanity.”<sup>14</sup> This “second democracy,” Needleman describes as “the democracy that actually tries to live inwardly according to the ideals of self-determination, liberty of thought and conscience, respect for the selfhood of one’s neighbor.”<sup>15</sup> Needleman distinguishes “individualism” from “authentic individuality.” This is different than someone being a selfish person and simply gratifying their material desires. US American independence and individuality requires an outer form of democracy that protects the right of individuals to pursue the inner search. The inner search, in turn, provides the idealism to maintain the outer democracy. Inner democracy without outer democracy is isolated spiritual materialism – building up spiritual experiences without social engagement, a criticism often made of new age pursuits. Outer democracy without the development of inner democracy leads to the freedom to exploit others for one’s own gratification – this is what Needleman refers to as the “crime of America.” He examines this through our history in relation to slavery and the oppression and genocide of the American Indians.<sup>16</sup> Needleman balances the call for inner connection to the “American soul” with bearing witness to the times when we have failed to live up to our ideals and have created political structures of oppression that deny freedom to others.

Our ancestors committed crimes in founding the United States of America. We have great ideals, but a tainted record of implementing these ideals. Joseph Rael tells us that we are doing things now for those who came before us. Healing is not just of this moment in time, but stretches backwards and forwards in time. Once blood is spilled it requires some kind of ceremony to bring life back into balance. We have not sufficiently done that in the United States. The genocide we perpetrated against Native Americans and the enslavement of Africans are pushed down

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13 *Ibid.*, 9.

14 *Ibid.*, 15.

15 *Ibid.*, 18.

16 Further reading on the American Genocide can be found in Dee Brown’s *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee*, Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz’s *An Indigenous Peoples’ History of the United States*, and in Charles Mann’s 1491 and 1493.

into our collective cultural shadow. Psychology tells us that if we do not face our darkness we will act it out, the same is true for us as a people as it is for each of us as a person. Joseph Rael has seen, in his lifetime, his people being second-class citizens, not being able to vote, not being able to practice their religion, and he himself went to boarding school. US American democracy is still an idea that has not been fully realized, yet that does not mean we should stop trying. Our motto is *E pluribus unum*, "out of many, one." We accept great diversity and our founders envisioned a unification of people coming together through the best of human ideals, yet there are contemporary forces seeking homogenization through exclusion of the "other," who in reality is actually our brother and sister, and in a very real way is even our very self. Unification through the inner recognition of our unity despite outer differences is the *idea* of US American democracy, unification through force and exclusion of "otherness" is totalitarian fascism.

But the question that now needs to be asked concerns the interior, human meaning of this fundamental goal of democracy and the inner as well as the outer conditions that are necessary for its realization. Can there be any real and enduring relationship between disparate peoples and nations unless there also takes place within the soul of the individual human being a similar movement of relationship between the disparate parts of oneself? Can there be an American nation unless there also exists within oneself a unified *American soul*?<sup>17</sup>

Needleman states the purpose of his book, "is to call for the return of the inner meaning of America to our hearts and minds." He sees democracy as a kind of medicine that can heal the individual as well as the collective through its realization and application. He writes that "when it is forgotten that the world is what it is because human beings are what they are, and that nothing essential in human life can be changed for the better without first attending to the inner disharmony, then, inevitably, there arises the dominance of 'politics,' leading to violence and war in all its many forms."<sup>18</sup> Outer war is thus a consequence of inner war. Inner war can only be healed by searching out the inner medicine. One then becomes medicine and must apply oneself to the outer war in order to bring about outer peace.

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<sup>17</sup> Needleman, 25–26.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 27.

Needleman discusses a Founding Father not often recognized in school- book history – Hiawatha, and the founding of the Great Law of Peace that brought together the five Northeastern tribes of the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) Confederacy.<sup>19</sup>

### *Bringing the New Mind of the Great Peace*

The creation story begins with twin brothers, whose Anglicized names are “He Grasps the Sky With Both Hands” and “He Who is Crystal Ice.” When He Grasps the Sky With Both Hands is born, he looks around creation and says “I know from where I come, and that is the sky . . . I will not forget that. I will continue to grasp with both hands the place from where I come.” When He Who is Crystal Ice is born, however, he says “I am not thinking about the place from where I came . . . It is sufficient that my mind is satisfied with having arrived at this place . . . This place will become exceedingly delightful and amusing to the mind.” Needleman comments that “Few legends of the world’s traditions make it so clear that the real root of all that we call evil is primal forgetfulness of our Selves.”

He Grasps the Sky With Both Hands creates humans and puts a portion of himself in them, giving them his own mind, his own blood, his own power, and his own breath. Before withdrawing from the earth, He Grasps the Sky spoke to the human beings and gave them their original instructions.

Do not ever forget this, that in the days and nights to come a grave thing will come to pass if ever you forget peace. You will not continue

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19 Needleman lists his source as an unpublished manuscript by Maril Rianna Blanchard as well as J.N.B. Hewitt’s *Iroquoian Cosmology*, second part. His sources for the story of the founding of the Iroquoian Confederacy are Paul Wallace’s *White Roots of Peace* and personal communication with Chief Oren Lyons. See endnote 94, p. 368 in Needleman.

