

Summer Newsletter 2025

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Reconnecting our spirituality with the rest of the alive world by Victoria Loorz



Victoria Loorz. Photo by Keith Turley

These are holy paradox times. The old certainties are burning. The myths we were handed are crumbling. And yet—underneath the smoke and ash—something new is becoming. A pulse. A hum. A whisper.

In our guides' meeting this week, we became aware of a pattern. In the midst of the collective crazy unravelling, each of us were paradoxically experiencing a profound movement of wild creativity and spiritual, earthy aliveness. We almost felt guilty about it, searching within ourselves for evidence of bypass. But we realized that we all experienced an equal sense of internal grief and devastation in appropriate response to the daily aggressive assaults on our collective stability. And we shared that many within the wild seminary felt it as well.

I can't remember now where I read it, but someone recently wrote that creativity is the counter-balance response to the vapid un-creating happening around us. These in-between times are not a pause between what was and what is coming. We are living in the overlap—the space where grief meets creativity, collapse meets re-enchantment, loss meets longing. We are not simply waiting in the liminal; we are living inside the paradox itself. Destruction and creation, side by side.

I've been asked "How can this reconnection of our spirituality with the rest of the alive world possibly be relevant during these insane times?" To me, it is becoming uncomfortably clear. The emerging new stories literally and necessarily (and mysteriously) are birthed in the stink of the composting old ones. The reWILDing emerges through the edge-walkers, the mystics, the healers, the artists and earth-listeners. Those who are courageous enough to stay

awake—to hold the tension, to live fully in the paradox—and not turn away. Resiliency and resistance at this time is not to solve the mystery of what is happening, but to widen your capacity to hold it. To become a sanctuary for contradiction. To live creatively in both the ache and the awe. As Wild Guide Ethan Teed said at our Intensive, "All creativity is co-created with the land, Mystery and all our relations. How could it be otherwise?" Humanity is not just physically interconnected with all beings, we are deeply connected spiritually as well."

This is a wild call - not to become a hero, guru, or expert - but to be one who avails yourself to the Holy Wild. One who listens. One who asks to remember. One who dares to root their spiritual life back into the rhythms of Earth, Mystery, and Belonging. To lead from the place of unknowing. To offer soul-rooted presence. To welcome creativity as it flows from the cracks. To embody a spirituality that knows we are not separate.

I felt myself well up with tears of sheer love when I realized on an even deeper level that the work we are doing -- all of us, you included -- is more important now than ever. That the practices of wild spirituality - saunters in the wild, grief rituals, sacred council, earth-based ceremony, deep listening, soul inquiry, mythic imagination - are not just tools for personal deepening and enlightenment. They are medicine for this moment in history.

The Seminary of the Wild Earth course is not learning some new religion. It is a pilgrimage. A deep, year-long spiral of descent and wild return for those who are ready to remember who they are. To wander with soul in our own wild places. To walk and live the difficult path of paradox -- and do so imperfectly, with all of our humanity, from the inside out.

Wendell Berry has said: "It may be that when we no longer know what to do, we have come to our real work..."



Barred Owl photo by Philip Brown on Unsplash

The 2025 cohort of Seminary of the Wild Earth is called Barred Owl. Barred Owls are often seen as invasive as they migrate west and threaten other native owl species. They are migrating, however, because of human disruption of habitat and climate. It is a complicated

and uncomfortable situation. They disrupt the old order of things. Yet, they are also navigators of change, responding with intuition and adaptability.

To those coming to this course: bring your uncertainty. Bring your longing. Bring your paradox. Find your community. Meet others who are hearing a wild voice beckoning. This wild spirituality community is a place where you will recognize kindred spirits and get the support you need to embody the vision blooming within you.

The above article formed the invitation to people to join the **Seminary of the Wild Earth**, a one or two-year experiential online programme run by the Center for Wild Spirituality and gives people a chance to immerse themselves in a community of like-hearted people who are asking the question, "How can I be of service to a groaning and sacred Earth at this liminal time of unravelling and the threshold of a new story?"

Sending you all the most wild blessings in these transformational times.

