



# The Transforming Outreach of Spirituality

Spirituality has been wrongly criticized as being self serving, a way to enhance one's own personal well being to the exclusion of involvement in global issues, social concerns and simply loving one's neighbor. As one who has spent years on a spiritual journey, as differentiated from a religious life, I can attest to the fact that personal spiritual growth has been the one factor that for me has stimulated profound concern for the healing of human distress and global disruption.

For several years during my time in Campus Ministry at CSU the students, faculty and I dedicated our efforts to carrying out our chosen theme: *Let us learn to live more simply in order that others may simply live.* We spent time in prayer an meditation, a spiritual exercise, as well as developing ways to live out our faith in loving care of the earth and our fellow citizens who share it with us.

The basic phenomenon that occurs in spiritual development is *transformation*. This describes the dramatic change that occurs first in our perception and attitude, then is reflected in our behavior and life style. It changes our politics as well as our prayer life.

Sulak Sivaraksa, a Thai Buddhist nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize in 1996 wrote: “Politics without spirituality is cold and blind. Spirituality without politics is simply inconsequential—it regresses into new age self help and escapism.”

Perhaps there are those people who have fallen into the trap of self-centered personal enhancement along their spiritual journey. Every journey in life has its hazards. However, to define or describe spirituality in terms of its hazards is foolishness.

Spirituality is best described as a primary and unique relationship with the Holy One along with its benefits and challenges. It functions as a *mysterious companionship with God*. Truly it creates a radical change in both our attitude *and* behavior. People who have difficulty with spirituality are often unwilling to allow this *transformation* to occur in their lives. They insist on staying in control, while spirituality puts God into control.

Paramount in spirituality is the experience of being given an *attitude of gratitude* that not only puts a positive spin on ones entire life, but also makes one care deeply about others and creates passion for protecting our planet earth.

I invite you to embark upon a spiritual journey or continue to pursue it to greater heights if you are already underway.