Needleman states that he has greatly condensed this story (which runs 26 pages) in his book. We have further condensed this story. Our apologies to any who feel this is not our story to tell, however it is so relevant to the topic of the book and it is in the public domain and may have influenced the foundational ideas of US American democracy. It is a beautiful story and we hope we have offered it with proper reverence and acknowledgement. We also hope to correct the recent use of “Hiawatha” as a racial slur, as it is a name that holds great beauty and meaning for spiritual democracy.

The Hiawatha that Needleman tells of is different than the one that Longfellow wrote about. Longfellow’s poem also later influenced Jung’s understanding of the indigenous people of what is now the United States. See “Hiawatha,” *Wikipedia* for more discussion on this confusion. There is also a recent publication by Kayanesenh Paul Williams for further reference, *Kayanerenkó:wa: The Great Law of Peace* (2018).

to live if you forget peace. The time will come to pass when there will be great divisions between the minds of human beings, and there will be nothing but contentions, and the people will forget happiness, peace, and me. . . . Then I will come again.<sup>20</sup>

The time came to pass that the human beings forgot peace. War, discord, separation, strife, suspiciousness, materialism took root. True to his prophesy, *He Grasps the Sky With Both Hands* intervenes by sending his emissary, Great Peacemaker. Needleman writes that “we are thus given to understand peace not as something passive, not as a mere absence of conflict, but as a force that can harmonize the actions and impulses of human life in all their multiplicity and opposition to each other. Peace – a unifying energy that paradoxically also allows each element to flourish in its individuality.” The force of peace is also known as “the new mind” which Great Peacemaker brings to all peoples. This new mind “shows them the real essence of their ideals of what it means to be human beings and to care for each other. This is peace as the field of life in all its vibrancy, peace as the call to serve what is far greater than oneself.”<sup>21</sup> However there is one who resists the new mind of peace, Atotarho, a wizard and chief of the Onondagas.

Great Peacemaker travels, meeting all the tribes and invites them to take into their hearts the new mind of peace. However, Atotarho resists and does not join. Before Great Peacemaker can face this last resistance, he seeks out the tent of a certain woman who lives along the “warrior’s path” that travels east to west. Needleman states that it “is through the mediation of a woman that the mission of peace takes form in the world, and in fact it is women’s power of judgment that will ultimately determine the leadership of the Iroquois Confederacy.” When Great Peacemaker meets this woman, she asks who he is. Great Peacemaker replies, “I carry the mind of the Life of God and my message will bring an end to the wars between east and west.” He then gives the vision of the Longhouse, where “All shall live as one house-hold under one chief mother.” Then he tells the woman, “Thinking shall replace killing.” The woman sees the goodness of his message and says, “I take hold of it. I embrace it.”

Great Peacemaker then says that women will be in charge of the Longhouse and that they will choose the chiefs because “you, my Mother,

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<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 204, 210–11.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 214–15.

were the first to truly grasp and accept the message of the peace that is power." He then gives her a new name, *Jigonhsasee*, which means New Face, and he tells her, "Out of the womb of the New Mind the nations will be born anew."<sup>22</sup> She asks where he will go next, and Great Peacemaker says he will head east, toward the sunrise. Shocked, she warns him that there is a great danger that way, there is a house of a man who eats humans. Great Peacemaker takes his leave and New Face spreads the word to all the warriors that she feeds as they travel the warrior's path in front of her house.

Great Peacemaker comes to the home of He Who Eats Humans, who turns out to be none other than Hiawatha, who lives in a state of human degradation, eating his fellow human beings. Great Peacemaker climbs on the roof and looks down into Hiawatha's home, seeing the fire pit and the kettle where he cooks the humans. Hiawatha returns home carrying a human body and puts the kettle on the fire.

Just at that moment, the man in the house bends over the kettle and sees not only the body of the human being he has killed and is about to eat, but also a face looking up at him. He is amazed. It is the Great Peacemaker's face, reflected in the water, that is looking up at him, but the man thinks it is his own face! And there was in this face such wisdom and strength as he had never seen before nor ever dreamed that he possessed. . . .

"This is a wondrous thing," he says to himself. "Such a thing has never happened before as long as I have lived in this house. I did not know I was like that. It was a great man who looked at me out of the kettle."

He goes over to the kettle to look again, and there again is the face of a great man looking up at him.

"It is true," he says. "It is my own face in which I see wisdom and righteousness and strength. It is not the face of a man who eats humans." And he takes the kettle out of the house and empties it by the roots of an upturned tree.

"No more will I do this thing that I have done for so long. No longer will I kill humans and eat their flesh."

The man falls silent and then speaks again to himself. His voice is breaking with remorse.

"But that is not enough. The mind inside is more difficult to change. I cannot escape the suffering I have caused. I cannot  
bring back the

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<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 218, 221.

dead. I cannot erase the cries of the women and children.”

