

1. EARTHFOLK AWAKEN

The Mushroom Cloud and Starship Earth

To start seeing, hearing and sensing the Sensual Preciousness vision requires that you come to grasp the vision which currently guides you, and discern how it determines how you, at this moment, see, hear and sense. Earthfolk identify the vision which dominates global culture as the one which produced the two iconic images of the atomic Mushroom Cloud and the snapshot of the Earth seen from outer space, of Starship Earth. These two images are graphic bookends to a vision and an imagining of what it means to be human.

On August 6, 1945 humans began to see and feel as they had never before. On that day they first saw themselves living under the Mushroom Cloud. While, initially, it was an image which mainly meant that a world war had ended, it endowed humans with a new way of imagining and so defining what it means to be human. It empowered them to see into what only gods were supposed to know, namely, the fundamental structure of reality. It empowered them to act as only gods were supposed able to act, namely, to harness the primal power to create and/or destroy the Earth. Many sensed that they were no longer "human" as previously defined. Consequently, new answers to Life's Big Questions were in the offing. As the Nuclear Age opened, a new Big Story emerged.

At its best the glory of the Big Story which dropped the Bomb is a celebration of the unfathomable imagination which collective human effort can produce. A shaman, at that time, spoke of "The Spiritual Repercussions of the Atom Bomb." He saw a linkage between the fire in men's minds and the fire of God's love. Nuclear fire was an invitation from God for humans to advance in consciousness, to become a global

people and truly create a brave new world. Reflecting upon the risk of mutual self-annihilation, global leaders proclaimed that no nation would ever go to war, again.

Nuclear fire enabled humans to imagine and explore a sub-atomic nuclear world, and to dream of amazing ways to smother the nuclear fire which could be unleashed from this strange realm of reality. The Mushroom Cloud celebrated the genesis of an awe-inspiring fire which quickly lit up the imagination of those who dreamed of solving humankind's major resource problems and harnessing this seemingly inexhaustible nuclear fuel to travel among the planets and galaxies.

Knowing Without Human Senses

Most significant to Earthfolk is that the Mushroom Cloud freed human imagination from the constraints of the five human senses. The sub-atomic nuclear world can only be imagined, not humanly sensed. The Mushroom Cloud became a symbol of an uncommon way of sensing. Nuclear scientists developed and had to rely upon machines to "know" and "sense" this world of split atoms. It was a world whose actions and reactions were traceable, for example, in a bubble chamber, but not knowable in any way humans had ever previously claimed to know.

While machines had been used to explore the microscopic and macroscopic worlds, these devices were adjuncts to the human senses, e.g., looking through a microscope or a telescope. The microscopic world was part of everyday reality—humans just needed magnifying machine glasses. In the same light, telescopes allowed humans "far vision," as is the origin of the word. The atomic and nuclear world, in sharp contrast, could and would never be directly sensed. All knowing and sensing was through interpreting data recorded by machine activity. The nuclear and

sub-atomic world was and will never be part of everyday sensate reality. It is a machine sensed world in which human sensing is an adjunct to machine knowing.

For many, machine sensing was claimed as true progress. It removed the annoying variable of human sensuality. While humans could know through the five senses, they could never just do so. Their five senses were always a part of a whole which was greater than their sum, namely, human feeling. Every human sense is interpreted by an emotion. For Earthfolk, sense with emotion defines human sensuality. Sensuality is, from a "pure science" approach, a less than ideal method of knowing because it can never be purely objective. For humans everything sensed is simultaneously felt, e.g., as beautiful, harmonious, right fitting or elegant, as is the Quantum mathematical theory developed to explore the atomic world.

Ideally and theoretically, machine recordings and reports are not polluted by the subjective and idiosyncratic feelings of humans. Nevertheless, even when they discipline themselves with methodological rigor, human scientists impose their feelings on their sensate readings. By nature, humans cannot be completely objective. The "I" is always feeling while it is thinking and these feelings taint evaluation and interpretation. While a scientist cannot but be moved by a sunrise, for it is programmed into the basic human core of sensuality, a machine will never be distracted by beauty or harmony or disturbed by unhappiness with its job. The fly in the scientist's ointment has always been that human knowing is sensual. With nuclear age machines, this irksome problem, it appeared, could finally be solved.

