

“There is no place  
on this wide earth

from ocean’s boundless space  
to mountain’s highest peak

where nature’s power is not divine  
and nature’s presence not a shrine.”

## Shinto



World-views, religions did not begin in buildings. It may have been the upright stance that allowed human beings to survey their world’s horizon. It were the features of nature, of the land, a rock, a waterhole, a tree or a spring that gathered and guarded meaning, and awakened memory.

The columns of a Greek temple remind of trees surrounding a clearing. The word temple derives from ‘temnein’, ‘to cut’: hence clearing, separate and sacred space. Islam began in an oasis and ‘mosque’ means ‘space’.

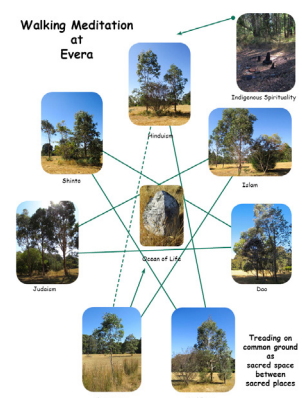


Aboriginal sacred spaces are guarding sacred stories, a nature holy book, repository of spiritual culture, economic knowledge and irreplaceable source of education.

Synagogue and ecclesia, eglise mean ‘gathering’, church, kirk, kerk, Kirche mean (house) of the Lord. The shape of a dome may remind of an original cave...

For a dialogue towards renewal within and in between world-views, spiritual cultures or religions, it may be refreshing for participants to leave established buildings, places of worship or study, and go out and forward to new beginnings and to revisit and reconnect with our origins in new ways.

The ‘Walking Meditation Project’ at Evera, Trentham, has been developed as a venue for such an opportunity. A semicircular clearing in Victoria’s Wombat State Forest, a clearing wide enough to provide space for 12 sacred sites, sufficiently distanced from each other for each site to create its own shape and character, and altogether sheltered enough to form a sanctuary for all: seven sites located in the form of a seven pointed star, imaginary homes for the world’s seven main religions. Of the other 5: three in the circumference: homes to the world’s Indigenous/Aboriginal Spiritual Cultures, to the Sikh Religion and the Baha’i Faith; and





two sites within the circle: Humanism and - at the centre - the 'Ocean of Life'.

In the context of the interfaith movement:

Participants are invited to 're-visit' the original spiritual impulse of each world-view, when it was not yet embodied in the structures that evolved as the means to realize its original potential to bring people closer to what for them was and is the most sacred: God, Cosmic Law, Human Dignity...

Here is the new rule;  
Break the wine glass  
And fall toward  
The Glassblower's breath.  
**Jall-al-din Rumi**

There is little need to seek a 'common ground'. We share the earth, nature, the light, the wind by walking on it and in it...  
And the surrounding stillness is a good space for our listening.



The medium by which spirits understand each other  
is not the surrounding air,  
but the freedom they possess in common.  
**S.T Coleridge**



After having dwelt for a brief time in each of the main sacred sites and having immersed ourselves in what makes each of them sacred in its own way, and after having walked in meditation from site to site on common ground - under the one sky, on the one earth - we might do well to sit around for a conversation.

Emerging from a meditative stillness we may share our experiences, observations, insights and - perhaps - some glimpses of a future in which our origins and present understanding appear in a new light and new possibilities getting closer to the source or goal...

To be silent.  
One who practiced silence more intently  
touches on the roots of speech.  
**R.M.Rilke**

The walk is more than half a mile long and - with moments of concentration, meditation, contemplation and prayer at each site - takes from one to three hours. The walk itself happens preferably in silence. There is ample opportunity for conversation afterwards.

As most participants come from outside Trentham itself, most 'events' begin at ca 10am and end at ca 4.30pm: the walk in the morning after a cuppa and short introduction. Participants bring something to share for lunch. A meeting space and modest amenities are available on the land. Drinks and biscuits for morning and afternoon teas are provided.

**The Golden Rule as central theme: Love God and love your neighbour**

Life wants to renew itself. The living spirit is greater than the body it inhabits. The spirit of each of the "world-views" is greater than the ways and forms through which they embody, understand and express themselves.



The project is open for the dialogue to be informed by the deeper perceptions and profound understandings flowing from initiation teachings and training within the different philosophical and religious streams.

What used to be hidden as 'occult' or 'esoteric' is now available, either in confused, distorted and commercialized ways on the consumerist 'spiritual supermarket' or in well-established contexts of integrity and competence.