This beautiful passage reminds us of Joseph Rael’s teaching that there is a place of held-back goodness within all our hearts. No matter how far astray we go, no matter how lost in darkness we become, there is the possibility of having mirrored to us our own goodness. Hiawatha seeing the reflection of Great Peacemaker superimposed over his own face comes to recognize his own inner goodness. Needleman comments on this further:

Here we feel the scale of this legend and of the source from which it has come. For here the legend speaks of a human crime for which no ordinary action can atone. Here the story may well be heard as speaking to our own remorse as we see in a clear light what has been done to an entire people. And here the tale echoes the constitutive legend of our own culture – the crime for which no ordinary action can atone, a level of self-remorse which demands of man an action of an entirely new quality. And for this action the man needs now to turn to the greatness he has seen in himself.<sup>23</sup>

Great Peacemaker comes down from the roof and consoles Hiawatha who is crying out of remorse for the greatness he has seen reflected within him and the terrible nature of his deeds. Great Peacemaker says,

The New Mind has come to you . . . and you are miserable because the New Mind does not live at ease with old memories . . . Now you will work with me to bring justice and peace to those places where you have done injury to man. We will work together to bring to the earth the new idea of the peace that is power. Such is the work given to man by the Creator of Life.<sup>24</sup>

Great Peacemaker gives to Hiawatha the *Kayanerenhkowa*, the Great Law of Peace. Hiawatha says, “I take hold, I grasp it. Now what work is there for us to do?” Great Peacemaker tells Hiawatha that he must take this New Mind to the evil wizard, Atotarho. Great Peacemaker describes Atotarho as a man of great power who kills and eats men who approach him. He has a twisted body and his mind is twisted and his hair is a mass of snakes. However, he is one of Hiawatha’s people and the Great Peace cannot manifest without Atotarho. Hiawatha is also a man who has eaten other humans and he can relate to the twisted mind of Atotarho, however

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<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 223–24.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 224.

now he has a New Mind, a mind of peace that he can bring to him. Great Peacemaker says that although Hiawatha must go and speak to Atotarho, "He will not listen to you. He will drive you away. But you will go to him again and again and at last you will prevail — *if you do not give up.*" Again, Great Peacemaker whispers, "*Do not give up.*" He then gives Hiawatha his name, "You will be called Hiawatha, He Who Combs for you will comb the snakes out of Atotarho's hair."<sup>25</sup>

Hiawatha goes to Atotarho, and sure enough, he is rejected and Atotarho shrieks his name, "Hiawatha-a-a-a-a!" He is overcome by a sense of foreboding. His three daughters fall ill and die. Hiawatha loses heart and says, "Because of this thing that has befallen me . . . I can no longer do the work of the Good Mind." The people seek to comfort him in his despair, but suddenly a strange great bird falls from the sky, startling the people. The crowd panics and running accidentally tramples Hiawatha's wife to death. Hiawatha further despairs, he shuns human beings, he wanders the forest alone. He walks without direction, searching for "someone with a grief as deep as his own." He has forgotten Great Peacemaker's words, "*Do not give up.*" Needleman writes that Hiawatha's mind becomes almost as dark as Atotarho's and that "man must experience *himself* as the force that resists the good." This is the dark night of the soul.

On the twenty-third day of his wandering, Great Peacemaker comes to Hiawatha and says, "I wipe away the tears from your face . . . using the white fawn-skin of pity. . . . I make daylight for you. I beautify the sky. Now you will think with a quiet mind when your eyes rest on the sky, which the Maker of All Things intended should be a source of happiness to man." Hiawatha looks above himself into the beauty of the sky and his mind clears of grief. Great Peacemaker addresses him and says, "Now . . . Reason has returned; your judgment is firm again. You are ready to carry the New Mind to others. Let us work together now and make the laws of the Great Peace."<sup>26</sup>

Together Great Peacemaker and Hiawatha go to face Atotarho. They withstand the blast of his screams and bring the New Mind to him. Needleman describes what happens as one who has forgotten their own inner goodness finds this goodness again within him- or herself.

But he has not understood where power and energy come from; and

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25 Ibid., 225.

26 Ibid., 230.

without this knowledge and experience all the force within him is turned outward toward violence and inward to doubt and despair . . . if it is not turned toward the striving to obey the Master of Life and to overcome one's own weaknesses, it will be turned toward violence; if this energy is not turned toward helping one's neighbor, it will be turned toward killing one's neighbor. Atotarho is power without understanding; he is the desire to live without knowing the Good. And nothing can overcome this force of violence except the direct experience of the Good within oneself, an experience that turns all the energies of man around so that they serve what they are created to serve.<sup>27</sup>

Great Peacemaker explains the Great Law of Peace to Atotarho, but Atotarho says "Who will bring this about? There is no one." Great Peacemaker says that Atotarho, himself, will bring about the Great Peace. "It is you yourself who will bring it about, *if you desire it*. You shall be the head chief of the Five Nations." But to this Atotarho just shrieks, "It is not yet!" Hiawatha approaches Atotarho and combs the snakes out of his hair and his mind is made straight, he now has the New Mind. He becomes the strong and good head chief of the Five Nations.