Although the registration deadline for the online course is 15 August, Victoria has said that they can handle late bookings if any of our newsletter readers want to join. https://www.wildspirituality.earth/sowe-2025

Victoria Loorz MDiv, is a Wild Church Pastor, an Eco-Spiritual Director and founder of the Center for Wild Spirituality, and co-founder of Seminary of the Wild and the ecumenical Wild Church Network. Her book, *Church of the Wild: How Nature Invites Us into the Sacred*, is an invitation to deepen our commitment to a suffering earth by falling in love with it and calling it church.

The Center for Wild Spirituality. Leadership for an Emerging New Story. Restoring kindred relationship with a sacred earth. https://www.wildspirituality.earth/

Gerald Winstanley: Land, People and the More-than-Human Worldby **Diane Pacitti**

Diane explores the historical revolutionary ideas of Gerrard Winstanley and the contemporary relevance of indigenous voices in addressing environmental crises.

Was the earth made to preserve a few covetous, proud men to live at ease, and for them to bag and barn up the treasures of the Earth from others, that these may beg or starve in a fruitful land; or was it made to preserve all her children?





Diane Pacitti

These words might today be spoken by indigenous people in Africa or Australia whose displacement or poorly paid labour has funded luxurious lifestyles in London or New York. In fact, they were written by Gerrard Winstanley who in 1649 gathered a small community to dig the common land of St. George's Hill, Surrey. In doing so, he was claiming the earth as our 'Common Treasury'.

In St James's Earth Justice project **Food for the Ecozoic** we have been exploring our own indigenous revolutionaries inspired by the book of **Genesis**. You can read more about Winstanley and his predecessor John Ball, a radical priest who challenged the entire social hierarchy here: https://www.sjp.org.uk/genesis-a-text-for-revolution/

Winstanley was a theologian, grounding his revolutionary vision in the texts of the Bible. And he was writing at a moment in British history when the world seemed 'turned upside down'. The impossible had happened. Cromwell's army of plain, devout men had defeated the Royalist army. The king had been beheaded and England was now a republic. And as talk of the Second Coming grew and new religious groups and fellow Digger communities were formed, Winstanley had his own fierce hope. To him, the resurrection of Christ, the 'Head Leveller' had nothing to do with an afterlife or a heaven located in the sky. The resurrection of Christ will happen here and now, through the acts of living women and men. It will happen when we treat the earth as a Treasury for all. With hindsight, we know that his Digger community was dispersed by cruel force. And yet we still respond to his confident assertion, 'Christ will rise in his sons and daughters.'

To read about the link with current insights of indigenous peoples, go to: https://www.livingspirit.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Gerald-Winstanley-Land-People-and-the-More-than-Human-World.pdf

Diane Pacitti is a writer who explores migration, power relationships, and what an Ecozoic vision might mean. Her collection *Dark Angelic Mills*, was produced during a poetry residency at Bradford Cathedral, and she now contributes to Earth Justice work at St. James's Piccadilly.

Falling Back in Love with Nature

Thought for the Day 1 July 2025 responding to the visit of The Herds to London.

by Lucy Winkett



The Herds arrive in London 2025

Around 11 o clock at night in a London park, still quite hot, I took part in the public art project **The Herds**. People of all ages were walking through the darkness looking for hundreds of animals that over these months have been travelling for 20 000 kilometers from the Congo Basin to the Arctic Circle. The Herds are life-size corrugated cardboard puppets, strikingly moving and fragile, worked by teams of volunteers. The project's Director, Amir Nizar Zuabi, reminds us that animals are the early warning systems of nature. Birds flock before volcanic eruptions. Herds run before earthquakes hit. But current warnings are not being heeded. It's because the debates about climate breakdown are happening above our heads.

Cerebral arguments about datapoints and temperatures are important for public policy of course, but for the change of heart that's needed, not as effective as tears. And tears are what I found myself shedding in the middle of the night in the park. The actors moving the life size puppets were themselves models of human sensitivity and cooperation with the animal world. Co-created movements learnt from the giraffe and the baboon recreated by teams of human beings intent on bringing their puppet elephants, deer, marmasets, to life. Ask the animals and they will teach you, says the Book of Job in the Hebrew scriptures, and what I learned from this Herd was that the animals in fleeing disaster, warning the planet, warning me, having made their way through hectic crowds in Soho, their movements

juddered and stalled as their exhaustion in the city became more pronounced, even though they'd found some sort of relief in the park and the plants. The power of the project was in the creation of the real time dynamic between the animals and humans. Those of us taking part were inevitably shining our torches into the eyes of the animals, who retreated, shied away, made tracks into the trees. This encounter placed me as a human as one who invades, exploits and exposes, along with my fellow humans, I became someone to be feared and avoided, someone from whom the animals just wanted to hide.

