

## Our Vision

We create understanding and appreciation of the diversity of our world's religious and spiritual traditions as we honor and nurture the spiritual journey and beliefs of each individual

---

LIVING INSIGHTS NEWSLETTER • DECEMBER 2009



### What do we want people to know most about The Living Insights Center?

**This is a universal religious/spiritual center, a temple for everyone.**

This means, most of all, that we welcome you as a sacred creation entitled to have your own beliefs and experiences. You're genuinely loved and respected here, just as you are. We offer broad and sincere support for your journey, but have no desire to impose anything on you — no one will try to convert you to anything. Rather, we ask that everyone who comes here agree to be respectful, loving and compassionate towards everyone else. As a result, Living Insights is a safe and nurturing home for everyone, an oasis, a family. Many people say this is the safest place they've ever been.

All faiths are respected, welcomed, and represented here (to the best of our abilities), and all may be practiced here. We offer exposure to a broad array of spiritual understandings and experiences, not just those of the organized religions. You may well receive significant new experiences and insights here. Many people have experiences here which prompt them to say this is the most sacred place they've ever been.

In sum, we welcome you, we hope to be of service to you, and you may even find your life is changed by coming here.

### Living Insights on the Cutting Edge

#### **A Recent Parade Magazine Survey Helps Put the Center in Perspective**

We often use this metaphor: God (or ultimate reality) is like an infinite clear light. When that light shines through finite human consciousness, it gets bent. Collectively as a species our consciousness acts like a prism, spreading the light to all the colors of the rainbow, each being a way of experiencing and relating to God. The main religions might be called the primary colors, but each person has a color which is perfect for him or her. Every individual's color is just as beautiful and perfect as everyone else's colors. Living Insights tries to present as many colors of the rainbow as possible, through our altars and sanctuaries, in hopes of helping everyone find and cultivate their own colors and ultimately experience the clear light. Because we focus on each person having the right to his or her own color, we call this a universal religious and spiritual center, rather than an inter-faith center. We celebrate the oneness that underlies everything, and the complete diversity of human spiritual experience.

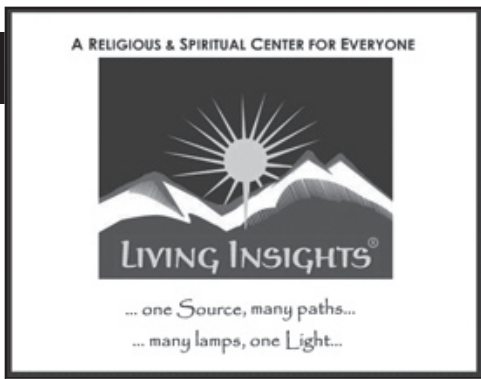
Now consider the foregoing information in the context of the following information which was partially presented in a recent Parade Magazine article (How Spiritual Are We? October 4, 2009):

"America is generally thought to be among the most religious nations in the Western world." 85% believe in God (69%), an unexplained power (12%), or many Gods (4%).

"Spiritually, Americans are ... tolerant in ways that would have astonished our grandparents." Only 12% feel their own religion is the only true faith. 59% said all religions are valid.

"What Americans are doing today is separating spirituality from religion, with many people disavowing organized practice altogether while privately maintaining some form of worship." 24% put themselves into a new category: "spiritual but not

*continued inside*



## St. Therese of Lisieux, the Little Flower

### Miracles Happen Here

Literally hundreds of people have reported miraculous experiences as a result of praying with our statue of St. Therese of Lisieux (aka St. Theresa, the Little Flower). Who is she?

The Roman Catholic Church considers her the greatest saint of modern times because people receive miracles so often when they pray with her. Before she died in 1897, at the age of 24, she said she would spend her Heaven doing good upon Earth. She left some writings behind, people read them and prayed with her, and so many received miracles that the Church named her a Saint in only 28 years, later named her a Doctor of the Church (the highest rank of Sainthood, one of only three women in that group), and then declared her the greatest saint of modern times. We believe she unconditionally loves everyone, knows everything there is to know about us, and has the ability to use God's power, whether as a conduit for or as a representative of God, to suspend the physical laws of the universe and the operation of karma (causation) and produce experiences which otherwise would be impossible — miracles.



## The Crystal Singing Bowls

### Profound Meditative States and Other Experiences

Most people say the Center's crystal singing bowls put them into the most profound meditative states they've ever been. Some go beyond that and experience visions, spiritual epiphanies, and emotional releases. A number have had experiences of God creating the universe, or God consciousness. Why does this happen?