Needleman comments that "it was necessary to go into the broken heart of human evil and comb the snakes out of man's mind and soul that brought upon him despair and out of despair a thick coat of anger and bloodshed."<sup>28</sup> Applying this story to ourselves, as contemporary Americans, Needleman asks us how we can atone for the crime of what we, as a country, have done to the American Indian peoples of this land.

If we glimpse even a little that America killed something that was divinely ordained, not only for the Indians themselves but for all of humanity and for all the earth . . . only then may we perhaps approach a true response and a true direction of recompense, not only to the Indian spirit, but to what we ourselves may recognize as the Good — why not call it God? Can we now do for man and for the earth what the culture of the Indian was designed to do? Can we help bring to the world and to ourselves the energy of the Great Peace? Although America betrayed all its ideals by slaughtering the Indian, can it — or any of us — accept that there is no recompense for this crime except to continue the work that formed the essence of the Indians' culture,

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27 *Ibid.*, 232.

28 *Ibid.*, 235.

the same work that we find as well at the heart of our own ideals . . . ? We are obliged, by the laws of conscience, to bring to the earth what the Indians brought. Without that, all other compensation and atonement will be perilously incomplete.<sup>29</sup>

Needleman tells us that we must make atonement for the sins of our forefathers. Atonement recognizes the crime of America and that wrong has been done and it seeks to make it right. Joseph Campbell speaks of a phase of the hero's journey called at-one-ment. In order to return on the hero's journey, we must let go of our fragmentation and return to oneness. Needleman tells us we must continue the work of the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) Confederacy and carry on in our hearts the work of the *Kayanerenhkowa*, the Great Law of Peace. Joseph Rael tells us that work is worship and so we must make *Kayanerenhkowa* our work, we must make peace our worship so that we can make the peace for our ancestors, make the peace for ourselves, and make the peace for Mother Earth who is stained with the blood of her sons and daughters.

Needleman encourages us to go into the broken heart in order to learn. We will next turn to Parker Palmer who speaks to us of the different ways that the heart can break and how we can develop a "politics of broken-heartedness" that grows compassion and connection rather than separation and wounding.

### *Healing the Heart of Democracy*

Parker Palmer is a Quaker, an educator and change agent. His organization Courage & Renewal seeks to address burnout in teaching, business, and health care through helping people lead an "undivided life." I traveled up from New Zealand to Minnesota in 2013 to participate in the "Integrity in Health Care: The Courage to Lead in a Changing Landscape" program. I have continued to write guest blogs periodically for the organization and I feel a real resonance with their work and message. Courage & Renewal has chosen both *Re-humanizing Medicine* and *Walking the Medicine Wheel* as selections for their annual Favorite Courageous Books.

Palmer sees the United States' crisis of democracy as a kind of heart trouble. Throughout the book, Palmer focuses on President Lincoln, who sought to preserve our Union during the Civil War, and who struggled with depression throughout his life. Parker Palmer has written about his

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own

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 236.



### Peace Makers of the Rainbow Light

struggles with depression, including while writing of *Healing the Heart of Democracy*. Depression, despair, hopelessness, rage, anger, and verbal violence are common emotions in politics these days. Now, maybe more than ever, we need to attend to the suffering heart of democracy. From the beginning, English colonists were striving for their own freedom even while oppressing others, particularly the native inhabitants of this land and the African slaves that they brought here to work the land. This fact, and the larger struggle of the Civil War, warn us that there is something

divided within us as individuals and as a people that we are struggling to come to terms with and unite.

Palmer cautions that the failure of democracy can only occur if our hearts are separated and divided internally and between ourselves as a common people.

If American democracy fails, the ultimate cause will not be a foreign invasion or the power of big money or the greed and dishonesty of some elected officials or a military coup or the internal communist/ socialist/fascist takeover that keeps some Americans awake at night. It will happen because we – you and I – became fearful of each other, of our differences and of the future, that we unraveled the civic community on which democracy depends, losing our power to resist all that threatens it and call it back to its highest form.

One of the key concepts in Palmer's book is the idea of holding tension when conflict arises rather than trying to immediately disperse it. He writes, "*It is in the common good to hold our political differences and the conflicts they create in a way that does not unravel the civic community on which democracy depends.*"<sup>30</sup> The unity of democracy comes out of the clamor of our diversity. *E pluribus unum* is our national motto, *out of many, one*. However, this one is not a totalitarian or fascist imposition of imposed identity, rather our unitary identity is made up of many identities – just as the stars in the sky are all part of a larger whole, and yet each one burns brightly on its own. The beauty of the sky is in its variation, not in its uniformity.

Palmer tells us that we can transform our suffering for the purpose of personal, national, and global transformation. He speaks of the two ways the heart can break: it can shatter, wounding self and others with its shards; or it can break open, opening to the potential wisdom of suffering. Palmer describes the work of writing his book, "I began this book in a season of heartbreak – personal and political heartbreak – that soon descended into a dark night of the soul. It took months to find my way back to the light and six years to complete this book." Thus begins Palmer's book, published in 2011, situating personal heartbreak within political heartbreak. What he struggles to find is how we can find a "politics of the brokenhearted" rather than a "politics of rage" or a politics of apathy. He asks us a series of questions.

