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GRAIL PROGRAMMES NEWSLETTER

Kleinmond, South Africa, March 2017



Stanislaus Lumano (2016-17 Tft Diploma course) shares with us a reflection paper on 'Inter-being'.

A reflection on "Inter-being"

By Stanislaus Wamukwamba Lumano

The Inter-relationship by Thich Nhat Hanh

You are me, and I am you.

Isn't it obvious that we "inter-are"?

You cultivate the flower in yourself,

So that I will be beautiful.

I transform the garbage in myself,

So that you do not have to suffer.

I support you; you support me.

I am in this world to bring you peace,

You are in this world to bring me joy.

These words by Thich Nhat Hanh - Vietnamese Buddhist monk, global spiritual leader, poet and peace activist - sum up the notion of an ecological 'household' - an interdependence within the bio(logical)diversity of all earth's community species and their variety of habitats (the biosphere).

"You Are Me..."

To be beautiful is to inter-be (Hope & Timmel, 1999) since 'beauty is in the eyes of the beholder'. More than superficial appearances, substantive beauty is intimate. Phonetically, intimacy sounds more like: 'into-me-see', that is to say, 'here I am, look at me, I have nothing to hide'. According to Donal Dorr (2008) our deepest heart's desire is an intimacy that is spiritual, a deep friendship.

IN THIS ISSUE

TRAINING FOR TRANSFORMATION

A reflection on "Inter-being".

By Stanislaus Lumano (Tft 2016-17)- p. 1-2

MTHIMKHULU COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Mthimkhulu Green Initiative Breaks ground.

By Lindia Trout - p. 2-3

THE GRAIL CENTRE

An ideal place for holiday accommodation, conferences and retreats. - p. 3

Intimacy is about getting rid of protective layers and facades and revealing oneself without fear of being judged or labelled. However, this requires trust. You and Me (We), don't have to prove ourselves so much as 'to be' ourselves - 'beyoutiful': Beautiful. Being oneself demands *cuer* - a courageous heart, that is, the courage to desire to be. Courage is not the absence of fear, but being able to make a conscious choice to live ones beliefs and values from the heart.

Inter-being is about an 'I-Thou' relationship; a personal encounter with 'an-other' not just another person nor any other person. That 'blood is thicker than water' is not the case always, for family doesn't necessarily mean blood, but who is willing to hold your hand when you need it most. As the saying goes, 'a friend in need is a friend indeed'. However, in this digital age, some people are like Bluetooth; if you stay close they stay connected, if they go away they find new 'devices' to connect with. As Albert Einstein rightly remarked, "I fear the day that technology will surpass our human interaction. The world will have a generation of idiots." Life is like a journey on a train, we boarded the train and met our parents. However, at some station, our parents will step down, significant others - siblings, friends, acquaintances and soulmates will board. We come to understand ourselves best through our relationships with other people.

Every person that we meet, no matter how brief, impacts our lives. It's up to us what lesson we draw from the meeting. "Some people come into our lives and leave footprints on our hearts and we are never ever the same" (Relationships n.d.). 'No one is an Island', and therefore; "You are me, and..."

"...I Am You..."

Thich Nhat Hanh says: "...I am You..." for "...I transform the garbage in myself so that you do not have to suffer". Transforming the garbage within requires empathy, not so much as to be understood as to understand... For it's in giving that we receive. Transformation doesn't happen in isolation, it is relational. Through our actions we influence others negatively or otherwise. Sometimes people are like garbage trucks that run around full of garbage (frustration, anger, disappointment, brokenness, bitterness, etc.). As their garbage piles up, they need a place to dump it and sometimes when they dump it on you, don't take it personally. Just smile, wish them well and move on. Do not take their garbage and spread it to other people at work, at home, in the streets, indeed, even in church. If we all chose to be angry at those who treat us unfairly, then the world would die of anger, frustration and bitterness. Admittedly, we are afraid to share with each other who we really are because, conscious of one's limitations and faults, we are scared we will not be accepted for who and what we are. So, we put on a mask, take on a *persona*, thereby concealing our true personality. A lot of trouble can be avoided in life if people would learn to talk to one another instead of talking about one another. It's in our vulnerability that one can come to realize that in fact "the rose and the garbage are one. If there was no rose there would be no garbage, but if there were no garbage there would be no rose" (Hope & Timmel, 1999).