Quantum physics tells us that everything we experience as matter actually is vibrating consciousness, vibrating into the form of matter because awareness is applied to it, and that every particle of matter is disappearing in and out of existence millions of times a second. Hindus have described the universe essentially this way for millennia, and say God is the awareness that's behind this. Most or all of the world's religions say God creates the universe with sound vibrations — for example, the Bible says, "God *said* (not *thought*), 'Let there be light.'" Hindus focus on the constant recreation of the universe, and have a name for the sounds God uses to recreate it in every instant: OM. We don't usually hear OM, but when we hear frequencies which are part of OM — and the bowls play such frequencies — we're hard-wired to consciously resonate with them at the deepest levels of our being. This enables us to drop down through the levels of our consciousness, potentially even to our God-conscious levels where we can experience the clear light level of our being. This is one key to the bowl experience.

These frequencies also are so comprehensive that they open all of the chakras, enabling people to have experiences such as a greater sense of oneness with the universe, greater love and compassion for oneself, the ability to move into the next stage of one's evolution, spiritual insights, and experiences of infinity. Because the bowls essentially turn off the monkey-chatter mind,

people can access the information in their souls, including (many believe) past-life memories and lessons learned.

Our founder Jack also sings devotionally with the bowls. He has an unusually broad vocal range, and the interactions of his voice with the bowls produce another set of powerful experiences for everyone.

## The Parliament of the World's Religions

### Two Living Insights Directors Participate

Every five years, representatives of the religions of the world gather to learn from each other. This year the gathering was held in Melbourne, Australia, and two members of our Living Insights Board attended and gave presentations — Sister Carla Mae Streeter, OP, of The Aquinas Institute of Theology and Dr. David Oughton of St. Louis University. There are three primary levels of interfaith/interreligious activities in St. Louis: The Interfaith Partnership/Faith Beyond Walls (largely comprised of prominent local representatives of 31 faiths), the Dialogue Group of the World's Religions and Philosophies (open to all people of all faiths), and The Living Insights Center. David and Carla Mae are the only people involved in all three. Sister Carla Mae spoke about The Interfaith Partnership/Faith Beyond Walls, which has been operating in St. Louis for over 20 years, David explained that representatives from many faiths have participated in the Interfaith Dialogues he's facilitated for the past 24 years, and both also included The Living Insights Center in their presentations. We know the Center will benefit from their experiences at the Parliament.

## Programming Spotlight

### Native American Teachings by Victoria Fortner

The Center strives to assure that everyone who presents programs here has the strongest possible credentials, as we really want to assure all of our programs are entirely credible. Victoria Fortner, who teaches Native American spirituality, is an illustration. She is part Shawnee and a prominent member of the Native American community (as well as being a member of Living Insights' Board of Directors). She is a pipe carrier, a 19-year Sun Dancer, a 4-year Ghost Dancer, and a Storyteller, and she travels nationally presenting information and workshops on Native American history, culture and traditions. Some of her artwork is on permanent display at the Smithsonian Museum of the Native American.

---

**Did you know?** To the best of our knowledge, only one store in the metropolitan area has more Native American items for sale.

## Our Board of Directors

**The Directors, listed in order of their time on the Board, are:**

**Jack Sisk** our President.

**Nan Breier** Jack's spouse and partner.

**David Oughton, Ph.D.** David has been the leader of the major grass-roots interfaith activities locally for more than 20 years, and has taught comparative religion at the secondary and college levels. He's currently on the faculty of St. Louis University.

**Sister Carla Mae Streeter, O.P.** Carla Mae is a Catholic Sister, a professor at The Aquinas Institute of Theology, and is very active in interfaith activities.

**Reverend Ted Lau** Ted is a computer professional and an Interfaith Minister.

**Father John Blair, OSF** John is an Episcopal priest who serves as Manager of Spiritual Care for Christian Hospital. He's also one of the Center's teachers for Buddhism.

**Victoria Fortner** See Programming Spotlight at left.

**Reena Hajat** Reena is the Executive Director of The Diversity Awareness Partnership, having previously held positions with The Interfaith Partnership. The Diversity Awareness Partnership is dedicated to promoting the value of diversity in the St. Louis region.

**Mike Robertson** Mike is a highly accomplished businessman and the facilitator of the local chapter of the Self-Realization Fellowship (an international organization founded by Paramahansa Yogananda).

