



The circle tale this month is a reflection by Christina and other voices of From the Four Directions work, in a year when our sense of the world has been made much smaller by the interconnection of global events and the tenacity of the circle.

Circle Tale #27, January 2002

A New Year

THREE BREATHS is a simple meditation taught by the Vietnamese monk, Thich Nhat Hanh. One breath to "let go..." One breath to "be here..." One breath to ask, "now what?..." "Now what?" is a huge question during a month that has held the confluence of Ramadan, Hanukkah, Christmas, Solstice, and New Year while war is raging, polarities run high, and divisiveness lurks behind the "united we stand" slogans posted across the USA.

Now what?

Last December, we returned from our first circle practicum in England with the global initiative, From the Four Directions. In the midst of torrential winter storms, (mostly young) community leaders from twenty countries gathered around the fireplaces of a Victorian retreat house and experienced the circle and each other. This rich diversity was continued in March when a North American practicum was held in the USA, and in May when a pan-African-European-Indian practicum was held in South Africa. In six months, From the Four Directions reached community leaders in 37 countries and the circle showed its marvelous cultural adaptability.

A lot has happened to this work in the past 12 months. After changing economics thwarted all efforts to fund it through philanthropy and grants, From the Four Directions shifted into a movement co-arising in several dozen countries because people simply carried their leadership and called the circle. Circle hosts are functioning in Africa, Europe, and North America. People are connecting through cyberspace to share stories and challenges: their voices reflect their own journeys this year:

Felipe, a Colombian living in Germany writes: "During this year I have been using many of the principles I learn for my life from all your stories and shared experiences... I have had the chance to interact again with different/diverse people and it seems that much of learnings I had strongly support me here. Let's keep our dreams up for the coming year."

Monica writes from Denmark, "I just felt like sharing an appreciation for the power and beauty of the circle. Here in Denmark we started two circles after the England practicum - one in Copenhagen and one in Rhus. Both circles have been "operating" for a year. Some people have only come to one or two circles and then left - but those of us who stayed have found a breathing-space and an "oasis" for meaningful conversations. We are sharing the hosting now. Many of us are beginning to use the circle in our other work...Lately, after our world has been thrown into more chaos - we / I have particularly appreciated our circle - safe space."

From Kenya, Kepta writes: "I imagine of the emergence of a powerful and daring transformative force of new African leaders based on different and higher values and visions in this continent from Cape to Cairo and from Nairobi to Niamey... I dream of this continent slipping like a giant python from it's unattractive and jaded skin of yesteryears, finding the formula to utilize its immense resources for its own development and progress. I dream of Africa taking a pole position to lead humanity to its next level of development..."

At the PeerSpirit office we notice circle work is increasingly self-organizing and self-sustaining and we notice it co-arising in many variations. We find ourselves among colleagues we didn't know a few months



ago, meeting people via internet connections and other programs, such as the Millionth Circle 2005 Initiative; or co-sponsoring "Conversation Week" in Seattle with The NewRoadMap Foundation.

Over fifty people a week visit the PeerSpirit web site to download the basic circle guidelines available there. We have four Circle Practica on the calendar and are looking for time to return to Europe and Africa. Our nonprofit arm, The Calling the Circle Foundation, is making initial plans to gather circle practitioners at a small conference next winter.

And so we face 2002 with determined hope. We trust that as a global family we are entering an absolutely essential period of dialogue in which circle has an important role to play and PeerSpirit has an significant gift to offer. We breathe...taking time at the turning of the year to rest, reflect, and set our intentions. We peers of Spirit -- Now what?

If you have a tale to tell, contact the PeerSpirit office and we'll help you share it.

*For more information on many applications of circle, visit our web site at www.peerspirit.com and subscribe to our monthly Circle Tale newsletter using the subscription mechanism at the top right of the page. Your e-mail address will **not** be shared or used by anyone other than PeerSpirit, and you can unsubscribe yourself at any time.*