The Herds are sweeping through the planet's cities, Kinshasa, Lagos, Marrakesh, Venice, Madrid, Paris, London, in these months. Next they visited Manchester to say to us city dwellers who are now the majority of human beings on the planet, that time is short for us to do what we have to do. As scripture tells us, ask the animals, heed their warnings, and fall back in love with nature itself.

Rev. **Lucy Winkett** is Rector of St James's Church Piccadilly. <u>www.sjp.org.uk</u>. This piece was broadcast on BBC Radio Four.

The Herds is an imaginative project that brings issues of climate change to the public through large scale out-of-doors events in the streets. David Lan, one of the core team and former artistic director of the Young Vic commented "We hope it being so extensive expresses that you can do big things." By shifting the narrative from doom to hope the project aims to stimulate conversation, action and collaboration. "We can only do it together" David Lan said concerning changing our minds and our future. https://www.theherds.org/

The Quiet Power of Compassion and Truth in a Harsh Environment by Beatrice Hillman

Beatrice reflects on her years as a prison chaplain witnessing deep pain and resilience.



Pope Francis reflected on a visit to a prison on Maundy Thursday: "Every time I enter a place like this, I ask myself: why them and not me?" (Vatican News).

For about 11 years I've been volunteering a day a week in a men's prison, as a lay Chaplain, and I love it – for lots of reasons!

The cycle ride takes me partly through lush, green parkland, and as I get through security checks and into in the Multi-faith Chaplaincy office on Monday morning, I find a wonderful team, with a Sikh Guru, a Roman Catholic priest, a couple of Imams, the Anglican Chaplain, and sometimes a Rabbi. A great start to the day, but this is a place is full of paradox and contradiction.

I take a list of men who are particularly vulnerable on two of the five wings, and go and see these men of any, or no faith. I don't see it as my role to evangelise. If anything, I encourage the Muslims to be deeper Muslims, the Christians to be deeper Christians, etc. Sometimes religion and faith are key issues for men, and for others, not. I meet and listen to people and cultures that I'd never otherwise encounter, and my mind is opened to previously unimagined worlds, perspectives, sub-cultures, pain, rage and woundedness. I'm also sometimes astonished by occasional memorable kindness amongst inmates and the burgeoning of amazing creativity and artistic talent.

While life inside the prison for everyone is extremely tough, lonely, gruelling and stressful, for some it's an opportunity to reflect on who they are, where they are, and why they're there. Many have had little opportunity, desire or time to reflect on their inner world or feelings. I'm not there to force anyone to open up. But maybe because I'm older than the prison officers (and maybe seen as 'motherly' or 'grand-motherly') and since prison is not an environment where men share their emotions or their 'softer' side with each other, they often choose to accept my invitation to "have a chat" in a space outside their cell.

Sometimes I see them weekly for months, or for years, on and off. If someone is on remand, awaiting trial, they may be held in the prison for years – often losing contact with partner and children, losing their job, and accommodation. The resulting stress often erupts in extreme anger and pain. My vocabulary of prison slang has soared.

I mostly just listen carefully, and with a bit of encouragement, all sorts of painful relationships, losses, and life stories emerge, some not expressed before. Sometimes I have a hunch that something ISN'T being said, which could be helpful to be voiced. For some men, talking about what's 'real', or 'feelings' is impossible, or scary, or they don't have the language for it. So, occasionally enabling someone to put thoughts and feelings into words, and to feel heard, is crucial. Or just being silent, together.

Sometimes I'm a witness to almost unbearable stories. A friend once said to me that I must

be 'unshockable'. But I'm not. I'm often shocked – I just don't show it, and sit with it. Wherever I am, inside or outside the prison, I'm interested in what 'makes people tick'. So I'm interested in the many kinds of "truth" in my, or our, inner world and the outer world. An encounter with even a fraction of 'your' truth can change your 'direction', I think. Maybe truth does set you free, but it can be very subtle and elusive, and it can be an excruciating journey.