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30 Palmer, *Healing the Heart of Democracy*, 9, xxvii

How did we forget that our differences are among our most valuable assets? . . . When will we learn that violence in the long run creates at least as many problems as it solves? Why do we not value life, every life, no matter whose or where? Or understand that the measure of national greatness is not only how successful the strong can be but how well we support the weak?

In seeking to address his personal and political heartbreak, Palmer tells us “In my experience, the best therapy for personal problems comes from reaching out as well as looking within.”<sup>31</sup> This fits with our theme in this book of the interconnection and unity of inner and outer work. The heart is the place where the inner and outer meet. Quite literally this is true as the heart and lungs work together, bringing our depleted blood into contact with the oxygen of the outside world and pumping this rejuvenated blood throughout our bodies. This is a two-way exchange as we breathe out carbon dioxide and breathe in more oxygen. This connects us to the outside world with every breath and every breath connects us with all of the green and growing things of the earth as they breathe in our carbon dioxide and breathe out oxygen.

Palmer seeks to reclaim the original meaning of *heart*. His definition fits nicely with Joseph’s teaching that the heart is the center of the medicine wheel, the place of integrating the outer directions of north, south, east and west with the inner directions of spirit, emotions, mind, and body.

Heart comes from the Latin *cor* and points not merely to our emotions but to the core of the self, that center place where all our ways of knowing converge—intellectual, emotional, sensory, intuitive, imaginative, experiential, relational, and bodily, among others. The heart is where we integrate what we know in our minds with what we know in our bones, the place where knowledge can become more fully human.

Without healthy spiritual hearts, we cannot have spiritual democracy and Palmer is seeking to help us create *a politics worthy of the human spirit*. Just as the heart is continually pumping and helping us transform what is used up into what is new and vital, we must, as individuals, as a nation, and as a global people, be continually renewing and revitalizing ourselves and our democracy. To do this we must continually come out of our heads and down to our hearts.

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<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 1, 2, 4.

For those of us who want to see democracy survive and thrive—and we are legion—the heart is where *everything* begins: that grounded place in each of us where we can overcome fear, rediscover that we are members of one another, and embrace the conflicts that threaten democracy as openings to new life and for our nation.<sup>32</sup>

I have wondered how this could practically be implemented, what would happen if every politician were to ask him- or herself before speaking or legislating —“Am I starting with my heart? Will my actions make the world a more loving place?” It seems we would live in a much different country if these were the motivations in the hearts of all of us as citizens and public servants—for we are all, in a democracy, public servants, seeking the greater common good.

Coming from the Quaker tradition, Palmer uses a process called the “clearness committee,” which he says is based on “the belief that every person has an ‘inner teacher’ — a soul-deep source of whatever truth the person needs to hear and the best possible source of counsel in challenging times.” It is through seeking this inner source of wisdom that a person should make big decisions and the clearness committee functions to support a person to turn his or her attention inward to this source. It is like saying that in the cave of the heart there dwells one’s own inner teacher, one’s own inner guru, who can give the best advice for you during the times that try the soul. Palmer sees that our outer ability to engage in democracy is made possible through our inner practice of self-connection, which is also divine connection. “If we are to be citizens of a democracy, we must spend time in conceptual spaces defined by personal experience, not by the mass media, spaces where we can get the news that comes from within.”<sup>33</sup>

Palmer quotes Rilke about doing the “heart-work.”<sup>34</sup> This concept of *heart-work* is a useful one for our book, as that is the kind of work that takes one to the center of the medicine wheel and it is the kind of work that is done in the center of the medicine wheel, and it is the kind of work that reconnects once from one’s deepest center to the world and universe. Palmer writes that to “reclaim our democracy, we need to do

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32 Ibid., 6, 10.

33 Ibid., 146, 154.

34 Rilke, “Turning Point,” cited in Palmer, 175. We previously discussed this concept of “heart-work” and some of Palmer’s ways the heart can break in *Walking the Medicine Wheel*, 139–40, 156–58.

the challenging heart-work of examining our myths, seeing how far they are from the reality of our national life, then reclaiming their embedded visions and doing the hard work necessary to bring reality closer to them.”<sup>35</sup> Thus we must go into the visionary space of the heart in order to reconnect with the source of democracy, what Joseph Rael would call “the principle ideas” of democracy – that place where we feed our souls on the Mother Earth’s milk of spiritual democracy. We must seek deeply the truth of each of our hearts. What our hearts tell us is that the heart is never alone, it is always reaching deeply inward toward the divine which is simultaneously stretching outward to embrace all of reality as One.

### *Joseph’s Teachings on Spiritual Democracy & Esoteric Knowledge*

Joseph recently sent me a couple of drawings. The first is a pueblo structure. There is a ladder leading up to another pueblo structure and then another ladder leading up to a very large pueblo structure, composed of many layers and tiers of rooms and it is surrounded in a cloud in the sky. I could see that there was some writing below the ordinary and non- ordinary pueblos, but it had been erased.

