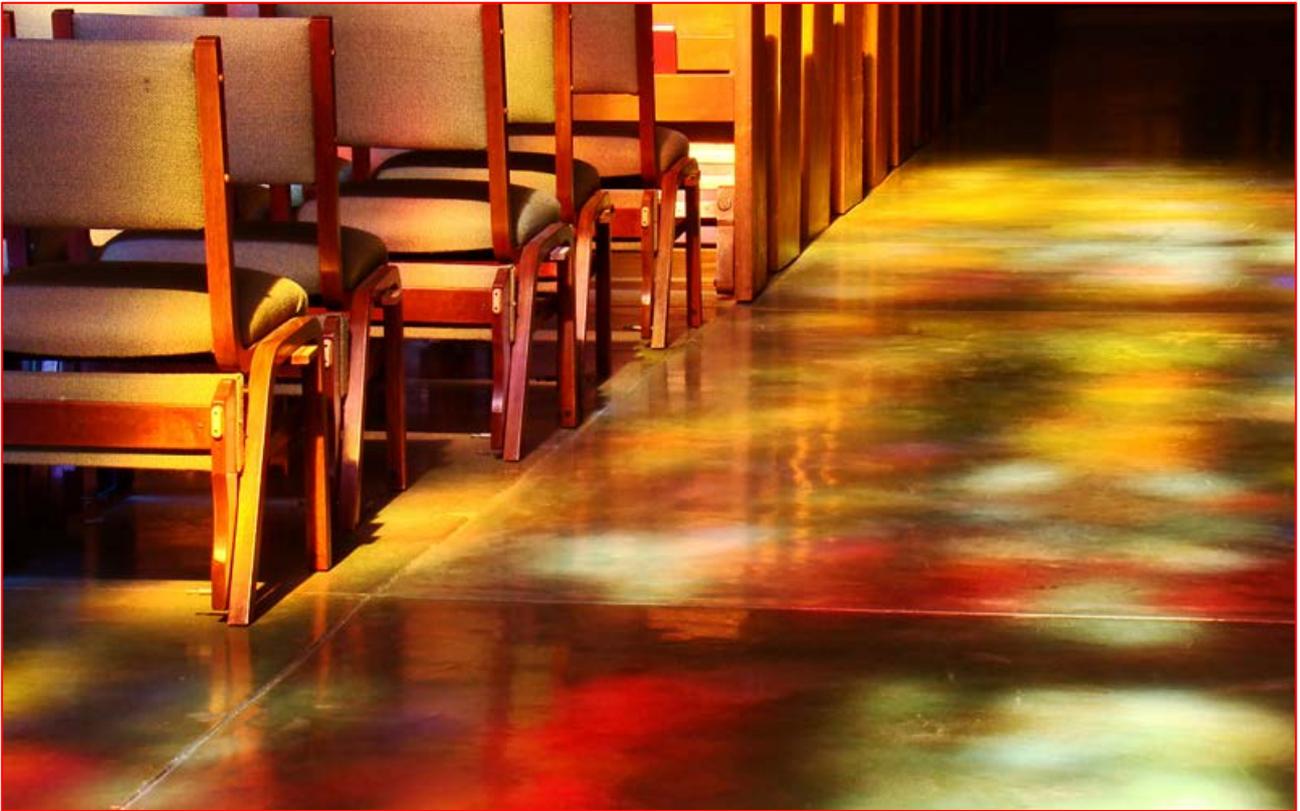


## *Evolving a Field of Love.*

*Madeline Duckett*



Recently I attended a very beautiful funeral service. Its beauty was attributable to many factors but began as I stepped into the church. It was a church with which I was not familiar yet what happened as I entered set the scene for the funeral to follow. The church exuded a distinct atmosphere of tranquility and sacred presence. It immediately calmed my spirit as well as my body, which was a little ‘frazzled’ from the sheer effort of pushing through traffic to find the venue. Despite the noises of people greeting one another, and despite those responsible for the service moving about to ensure that all was in order to begin, the atmosphere was one of invitation and ‘prayerfulness’. It was as if the very walls of the building had absorbed the prayers of countless people and church rituals over many years and now reached out to share this calming atmosphere with anyone open and receptive to receive it. I am sure that you have had some similar experience, not necessarily in a church but in some place that immediately calmed the spirit and invited you into silence and deeper reflection.

It is this ‘atmosphere’ that I would like to focus upon in the following reflection. As the name of our network states, we are part of the *“Contemplative Evolution Network”*. But the question is, just what are we hoping to “evolve”? I suggest that those who choose to be part of this network are ultimately involved in evolving a ‘field’ of love and compassion in the world.