As with all prisons which you read about, the inside scene is grim. Prisons are overcrowded, rife with drugs, gangs, vendettas, feuds and sometimes violence. Many are held in their cell for 22 hours a day. Food quality and very basic comforts are major issues. You'll have read about the Court backlogs, often resulting in trials being adjourned for years, and how poor remuneration of legally aided lawyers results in a dire lack of, and inadequate representation in court. It's extremely stressful – and terrifying, awaiting your trial.

Many of the officers are wonderful. Their role is hugely demanding, often exhausting. The one thing everyone in the prison needs, but nobody gets, is some individual care and attention. For many, they've endured this lack all their lives, and whereas we think of the 'victims' of crimes as those against whom a crime has been committed, in fact very often the perpetrators themselves are victims of abuse, deprivation, neglect, exploitation, lack of mental health care, poverty etc. Sometimes a period 'inside' enables a man to observe his patterns, and with courage, challenge them.

Alas however, often men's experience of the tough regime and challenges of their interactions with others in prison, perpetuates those patterns of deprivation or abuse which brought them into prison in the first place. I sometimes reflect that if I'd been a few notches up some spectrum or other, and if certain conditions had been different in MY life, maybe I, too, would have made bad choices. Sometimes my day is tough. I see men in huge distress, confusion, anger, helplessness or despair. Sometimes listening, or a conversation – or even shared silence with that man, releases a little bit of the distress. Where certain conditions of acceptance and 'love' prevail, change is more likely to happen.

I'm constantly aware, particularly on prison days, of God's love flowing through everyone and ALL creation ALL the time. I hear Lucy Winkett's Easter sermon about the tormented man living among the tombs and how we all are in a sense 'entombed' or perhaps we could say 'incarcerated' with unhelpful mindsets. The Easter resurrection narrative invites me to trust in an ever flowing love beyond the tombs, that is healing, restoring and timelessly radiant.

Beatrice Hillman is a meditator, retired from various pastoral care roles, having taught in the Far East and in London. This article formed the basis for a wonderful talk and discussion at the Living Spirituality Connections Journeying Together Group in June 2025.

Ageing as a time of growth, wisdom, and personal transformation. by Martina Breen



Martina Breen

Ireland, like many other developed countries, is experiencing an ageing population, with people living longer than ever before. The Central Statistics Office (CSO) figures predict that those aged 65 years and over will increase significantly: from 629,800 in 2016 to almost 1.6 million by 2051. This evolving ageing population presents new challenges and opportunities for not just us as a nation; the same pattern is occurring worldwide.

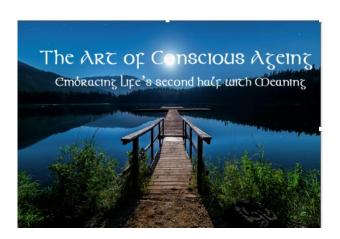
Reb Zalman, author of *Age-ing to sage-ing:* A *Profound New Vision of Growing Older* poses the question of why should we live beyond the time of begetting and raising our children? He goes on to state: "If we do live longer, then nature must have a task. There must be a purpose. The purpose is to hothouse consciousness, generation by generation; so that the older generation can transmit something to the younger." Rather than allowing yourself to just grow old — you can make a decision to enter a new life stage and consciously age. So, whilst ageing is a natural process that involves physical changes and a gradual decline in physical abilities. Eldering or Sage-ing, on the other hand, is an intentional approach to ageing that involves actively seeking out opportunities for growth and transformation in the second half of life. It's about getting older with intentionality, resilience, and grace. It involves not only addressing the physical and mental aspects of ageing, but also the spiritual aspects such as finding meaning and purpose in the lives we have lived, as well as exploring and visioning the time we have left. Rather than viewing ageing as a period of decline and loss, it is time to look at our process of ageing as a time of growth, wisdom, and personal transformation.

These approaches to healthy aging align with the wisdom shared in Ron Pevny's book: Conscious living, conscious aging: Embrace and savor your next chapter, along with books like Tuesdays with Morrie by Mitch Albom. They each offer us profound lessons about the value of inner growth, personal transformation, and the importance of having a sense of

community as we grow into our elder years. To become an adult, we need to let go of being an adolescent. To become an elder, we need to have completed our adulting. Elderhood is a new phase of life, given to us by the grace of longevity. There is a newfound freedom in embracing our age and ageing consciously. By modelling conscious ageing and embodying its principles in our own lives, we can inspire the people in our lives to do the same and create a more compassionate and fulfilling world for ourselves and others.