**Do not treat others in ways  
In which you yourself don't want to be treated.**

### Why the Golden Rule?

Expressed at different times, in different ways and cultures, the Golden Rule can be seen as crystallization of living customs and laws that have guided peoples for thousands of years in their relation with one another ('horizontal') as well as with nature, higher realities, God, the Good ('vertical')

These customs and laws had been formulated during the "axial time" (ca. 1500BCE ---ca. -600CE) when the World-Views developed their current forms, texts and practices and when economic and political life was (still) embedded in a spiritual culture for which the natural world was an expression of spiritual presence as well.

Since public life has been fragmented into its ecological/economic, legal/political and reflective/cultural functions, (a second "axial time?"), the Golden Rule has remained as philosophical and/or religious guidance for individuals' private lives, but lost its role as basic rule for all public life, now often dominated by economic interests



**The essence of economy is in one word: attention.**

O.Mikhael Aivanhov

Why economy?



The creation of an economy that works for all requires a wisdom like the one nature displays in its most mysterious processes of digestion and reproduction.

It needs spiritual awareness and guidance at an even deeper level than the political process to establish justice or facilitating the freedom in which creative culture can thrive.

To break the consumerism that now consumes the earth requires a transformation in the order of an evolutionary step. Attention to the true nature of consumption and the sacredness of daily bread has always been a spiritual concern. Today's focus is to awaken economic life to its own deepest spiritual origin and task, to enable all of us to live and work in the care and dignity of a true human sisterhood/brotherhood in partnership with nature.

The project is a rather unique contribution to education, an experience rather than a formal lesson. An experience like entering a conversation that is already going on. You might be late or feel like an intruder, but no, you are welcome and yet, you naturally become still and attentive of what is being spoken... Gradually the conversation begins to make sense of what you have already learned, and – in the end – it may help in making sense of the learning that continues, in the classroom or in life.

The notion 'comparative' religion is not quite right when it is understood as comparing 'better' with 'less' etc. And – of course – 'world-view' is a wider concept than 'religion'. But in this context comparative might rather mean 'comparing notes' as in: 'I see it this way, how do you see this?' 'What is your experience, for me it is like this'. Etc.





The project doesn't replace any discursive learning/teaching nor any interfaith walks between established places of worship in cities or towns. On the contrary, it complements them and may even begin to develop a sense of how church, synagogue, mosque, a Quakers' 'Friends House' in our neighbourhood might form a silent pattern of interconnections...

The project is supported by a modest library, which is open for participants to explore...Some references relevant to this introduction:

- Nguyen Anh-Huong & Thich Nhat Hanh. Walking Meditation Sounds True Inc. Boulder USA 2006 -\*-*Inspiration for the form of the project.*
- Earth Celebration 1997 25th – 28th September 1997 in Waldenburg-Wasserfallen, Switzerland Ganga Verlag Walzenhausen. Switzerland. -\*- *The inspiration for the content of the project.*
- A.P. Shepherd. A Scientist of the Invisible An introduction to the life and work of Rudolf Steiner. (1954) Floris Books Edinburgh 1983. *Canon Shepherd, Anglican priest, Vice-Dean of Worcester Cathedral, demonstrating the relevance of Steiner's spiritual work for many fields of life including religion.*
- Anonymus (Valentin Tomberg) Meditations on the Tarot. A Journey into Christian Hermeticism. Element Books UK 1991. -\*- *"It is simply astonishing. I have never read such an extensive account of the 'perennial philosophy' [...]. There is hardly a line without some profound significance. [...] To me it is the last word of wisdom."* Bede Griffith. In: *Beyond the Darkness.* New York 1999



## Convener:



Henk Bak, born 1931, Nederland. Historian and philosopher, Hist Drs Nijmegen 1964. Teacher and lecturer at secondary and tertiary levels, 1959-1996 (since 1978 in Australia): history, philosophy and cultural anthropology of craft, art and design. Retired as senior lecturer from Monash University. 1994-1996 convener of "Religious Conversations" at the Caulfield Campus. Currently preparing a study and anthology: 'World-views in Dialogue' for publication.

**Contribution:** by donation, to cover expenses.

## How to get here:

By train: to Woodend and then coach to Trentham: limited, weekdays only, please check timetable.

By car: **Calder freeway from direction Melbourne** exit Woodend/Macedon or from direction Bendigo: exit Woodend/Romsey. In Woodend: turn off to Daylesford/Trentham. In Trentham: Forest Street is the first Street to the left after the sign 'Trentham'. No 14 is to the left.

**Western Freeway :** exit Greendale/Blackwood, Trentham. At T intersection turn right: Forest Street is the last street to the right.

**From Daylesford:** follow Main Street/High Street : last street to the right is Forest Street.

**For information /bookings: phone (03) 5424 1702  
or email: [hbak@westnet.com.au](mailto:hbak@westnet.com.au)  
or write to Henk Bak, 14 Forest Street, Trentham 3458**