Editorial

CHALLENGING CONVENTIONS AND NEW EXPECTATIONS

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Departing from tradition, this issue of the journal offers some changes in design and presentation that we all hope you will find enjoyable, effective and easy to use. We have let the art on the cover escape its frame, to fill the entire space. Expansion of this vision feels appropriate for the aspirations of the journal. The beautiful photograph is by Dan Bush, and it adorned the conference program. Dan’s work can be found at www.missouriskies.org. Also, the texts are now formatted with two columns on the page, to more effectively show the flow of the articles and, we hope, to make reading easier.

In keeping with tradition, this issue of the journal presents keynote presentations from the Seventeenth Annual ISSSEEM Conference: The Science of the Miraculous. Throughout its life, our society has carefully challenged conventional thought, and last years meeting is a hallmark in that tradition. Taking an intentional oxymoron for its theme, the conference offered many opportunities to experience work that happens when science is approached as a sacred art, and when healing is practiced as a sacred science.

As with many technical terms, the concept of an oxymoron has devolved in common usage to take on a meaning of simple nonsense, even if perhaps cleverly expressed. In original use, an oxymoron is a rhetorical device—intentionally forming a contradiction in terms, in order to express a deeper truth; often poetically presented, as in the expressions “a deafening silence,” or “deliberate haste.” Juxtaposing concepts that are commonly assumed to be alien to each other can often reveal truths deeper than the common assumptions. These four keynote presentations from the conference show how useful it can be to join ideas often assumed to be unrelated or in contradiction.
Matthew Fox’s address opened the conference, reminding us that awe is the appropriate response to the wonder that is creation, and that we, ourselves, are delightfully suited to delve into the depths, and understand these wonders. Matthew proposes that we have outgrown the common distinction between natural and supernatural. All of nature is “super,” and we all can learn to live within nature in compassionate ways. We no longer believe, with the ancients, that we are placed at the physical center of the universe, but we have discovered that we are in many ways situated in the middle of things, and this is a delightful place from which to see how we are embedded in the web of creation.

Christine Page’s presidential address, The Miraculous Heart, combines her physician’s understanding of the many processes of the physical heart with her intuitive observations about many wisdom traditions—for understanding spiritual powers of the heart. Traditions about the heart as the core of our being are not mere romantic impulses, but rather can reveal deep truths about our spiritual connections, both with others and with our own life’s path.

John Hagelin synthesizes his understanding of recent innovations in physical theory with his understanding of the power of meditation practice. John provides a model for how and why meditation interacts with the ground of being, and he reviews the solid and striking evidence for the efficacy of meditation directly affecting the common well being, in addition to personal well being.

Freddy Silva presents a far ranging survey of similarities in physical structure and energetic measures among many of the world’s sacred sites, and the curious phenomenon of crop circles. Consistent with the early researches by Jacque Vallee and his colleagues, Silva finds that authentic crop circles can be easily distinguished from hoaxes or human art works, by a superheating effect that is responsible for the bending of the stalks. Trampled grain has broken stalks, while true crop circles result from a curious process of softened stems that cause the plants to droop. Jacque Vallee proposed that military weapons engineers could be responsible for the precision of the heating effects and the concise geometries of crop circles. Freddie Silva connects the crop circle phenomena with energetic patterns unique to the specific location of their appearance, and compares these with the structures of gothic cathedrals built on sites previously held sacred, because of their healing and transformative energetic patterns. Freddie is collaborating in preliminary studies of some evidence for healing benefits from crop circles.

All four of these scholars show us what rich possibilities are revealed when we look with open eyes and open hearts. I hope you will enjoy these masterful explorations.