Ron offers us a guidebook in exploring the ageing process with awareness, curiosity, and purpose. He writes extensively around the personal and spiritual growth that occurs as we age and he models his own teaching in his own personal life. He says that this growth that's available to us as we age is not necessarily a given; it requires a deliberate effort to engage with our own ageing process and to cultivate qualities like self-awareness, resilience, and wisdom.

As one ages, like all of us do, we find our way through life. If we didn't age, we would remain stagnant and bettering ourselves or helping others would not be second nature. According to Pevny, conscious eldering involves several key practices. One is self-reflection, which involves taking time to reflect on our life experiences, our values, and our goals for the future. Another is community-building, which involves connecting with others who share our interests and values, and who can support us on our journey of conscious ageing. A third practice is service, which involves using our skills and experience to make a positive impact in our communities and the world at large.



To read the full article go to:

https://www.livingspirit.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Ageing-as-a-time-of-growth.pdf

https://martinabreen.ie/ draws from many streams — Gestalt psychotherapy, Celtic spiritual traditions, spiritual direction. At heart, her work is simply to hold space with compassion, truth, and respect for the journey each person is on. Over the last decade, her work has expanded into the sacred terrain of conscious ageing and the art of living and dying well.
Trained as an Anam Cara (spiritual midwife) and a Certified Sage-ing Leader, she guides

others in embracing the gifts of the elder years, facing mortality with grace, and living with intention. Her approach is soulful, relational, and grounded in real human connection. Martina runs online courses on the above themes.

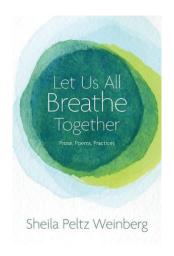
Sageing International https://www.sage-ing.org/ runs many courses and workshops on the themes in this article.

Two Peoples, One Land Prayer for Gaza/Israel by Rabbi Sheila Weinberg

Two peoples, one land,
Three faiths, one root,
One earth, one mother,
One sky, one beginning, one future, one destiny,
One broken heart, One God.
We pray to You: Grant us a vision of unity.
May we see the many in the one and the one in the many.
May you, Life of All the Worlds, Source of All Amazing Differences help us to see clearly.
Guide us gently and firmly toward each other, toward peace.

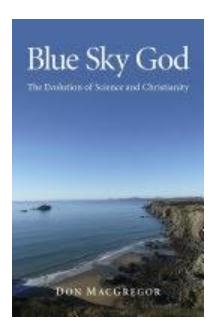
Rabbi Sheila Weinberg is the former rabbi of the Jewish Community of Amherst, Massachusetts, and has taught mindfulness meditation and yoga to rabbis, Jewish professionals and lay people in the context of the Institute for Jewish Spirituality. She is a spiritual director, and a poet and author. https://www.sheilapeltzweinberg.com

Her latest book is:



Blue Sky God. The Evolution of Science and Christianity by Don MacGregor

Reviewed by Linda Courage



We thought it would be useful bringing you Linda's review of this book, published in 2012, in order to bring it to the attention of those who haven't yet read it.

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I have not come across a book quite like **Blue Sky God** and its ability to open new ideas and make important connections between science and Christianity - it is meaning making. As the title suggests, it is a book of two parts and the titles within each should not discourage readers from setting off on an eye-opening journey.

Part One - From Science to Sacred introduces us to four theories that are then brought to the evolution of Christianity in the second part of the book.

It begins with an exploration of **Quantum Reality and God as Consciousness** in accessible ways because Don uses examples and analogies to help us grasp new ideas.

A strength of his writing is to then help the reader make connections with faith and life experience, particularly in the next chapter which explores **Epigenetics**, **Healing and Prayer**. His writing embraces all sorts of practices that readers might have discounted as bogus, bringing them into the realms of faith precisely because of what the evolution of science has uncovered.