The other drawing is the floor plan of Joseph’s home as a child in Picuris and shows the bed where he slept. One interesting thing about the drawing is that the Holy Room is as large as the bedroom, common room, and kitchen combined. Joseph wrote some things on this drawing. “Not to scale house where BPA [Beautiful Painted Arrow] lived and dreamed at night.” “How the principle Ideas visited my dreamtime from the Holy Rooms so we could travel to the upper village located in the Heavens.”

On the back of this drawing is another that shows a rectangle of “BPA’s house,” and then layers of rectangles above as the “upper village.” There is an arrow from the upper village to more text. “Each of the squares is a universe and there are billions. The Spirit Helpers belong to all humans as our teachers.”

Joseph called one day and I asked him about the text that had been erased on the drawing he sent. Here is what he said:

*“Tiwa knowledge is held in the above, not in the ordinary Tiwa, but in the Tiwa in the sky.*

*“The esoteric knowledge is held in the city above the city. We talk about*

*the Sky City, which exists above the ordinary city. Up there all of the esoteric knowledge dwells, because when I talk about non-ordinary reality or the esoteric, I am speaking about eternity. What is in eternity is there for all time. "I had a student asking me about what is meant by 'esoteric knowledge,' he said he didn't understand what 'esoteric' meant. I told him that when you are going to dig post-holes for a fence, you should get a cup of water. Take the cup or water outside to make an offering to the rising sun. Offer water in the four directions. Then go inside and eat your breakfast and then go do your work. Remember that I teach that work is worship, so when you are doing your work you are worshipping and you are bringing the esoteric knowledge down from the sky and into ordinary reality. As you dig the hole you are there with the hole and you dig down 12 inches, 13 inches, maybe 15 inches. Then you put the cedar pole in the ground. Then you put an inch of earth around the pole and you tamp it down as hard as you can. Then you put another inch of earth around the pole and you tamp it down. Then you gradually put in more earth, but you don't have to tamp it down as much. That pole will stay in place more than if you put it in concrete. That way you are bringing together the spiritual, the emotional, the mental, and the physical. You are bringing together Wah- Mah-Chi, Breath, Matter, Movement.*

*"The esoteric knowledge is in the sky and what we do is we bring it down into ordinary reality. It is not human beings who are doing the work, it is the esoteric knowledge. Human beings just need to learn how to connect to that esoteric knowledge. So what you do is in meditation you learn to go to the city in non-ordinary reality, the Sky City. You can go there and look for someone who is teaching there and you can learn what you need to learn and then you bring it back down to the earth. Up there you can come into contact with all the various spirit helpers.*

*"You sit in meditation and eventually you find yourself in the upper realm. I would sit and meditate and I would look around for the ladder that leads up to the esoteric knowledge. The way that you develop the ability to go up to the esoteric knowledge is by living a life of piety. You live in piety and pretty soon the spirit helpers get used to seeing you and they think you are all right and they start to help you.*

*"In the old times priests would go into caves when they were seeking esoteric knowledge and contact with God. In Greek times, from what I have read, the Greeks used to go into caves for their esoteric knowledge. The trouble began when they brought their ceremonies out into the light of day and then they did not work as well. In the light that illuminates ordinary reality, there are a lot of*

*distractions. I don't mean like the Christians do that there are demons that are trying to lead you to evil. I mean that there are many different things to look at and these can be distractions from the esoteric knowledge. When you go into darkness, you can see into the dark matter and this connects up to the esoteric.*

*"You are in Seattle, right? And that is named after Chief Seattle. So what you can do is go into meditation and look for a ladder that leads up, 10 miles up, and you can go there and you can talk with Chief Seattle about what his esoteric teachings are. They are always there for those who know how to access them.*

*"When you are seeking esoteric knowledge, you shouldn't ask questions. Remember how I have told you that when you ask a question you are setting up the human template to miss? It is like an arrow. If you are going to hit something you imagine yourself hitting it, you don't ask, 'how am I going to hit it,' or 'why does that deer move so quickly and quietly?' If you do that you are setting yourself up to miss. The esoteric knowledge is a lot like a deer, quiet, fast, elusive. To find it you have to imagine yourself finding it. If you say 'Why, why can't I find it?' you will never find it. When you question you separate yourself from it, but it is already there for you to find in an instant and you are there.'*

One of the last things Joseph said to me was, "See, there are always synchronicities, you just have to look for them." Earlier he had said, "You can go into meditation and find esoteric knowledge and then when you see something on a billboard in California, or Denver, or Seattle, you can look at it and understand it and say, 'God is talking to me through this billboard.'" Oftentimes when I am working intensively on something, Joseph will call me and I want to ask him linear questions about the topic. Sometimes he is teaching something that is obviously about the topic. Other times, no matter how many times I ask him he goes off on (seeming) tangents that keep looping and circling around the topic without (from my perspective) seeming to hit it.

