

REPORT #2 FROM SHALOM MOUNTAIN -----ELLIOTT #2153

Though not one of the 2,000 members of the Shalom Mountain community in diaspora, I am a dear friend & former colleague of its founder-director, Jerry Jud, who accordingly has me on his mailinglist, as I him on mine. Today (5May87) I read his Report #2, #1 arriving 7 years ago & #3 promised for the year 1994. The reports, addressed to churches, are prefaced by a one-page letter thus: "Dearly Beloved Members of the Shalom Community." As the document itself--"Reflections of a Journeyor, Part II--A Shalom Mountain Paper," 27 Feb 87--is public, I should & do feel no hesitance in making this Thinksheet an open letter.

Dear Jerry,

*Loree & I deeply appreciate being included in your solemn call to action on behalf of suffering humanity & our threatened earth, for that is--we rejoice to observe--the heart of your report. So that my readers need not have your Report in hand, I'm including enough of "you" to context "me," my brief commentary on your Report. Loree & I share your handwritten hope that before long "we can see each other again," so inadequate is paper in comparison with skin. So here goes:*

1. I rejoice in your continued affirmation of our Christian faith & your membership, & occasional preaching, in a church near your retreat-&-conference center. Hang in there, man! But it's not easy to see how you manage it, given your mixing it up with the Goddess: "As the owner of Shalom Mountain and as a priest of Jesus Christ, I have called for the dedication of the mountain to the Goddess. This does not mean that I am no longer Christian. All of my life I intend to bear the shame and glory of bearing the name of Christian." As I spoke on the occasion of your Mountain's original dedication, before the local return of the Goddess, I am forever a part of the holiness of the place, and have historical seniority over Her, though you should not feel that I would ever make anything of Her being thus inferior to me in the mountain's long hierarchy of time.
2. In preaching "the return of the Goddess," you mix the paradigm metaphors. Which is she, back (but you badmouth linear time!) or up (resurrected from the space under our feet, where she was--linear time again?--driven underground when she lost the cosmic battle of the sexes, being inferior at least in this sense)?
3. How do you relate your two orientations, to action & to the Goddess? The former correlates with biblical linear time, time during which, which can thus be also time for which & in which, change time, progress time. The latter historically has never correlated with improvements in the human condition, but rather with a static consciousness & stagnant society priest-ridden & male-dominated. The current feminist movement has deconstructed-reconstructed the Goddess myth, creating romantic revisionisms that have less purchase on history than science fiction has on science. I am distressed to see you preaching this Goddess Golden Age Past as though it were history--and prophecy!
4. I must remark your internal contradiction that while you preach androgyny, you are practicing both patriarchy (as founder-director-owner) & matriarchy (the two women you've set up to rule with you having the power to outvote you & then, upon your demise, to succeed you). Why should you not practice androgyny & provide for the turning over of Shalom Mountain to a male-female couple? For androgyny on this matter, Sun Moon is a better model than you: The Messiah, says he, will come--in fulfilment of the male-female "image of God"--as a male-female couple. The psychosociodynamic of Shalom Mountain is this: It's always been your show (why not?), and the reality of your patriarchy has become invisible to you, with the result that you have deluded yourself into imagining that two females could & would continue the ministry to humanity you have begun. Forgive me if "deluded" is too strong: I think it is not. I think of a two-women-run oppressive religious community, the Community of Jesus, here on Cape Cod. The illogic of romantic feminism runs like this: (1) Things are bad under the boys; (2) Things were better under the girls (the prehistorical-romantic myth referred to above); (3) Things will be better again when the girls get control again.

Yet you are ambivalent about this project. While you state that your community is "working on the central hunch that phallic power is about to destroy the earth and that the long established hierarchy must yield again to the feminine," elsewhere your talk is not of power reversal ("yielding") but of power sharing, what I might call a Tantric-Taoist-Jungian balance of masculine-feminine in each person & between the sexes. As your orientation is more psychological (your PhD being in psy. of religion) than political, I suspect that the balance idea has more energy in your heart-mind than the power-reversal idea....Which is as good a place as any to note how uncritically you accept certain psy. notions of Freud & Jung. Eg, often in your Report you use "project" in the Freudian way, humanity projecting its images on "the cosmic screen." The anthropocentric arrogance of this is risible: The divine mirror or screen just holds still while we do our thing on it! The reverse of the Bible's beginning, which has us the screen & God the projectionist. Of course there's some epistemological sense to Freud's "projection" image, but he & you (he explicitly, you unwittingly) go beyond that to deny revelation (except, in your case, wherever revelation is seen as exepetetic to an otherwise grounded belief, such as "God is love"). As for Jung, here's an instance of your uncritical acceptance of his worldview: "I believe that we are born with all the wisdom of the universe within us as part of the collective unconscious." By this doctrine, Jung slew all three of his fathers--the pastor, the psychiatrist, & God (whom he "knew").

5. What a rough & unfair ride you give the Bible! You seem to have swallowed whole the radical-feminist Bible-bashing. The Bible begins with an androgynous story (Gn.1.1-2.4a) of male-female equality in being & doing, but you never refer to it. Instead, several times you refer to an earlier & inferior story the Bible deliberately subordinates to the opening story even though the historical order of the stories is the reverse of the canonical order. You are biblical in preaching "no true inner journey without the outer journey." Well, neither journey can be true when the Bible is abused in the interest of alienated-politicized feminism. You say "my journey is a continuation of the Biblical Story," but I don't see the respect for and wrestling with Scripture I'd expect of someone who says that. I don't see Bible study, or even prayer, on your list of disciplines for "marshaling energy": "yoga, meditation and fasting." And I hear nothing of the biblical themes of sin, repentance, grace, forgiveness, obedience, humility, gratitude, the joyful practice of the presence of God, the rule & realm of God, the return of Jesus (not the Goddess!), Christian community-church, salvation here-hereafter. You say "the spiritual journey has more to do with the religion of wings than with the religion of control....those of us who live the religion of wings care for the earth, long and work for peace, the end of hunger and the freedom of the oppressed"--but why badmouth control when you control the whole process from "unblocking" people's unconscious "for their journey" to the dynamics of the processes and on to the action options (peace, hunger, ecology, the feminist movement)? Your own genes have wings, your personality is itself unblocking, your spirit is debonair, your touch is light, and all that is your style of control. I like it, I like the kind of guru you are; but I don't like your specious wings/control distinction, which seems aimed to disparage traditional Western religious leadership and thus to discourage your followers from participation in church & synagogue.

6. You're against preaching sex "only within the context of marriage," but you say nothing of the down side of sex with all its disorientations & diseases (to which now AIDS has been added). I get the feeling that for you, sex is more wings than control--the adolescent & recreational view. Where are you now on covenant, loyalty-faithfulness, responsibility-accountability? Since you're not to surface with another report for another seven years, I'd expect some guidance to your followers on so important an area of personal & social control....I too am for "bridging the gap between the Sacred & the Sexual," but I reject the nature worship that collapses the biblical "holy" into the earth-sacred. I'm against the dominance of redemption over creation or vice versa, the latter being your position & that of Mt. Fox, whose "creation spirituality" is a pathetic substitution of his mouth for his (useless-by-vow) penis. But I'm radically pro-earth, anti-humanity wherever irreversible damage to the biosphere looms...But many of my Thinksheets, all of which you get, touch on many of the concerns we share & are working away at, you in your corner & I in mine.