The story continues through Morphic Fields and the Works of Christ in a conversational and

encouraging style that I found enlightening and encouraging. Jesus the person and his life are opened and explained afresh in ways that invite wonder grounded in what we have observed happening in contemporary situations. For example;

Morphic resonance is the concept that an individual organism can be influenced by the behaviour of another organism of the same species, despite having no physical contact with it, because there is a connection through the morphic field of the species. Page 65

Part One concludes with **The Quantum Sea of Light** and an explanation of Zero Point Field of electromagnetism. Don explains that "there may be some difficult passages, but it gets easier from here on!"

He continues in his conversational style, with explanations and examples that foster understanding. Memory, light, spiritual light, and photosynthesis are opened, the latter as Judy Cannato's metaphor for the incarnation of Jesus:

As I reflect on photosynthesis, I am drawn to reflect of the incarnation - that definitive event in Christianity in which divine life spilled over into human life in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. Looking at the Incarnation through the dual lenses of evolution and the interaction of photosynthesis can give us insights into who Jesus is and his meaning for all creation. Page 90.

As in any book I choose to read, I soon turn to references, notes, and appendices; they do not disappoint. Contemporary writers of science and theology and new fields of inquiry abound - Bourgeault, Emotional Freedom Technique, HeartMath to name a few that caught my attention.

There are three appendices on The Virgin Birth and Nativity Story; A service of Prayers for Healing With Laying on of Hands and Anointing; and A Consciousness Eucharist. Each uses language that reflects what we now understand from science, and how this touches understanding and construction of core beliefs.

I'm hoping I've encouraged readers to want more so here are the contents of Part Two:

Re-thinking Jesus - Joining up Science and Religion. The potential of Jesus. Son of God. Jesus and Human Potential. The "I AM". Disentangling Jesus from tradition. Resurrection. Christ Consciousness.

Revisiting the Kingdom - The Kingdom. Repentance and Renewal. Awakening into the Kingdom. The Kingdom Operating System. The Kingdom of Unitive Consciousness. Repent, Love, Forgive: Kingdom. Filtering the Message. The Wisdom Way.

And then Chapters on Salvation Evolved, Spiritual Evolution, The Evolution of Religious Language, and Moving Forward.

In conclusion, I found this book personally transformative and have recommended it to a number of friends. Despite it being published in 2012 it gives us a digestible understanding of the four scientific theories that can illuminate and ground, if not transform, our understanding of Jesus - who he was, what he did, and the impact of his life on our own.

If the book had been written in 2025 I suspect there would be more and different examples of resources in the **Moving Forward** section, but we can add or seek out our own - for example, I can recommend The Abbey of the Arts, Living Spirituality Connections, and CANA.

I also suspect that if the book were written in 2025 it would use more inclusive language in places - a suggestion I'm hoping the author will forgive. It is a major reason for my leaving mainline church.

Don MacGregor has been an Anglican priest, a science teacher and university chaplain. He is part of the core group of Christians Awakening to a New Awareness, and is a subscriber to Living Spirituality Connections.

Linda Courage is a retired nurse with a background in science. She lives with her cat, Molly, and is currently enjoying her allotment and being a foster mum to hedgehogs. Recent decades have seen her discover and share expressive art and spirituality practices. A contemplative who likes people, she is drawn to local community projects that foster wellbeing and move us towards net zero. She enjoys being part of Living Spirituality Connections.

The End Times by Steve Taylor



Overleaf...

The End Times

How can our lives have meaning when we're living through the end times? How can we find fulfilment with catastrophe hovering over us?

Why should we keep building as structures collapse all around us?

Why should we keep striving when our goals seem to be dissolving, like mirages? Why should we keep trying to contribute when nothing may remain to receive our gifts?

But look inside – can't you feel your soul aching with a yearning for change?
Can't you feel the impulse to surrender to a transcendent new goal, rising like a wave?

The superfluous is being stripped away. The urgency of the end times is paring us down to our essence.

Our personal goals are fading so that a collective cause can take us over as we turn to face the end times.

This is the time to transcend fear to abandon doubt and pessimism and harness the will of our highest selves to alchemize chaos into harmony and send out waves of transformation so that the darkness of the end times can give birth to a bright new world.

Steve Taylor is a senior lecturer in psychology at Leeds Beckett University, and author of several best-selling books on psychology and spirituality. His books include *Extraordinary Awakenings, The Clear Light*, and *The Calm Center*. He regularly appears in the media in the UK, including Radio 4's Prayer for the Day and the BBC World Service. https://www.stevenmtaylor.com/