I asked Joseph about his ideas on "spiritual democracy" and "America," but instead he spoke about esoteric knowledge. Extrapolating from his teachings we could say that Spiritual Democracy exists in an upper level in the Heavens. There is an ordinary United States of America and there is a non-ordinary, esoteric United States of America. The esoteric wisdom of the Founders of this land (including both the European and the American Indian Founders) is still accessible for those who know how to reach it. We can allow ourselves to be taught by becoming seekers. If we simply ask a lot of questions, however, we will not find the answers, but only more

distractions. Spiritual Democracy can be found by movements upward as well as downward. Going into the darkness, one can more easily connect with the “dark matter” of the esoteric without the distractions that light up in ordinary reality. The way up to the esoteric is by first quieting and going inward into the darkness of meditation and from there one can travel upward. If we were to come into contact with the principle idea of the United States of America, we would do this through each of our own hearts and from there connect to the USA that exists above the ordinary USA we live in most of the time. There is the ideal and there is the ordinary. We renew Spiritual Democracy through a continual process of re-connecting to the Upper United States of American (UUSA) which exists in eternity, in the ideal realm above us. We bring this esoteric knowledge down from Father Sky to become embodied in Mother Earth.

Joseph often speaks of spirit helpers who we come in contact with and who guide and instruct us in our seeking. Maybe this is why the names Washington, Hamilton, Lincoln, Black Elk, Hiawatha, and Chief Seattle continue to inspire us. To be inspired means that one is breathed into. If we only think of ourselves in isolation, we are breathing recycled air that gets stale. If we re-remember and re-connect to the principle idea of Upper United States of American, we are allowing ourselves to be a vehicle for the spirit helpers of UUSA. We can be inspired by the Indigneous and colonizing Founders of the United States of America and we can be seekers and distributors of divine wisdom.<sup>36</sup> Just as individuals, nations too, require continual re-orientation toward the divine and continual infusions of divine wisdom. This is what Joseph means when he says “we do not exist.” We do not exist as concrete, separate, individuals. We only exist when we come into relation with the Source of being who is continually recreating us. Seeking to stay the same is death and fundamentalism. Allowing ourselves to be continually inspired and recreated is life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

The abbreviation for the United States is *US*. This is also telling us that when we are speaking of the United States, we are speaking of *US*. Esoteric knowledge teaches us to pay special attention to synchronicities like this. When we speak of the United States, we continually hear the whispered reminder – *US*. The United States of America is abbreviated

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<sup>36</sup> By “Founders” we mean our Native brothers and sisters as much as the Europeans and their descendants. Any name that is remembered and revered is an ancestor and Founder of the land.

the US of A. This reminds us that the idea of the USA is beyond the little *us* of citizens of just this one country, and that we are speaking of the big *US* of the Americas – and even more the *US* of the world.

### *Working for Peace after War*

Following World War I, the people of many nations of the world got together to create the League of Nations in 1920. This was brokered by a number of people, including Lord Bryce from the UK, US president Woodrow Wilson, and South African, Jan Smuts.<sup>37</sup> The League of Nations lasted from 1920 to 1945 when it was replaced by the newly formed organization, the United Nations. The UN is an organization dedicated to promoting world peace and human rights. While it has become trendy amongst the populist right wing in the United States to demonize the UN and seek to limit its powers or even to speak of withdrawing from it, we need an organization dedicated to promoting peace in this world. How will we ever be able to come together as one people of the Earth if we do not have organizations that are forums for every nation to have a voice? The idea of the UN is to create a council of world leaders who will hold the identity of global citizenship above the narrow identity of tribes and nations. This is one of the foremost organizations working for peace on the planet. The UN brings together soldiers and diplomats from all over the world. The soldiers serving as “Peacekeepers” wear blue helmets, no matter what country they come from.

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37 South African Jan Smuts has an interesting history. Smuts was a Field Marshall, a member of the British War Cabinet, a Prime Minister of South Africa and is the only person to have signed the peace treaties ending both World War I and World War II. However, Smuts was a proponent of apartheid (separation of whites and blacks in South Africa) and was the opponent of Gandhi in his work for civil rights for the Indian population living in South Africa. I choose the word “opponent” rather than enemy, since, even though they were on opposite sides of an argument, Gandhi still gave Smuts a pair of sandals as a gift, made with his own hands. This tells us something of Gandhi, who took the time to hand-make sandals for his opponent who favored segregation. Not only that, Gandhi made the sandals whilst he was imprisoned. Smuts returned these sandals to Gandhi in 1939, on Gandhi’s 70th birthday with the following note, “I have worn these sandals for many a summer, even though I may feel that I am not worthy to stand in the shoes of so great a man,” (Mahatma Gandhi, *The Essential Gandhi: An Anthology of His Writings on His Life, Work, and Ideas*, ed. Louis Fischer, 98). We can speculate what effect having Gandhi as an opponent may have had on Smuts. Even though Smuts was a proponent of racial segregation and opposed rights for non-whites in the early 1900s, he later did much to promote peace. He was also a philosopher and in his 1926 book *Holism and Evolution* coined the word, “holism” the concept of unifying separate parts into a greater whole (which is greater than the sum of its parts).