Nuclear Imagination: Vaporizing Humans

With great optimism it was forecasted that, one day, humans would be able to understand the basic building blocks of reality and so know how the world had been created. It was envisioned that, once the fundamental structure of reality was understood, humans could employ that knowledge to explain how everything really fitted together. They could explain the Alpha moment—Creation and Where and How All Came to Be, and the Omega moment—Where and How All Things Are Going and Will End. Practical applications for improving the lives of all people, ranging from cures using nuclear medicines to advances in genetic manipulation to the positive ecological impact of nuclear powered transportation, were excitedly proclaimed.

Earthfolk see the Nuclear Fire and its promise. Despite problems with nuclear waste and other practical operational challenges associated with harnessing nuclear power, the fact of nuclear energy is here. But what is critical to Earthfolk is that nuclear energy stimulates an imagination—that of the Mushroom Cloud, and a consequent set of acceptable heartfelt actions—foremost being dropping the Bomb, atomizing humans.

The Mushroom Cloud when first seen, and when ever seen, evokes primal feelings. Its sight provokes breakdown or breakthrough. For most it unleashes a feeling of dreadful fear that paralyzes. For others it unleashes a feeling of absolute power, a heady human sense of positive pride, and a sense of relief that, given enough time, humans can assemble together, as the scientists did in the Manhattan Project, and solve just about any earthly problem.

While the Mushroom Cloud's Big Story presents an amazing vision, we Earthfolk are more awestruck when we look at the personal Stories of

nuclear scientists and military leaders. *How have humans who are inspired by the Mushroom Cloud's Big Story acted?* What Earthfolk reflect upon is that nuclear energy was first used to obliterate and vaporize human flesh. The dropping of the Atomic Bomb on Hiroshima, Japan on August 6, 1945 was the first heartfelt act in the opening paragraph of the personal Story of the pioneering nuclear scientists and atomic war military leaders. Since that time few other Mushroom Cloud personal Stories have been told which testify to other than military uses, inventions and applications for nuclear energy. Some have harnessed the nuclear fire to generate a modicum of electricity. Others have applied the devices which are used to explore the sub-atomic world to improve aspects of medical knowledge and practice. Yet, when Earthfolk hear the phrase "nuclear energy" or once again observe the Mushroom Cloud we anticipate that a discussion of war or of a military application will follow.

At its worse, the Mushroom Cloud reflects the imagination of a Big Story which terrifies those who ponder the Bomb's insight and moral that we humans cannot control what we produce. Its Big Answer to the Big Question, "What is the purpose of Life?" is haunting, since the voice from within the Mushroom Cloud whispers, "Self-annihilation." Or, to the Big Question, "What is especially human about being human?" the Answer is clearly ironic, namely, that humans are a species whose good intentions more often than not pave the way to another region of hell. Or, "How should we live?" Big Answer, "Endlessly at war in fear of and seeking to dominate other people."

At the time of the first blast there were calls to put the nuclear genie back into the bottle. Earthfolk understand that once a way of imagining and a novel way of human sensing has been discovered and unleashed, it is

almost impossible to suppress. For Earthfolk the most disturbing legacy of the Mushroom Cloud is its peculiar definition of human intimacy.

Human Intimacy No Longer Valued

How did the Mushroom Cloud re-define human intimacy? Earthfolk see this emergence of machine sensing versus sensual sensing as the most profound impact of the Scientism Big Story. Scientists had, for centuries, been moving towards modeling humans as machines. It is popular to talk of the body as if it is a bio-mechanical device (which in the Scientism Big Story, it is). Heady research strives to create bionic replacement parts so that humans can live longer as quasi-machines. For some the ultimate goal is to be able to make humans as machinelike as possible and machines, eventually, into their own self-sufficient "life" forms.