The church described above exuded an atmosphere that drew me (and others) into a reflective, contemplative place where the words and actions of the funeral service simply articulated the faith of those present but also those of generations of pray-ers down through the years. Such “pray-ers” are people who, over time, have chosen and/or been drawn to come enter this place of worship and

prayerful reflection. For me it was like stepping into a ‘house of love’, and that Love was tangible. The atmosphere could perhaps be described as an invisible field that enveloped all comers, one which entered into them and held them in some sense of united attitude, feeling and purpose. It is something of this kind that is developing in those who take part in the contemplative activity of our network

In her book *Field of Compassion*, the late Judy Cannato<sup>1</sup> wrote eloquently about such a field - how it develops, and how it can be maintained, strengthened and ‘grown’. The book provides a picture and process for creating and strengthening such an invisible field of Love that bears fruit in compassion, healing and increased consciousness. We become more aware of our ability to create another reality in the world around us by how we are and by what we choose. She writes in the introduction:

*Making consistent choices out of ever-growing awareness creates a spirit, a field of energy that catches others up and invites them in...[C]reating a field of kindness or care with intentionality produces an environment fecund with healing...allowing us to move...into the kind of refulgent living that is at the heart of what Jesus means when he says, “I came that you may have life, and have it to the full.” (Jn. 10:10)<sup>2</sup>.*

As we participate in the contemplative activity which CEN encourages we help to evolve such a ‘field’ of love and compassion in the world at large. Each time we meditate together and hold those who are suffering in our intention for healing and relief, we help to *evolve* love just a little bit more in the environment. Slowly the consciousness of those immediately around us can be altered and this can begin to shift consciousness on an even larger scale. You may have your own experiences of just such a shift with a group in which you have lived or worked.



One CEN friend shared with me how her phone alarm is set for 4.00 pm each day, even though, due to the nature of her work, she is not able to break off, for example, in the middle of a meeting and meditate. The alarm notifies her to become conscious of the sacred time beginning and of those who can and will be gathering. It alerts her to enter this time herself and unite by intention with those who do gather to contemplate wherever they may be. It acts as a moment of mindfulness of those in pain or need, in the busy workplace itself as well as in the larger wounded world which greets us daily in the media and elsewhere. As well as this, the alarm is a talking point for those who curiously ask about its purpose and who may be drawn to join as well, thus strengthening the field a little more.

My experience in entering the church and experiencing its rich atmosphere - the fruit of prayer and contemplation over many years - is something of metaphor for what we

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<sup>1</sup> Judy Cannato, *Field of Compassion*, Sorin Books Notre Dame, Indiana, 2010.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid p. 6

continue to do as we light our candle and/or sound our gong and/or gather with other like-minded people to contemplate at 4 pm. The field we are creating at this time is between yet beyond ourselves and gathers into itself all open to enter its ambience. This regular activity of contemplation and holding love can be seen to contribute to the inner evolution of the world around us - the evolution of soul and spirit so desperately needed in our time.

Here, in this developing field of love and compassion we find ourselves distant from one another and yet together at the heart of all that is. Here we can pray in the beautiful words of Teilhard de Chardin who saw the larger picture much more clearly than we may ever be able to do:

*I love you Lord Jesus, because of the multitudes who shelter within you and whom, if one clings closely to you, one can hear with all the other beings murmuring, praying, weeping...I love you as a world, as this world which has captivated my heart.*<sup>3</sup>

For Teilhard everything existed in what he envisioned as the heart of Christ whom he saw as both here and still coming. For him Christ was the living, sacred Love-presence permeating and growing in the world and the cosmos. If we are able to even begin to see in this way, it is in the Christic heart that we too can hear the murmuring and weeping and longing and dreaming of the world. Here we rest for a while for we have stepped into a 'house of love' that dwells in the invisible midst of all things.



The church which I entered some time back exuded this 'house of love' feeling. It was a 'field', grown over many years by unknown people. Today we are becoming conscious that such a 'field' can be created outside of bricks and mortar and between nameless people we may never meet in the flesh. The human unfolding of consciousness is making this possible by means of thought-connection, spirit intention and personal choice. And technology is assisting in spreading the word of this and making connection to far-flung people and places more the norm. Perhaps we are being invited today to build a house of love, healing and compassion that is beyond borders and

boundaries, and rests on 'seeing' what the eyes of the body cannot see but hearts can sense through sustained contemplation and intentional loving!

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<sup>3</sup> Teilhard de Chardin, *Hymn of the Universe*, Collins London 1961 p.76