Joseph received a letter from the United Nations in regard to his work with the Sound Peace Chambers and ceremonies to promote world peace.

*UN Letter, Katherine Springer, 20 Feb, 1989*

1. It is with great pleasure that I acknowledge the contributions of Mr. Joseph Rael to activities furthering world peace. This is a primary objective for the United Nations, for whom I work, and the U.N. Peacekeeping Forces have recently received the Nobel Peace Prize for efforts in this area. Mr. Rael is known in a number of countries around the world to be dedicated to the cause of world peace and to undertake activities which further its achievement.
2. Among Mr. Rael's numerous activities is organizing group prayer, particularly in connection with Peace Chambers. Such groups chant for world peace, accompanied by rattles, drums, and eagle feathers which are essential to the inspiring performance in many traditional and non-industrialized societies. It is hoped that Mr. Rael will continue to expand his activities to other countries in our common pursuit of peace on this planet.

Katherine Springer

*Technical Advisor 20 Feb, 1989*

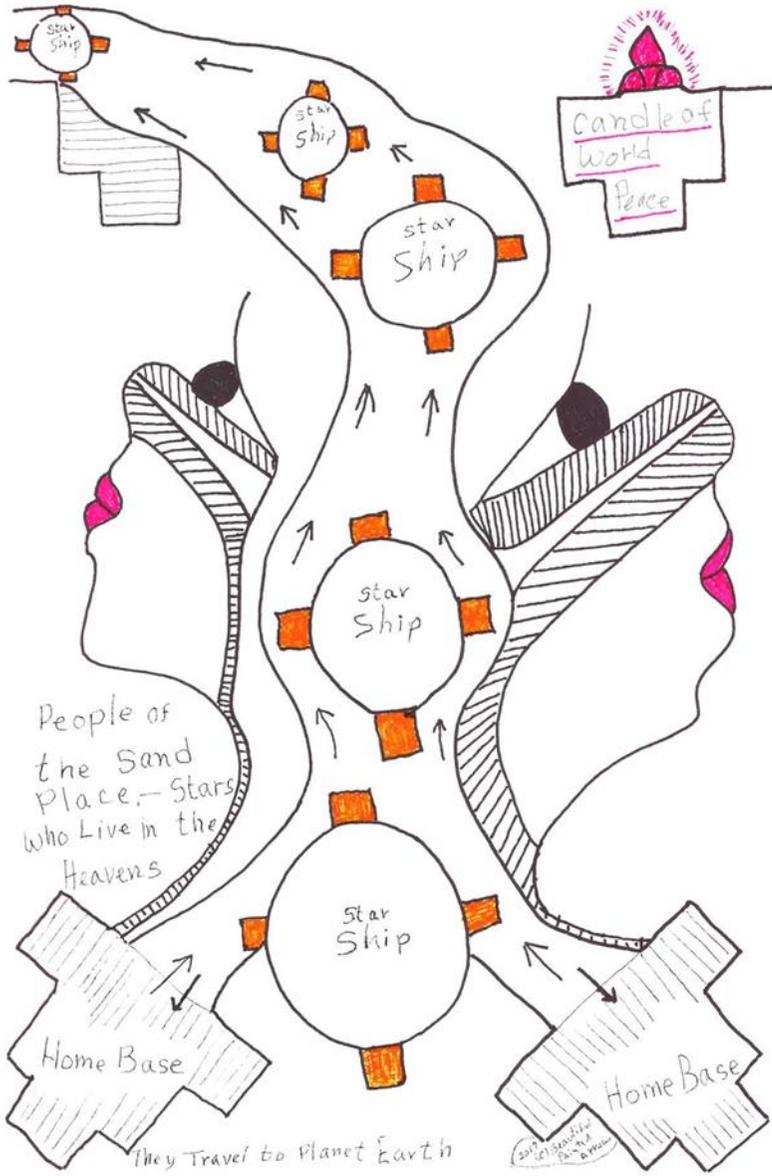
The United Nations Declaration on a Culture of Peace states that, "since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed."<sup>38</sup> Needleman tells us that we need a New Mind to bring the *Kayanerenhkowa* (Law of Peace) into our minds and hearts. Joseph tells us that war stems from a state of mind (and of heart) in which we falsely strive to persist in our separated, individual identities. Through atonement for the crimes of America, we can bring *at-one-ment* which brings a change of consciousness and identity. Then we can all share, Native Americans, European Americans, African Americans, and all peoples of the Earth, that peace and abundance of the Horn of Plenty.

The original Founders of Spiritual Democracy are Father Sky and Mother Earth and they have given us this teaching of peace. It is up to us to listen to this teaching. We can renew Spiritual Democracy by listening to the depths of our hearts, by listening deeply to the land, and by listening with all our being to the sky.

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<sup>38</sup> The United Nations Education, Scientific, and Cultural Organization constitution, signed 1945.

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Candle of World #2 – People of the Sand Place – Stars Who Live in the Heavens - They Travel to Planet Earth

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