"...We 'Inter-Are'"

That "...we 'inter-are'" is obvious from a critical consciousness of the current [ecological] crisis. From it the Greek *krisis*, literally meaning 'decision', is a turning point for better or worse. If environmental justice is to be attained, humanity requires a transition from dualism to a (w)holistic bio-centric worldview, where the separation of people from each other, people from nature and people from the transcendent, is seen as false dichotomies. As a new consciousness of cosmology and our amazing place in the universe emerges, there's need for a paradigm shift if sustainable development to be achieved. Modern society sees

nature as 'other', leading to a disregard for the impact of human activity on nature and natural resources thereby treating both human and non-human as commodities. 'Reading the world', it's evident that 'the book of nature' is one and indivisible. Religion's main role is to reconnect (*re-ligio*) us to the whole, to ourselves and to one another. What has been lost is honest relationship with mother earth and with one another.

Too much "me" can never find "you" or anything beyond itself. A world, not only outside us but within us as well, groans and moans in birth pangs and grief, reflecting an ecological spiritual consciousness that is redefining the centre of our existence as *interconnected*.

Mthimkhulu Green Initiative breaks ground

By Lindia Trout

The Mthimkhulu Greening Initiative started with the idea of an organic garden linked to the Smartkids early childhood development and afterschool programme.

The aim of the organic garden is to supply Smartkids with nutritious vegetables and a space where children can learn about science, nature and the environment from growing their own food and herbs. Children's appreciation for nature develops at a young age, so starting environmental education for kids as early as possible is advantageous for their development.



Mthimkhulu Greening Initiative organic garden.

The garden has attracted a huge amount of support. Since then it has grown into three exciting project initiatives that has drawn in partners and supporters including the Kogelberg Biosphere Reserve Company, the Department of Agriculture, the local councillors, local businesses and volunteers.

The three projects will now include: the organic food and herb garden, a fynbos nursery co-operative - that will create jobs locally and also sell

indigenous cuttings - and an education and training component.

We are excited about how this project has brought together so many supporters and volunteers who are willing to invest their energy and time in taking this initiative forward. We look forward to seeing how this initiative will grow and expand.

The Grail Centre - an ideal place for holiday accommodation, conferences and retreats

The Grail Centre is an ideal place for holiday accommodation, conferences and retreats. It is located in Kleinmond, at about 100 km from Cape Town and 40 km from Hermanus. Surrounded by trees and mountains, it has thirteen self-contained Cape cottages, a swimming-pool, two meeting rooms and a dining room in a quiet atmosphere for work and relaxation. It is a perfect place to come for a holiday with your family. For bookings contact 028 271 3410 or grailadm@mweb.co.za.

Area Attractions

Blue Flag beach (10 min walk)
Pristine Fynbos Reserve
Mountain hiking trails
Betty's Bay African Penguin Colony
Wild horses
Birding at Rooisand Nature Reserve



The view from Kleinmond mountains.

ABOUT US

THE GRAIL CENTRE TRUST

The Grail Centre Trust is based in Kleinmond, Western Cape. This Not-for-Profit Organisation delivers two programmes, namely Training for Transformation and Mthimkhulu Community Development Programme. In addition, the Grail Centre Conference and Retreat Centre can accommodate groups of up to 50 people.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Mthimkhulu Community Development Programme

Tel. +27 (0)28 271 5213

Fax. +27 (0)28 271 5639

Email: admin@grailprogrammes.org.za

Website: www.grailprogrammes.org.za

Facebook: Mthimkhulu-Community-Development

Training for Transformation

Tel. +27 (0)28 271 4887

Fax. +27 (0)86 576 88 65

Email: tft@grailprogrammes.org.za

Website: www.trainingfortransformation.co.za

Facebook: TrainingforTransformation

The Grail Centre

Tel. +27 (0)28 271 3410

Fax. +27 (0)28 271 4704

Email: grailadm@mweb.co.za

Website: www.thegrailcentre.org.za

Facebook: [grailcentre.kleinmond](https://www.facebook.com/grailcentre.kleinmond)

Our work is not possible without your support.
Please contribute and contact Eunice on
eunice@grailprogrammes.org.za.



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