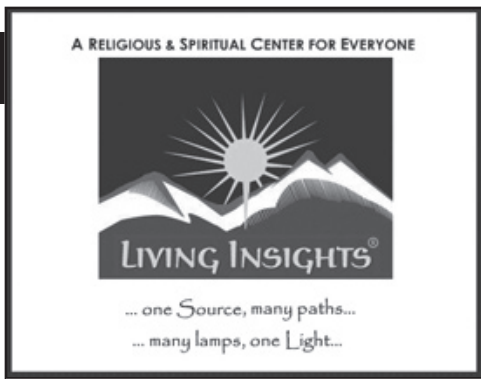
## Living Insights on the Cutting Edge

*continued from front cover*

religious." 50% rarely or never attend worship services

"Fear of God is another staple of religious belief that is no longer as pervasive as it once was."

As recently as a few years ago, we felt Living Insights was "swimming upstream" in trying to get people to respect religions other than their own and to feel comfortable having personal beliefs which might not fit within one of the traditional organized religions. It appears progress is being made!



## A Brief History of Living Insights

Our founder, Jack Sisk, became a Hindu at the age of 14 as a result of having a powerful samadhi experience, and later developed a connection with Tibetan Buddhism as well. However, he focused on his career as a healthcare corporate attorney for 23 years, including serving as Barnes Hospital's first in-house General Counsel, and then serving as a senior attorney with BJC Healthcare. In 1995, he received a calling to create a Center which ultimately became Living Insights. For four years he tried to get BJC to create the Center, which originally was envisioned as a hospice-based facility focused on helping people deal with mortality. He ultimately left BJC on December 31, 2000, to create Living Insights independently.

Jack thought he was creating a museum and school. He'd not had any spiritual experiences for years, and consequently didn't know how to help anyone have them. He didn't believe in beings he couldn't see, other than God. At the most, he thought the Center would be like a bus station — people would come seeking spiritual experiences and he'd figure out where they could go find them and would send them on their way.

Shortly after the Center opened, Jack was donated the first of the large crystal singing bowls. Everyone who heard the bowls had major experiences — visions, spiritual insights, emotional releases. One of the first people who had such an experience was the owner of the St. Therese statue. She said that when she heard the bowls, St. Therese came to her and asked to move to the Center. Jack initially dismissed this as unreal, but at least four miracles occurred within the first two hours of the statue coming into his hands. With these experiences and others throughout the Center, Jack quickly came to understand that the universe is quite different from what he thought, and that the Center was to be a temple rather than a museum.

It soon became apparent that the Center should be based on community support. As a result, a nonprofit corporation was formed in 2003 to take on the Center's operations once tax exemption was received. We created our first Board of Directors, and applied for tax exemption. The IRS usually approves

such applications in a couple of months, but the IRS hadn't seen any organization like this before and it ended up taking two years. When the exemption was approved in 2005, the Center's operations and virtually all of the assets were transferred to this charitable organization (Jack donated almost everything he'd put into the Center). Since then, the Center has not been owned by Jack and has instead been operating as a tax-exempt charity governed by a diverse and dedicated Board.

There have been two unsuccessful attempts to move to larger quarters, and such efforts have since been shelved due to the current economic conditions. For the most part, we love the Center's current location, although everyone feels it's too crowded.

## How to Support Living Insights

The Center depends on community support, so please consider becoming an annual Supporter of The Living Insights Center at one of the following levels, each with certain benefits (besides the most important benefit of knowing that you're helping keep the Center going):

Level of Support	Minimum Donation	Benefits
Friend	\$50	Borrowing privileges from the Center's library
Seer	\$100	5 % discount on classes and most retail purchases; library privileges.
Visionary	\$250	10 % discount on classes and most retail purchases; library privileges.
Keystone	\$1200*	10 % discount on classes and most retail purchases; library privileges; special events.

\* (Lump sum or \$100/month commitment)

Of course, donations of any size are always appreciated, and whether or not you make a donation certainly won't affect how you're welcomed at the Center. Our goal is to raise \$30,000 through this program as soon as possible (ideally by the end of 2009), so please support us to the extent you can and to the extent you feel the Center is of value to you. Incidentally, none of the \$30,000 will be going to a salary for Jack. Donations to Living Insights are tax-deductible. Donations already made this year will be counted in determining Supporter status (status for one year from the date a donation threshold is reached). We've now made it possible for you to make donations online through PayPal — the easiest way to do so is to go to our website and click on the Donate to the Center link. *Thank you!*