With the discovery of the nuclear world, the model moved beyond describing humans as machines to defining humans as bundles of atomic particles. This was a significant step in the reduction of "human" essence to something nonhuman. Now it was not just the nonhuman machine (which was still able to be sensed, that is, touched, etc.) as model but the insensible world of nuclear particle clouds. Scientism's triumph was its assertion that the Basic Truth is that Reality is of Non-Human Stuff. It is not a difficult leap to go from this model to grasping why the first heartfelt act of nuclear scientists was a Warrior's Quest act of not just slaying humans but of vaporizing them, that is, changing them back into nuclear stuff. For, after all, what is another human but just a whiff of atoms? *Poof!*

Scientism's Big Answers changed after the Mushroom Cloud appeared. Before then it explained matters with a certain, almost adolescent, innocence. Though the theory of Evolution had led to applying the

sobering phrase “survival of the fittest” as part of almost every Big Answer, the pre-Mushroom Cloud Scientism Big Story spoke glowingly and rapturously about the Future in terms of inevitable Progress which was grounded in the fact that the human mind, given enough time, would unveil the mysteries of the universe. Many foretold a humanity which would evolve a super-consciousness. Some foresaw a certain immortality for humanity which would be achieved by replacing mortal flesh with a “living machine” in which the human mind existed as pure thought.

With the discovery of the Atomic Bomb came the knowledge of the atomic nature of all reality. Through their work nuclear scientists clearly demonstrated that all reality is interconnected. They showed that at the sub-atomic level all humanity is made of the same basic stuff, and that we are all simply that one stuff. This insight into basic reality could give rise to a declaration that all humans are intimates each of the other, but it did not and does not. And, more than likely it never will. Their Big Answers to the Big Questions concerning the meaning and purpose of life were still trapped within the limits of the Mushroom Cloud’s vision and imagination. Instead of rejoicing that science had removed the primary reason for justifying human conflict and war, namely, that the Other is Intimate Enemy, they dropped the Bomb, which, among many things, said to the world, “Fear us! We now possess the power which gives us complete Dominion over all living forms!” Instead of answering, “We live on the One Earth. We are One Family. We are all One Flesh, One Mind, One Soul,” they did not pause—nary a breath’s hesitation—before ratcheting up their military might, even moving to militarize outer space.

While Nuclear Fire remains trapped within the imagination of the Mushroom Cloud, we Earthfolk value the unintended consequence it

produce, namely, the insight that the interconnectedness of all things at the atomic level is a useful metaphor for human intimacy, that is, humans are all the same atom! (“Atom” and Adam—inevitable Biblical pun.)

Instead of affirming the metaphorical unity between nuclear atoms and human hearts, the Mushroom Cloud was used to devalue human intimacy. The Bomb’s capability of annihilating all life, even of the bomber nation, at any given instant, manifests a total disregard and lack of reverence for life in any form. Under the Mushroom Cloud there is no concept or reality called intimacy. Instead of building a connecting metaphor upward from the atom to the human heart, a disconnecting metaphor surfaces from the Mushroom Cloud. It is that all life can be disconnected until there are just atoms. And that to do so is not a violation of any sort, rather it is simply returning Life to its essence, i.e., its nuclear state.

The Mushroom Cloud’s legacy is this reductionistic and annihilating metaphor of Life and human life as a whiff of atoms. It leads to the assertion that among all clusters of atoms there is no intimacy, just a (machine sensed) cloud of nuclei. Its Big Answer to what is special about humans is, “Nothing.” Its answer about the future—“Why are humans on Earth, and where are we going as a species,” is “To wage Endless War and realize self-annihilation.”

It is understandable, then, that when we Earthfolk look at the Mushroom Cloud, we are overwhelmed by a pervasive feeling of powerlessness. The Mushroom Cloud simply frightens those who open themselves to its primal emotion of vaporizing fear. All are immobilized by an awesome and drenching sense of terror, helplessness and insignificance.

Endless Warring as Heartfelt Act

How does the Mushroom Cloud set the boundaries for possible heartfelt actions? Since humans are but whiffs of atomic stuff, and since there is only dis-connectedness of anything human in the nuclear metaphor, iconically and emotionally the Mushroom Cloud *can only* evoke hopelessness and despair. This vision of hopelessness and despair validates the key heartfelt act of Warrior's Questers who are Endlessly Warring. They endlessly war because they live in dreadful fear of the Other as Intimate Enemy.

Endless Warring is the reductionistic act supreme. It reduces all human issues and concerns to the act of exercising Dominion over another, subjugating them or murdering them. Murder is one way of rendering a human into non-living stuff. Slaying is atomic vaporization in slow motion. The Warrior's Quester's heartfelt act of slaying expresses and makes present the Mushroom Cloud's vision of human life as, at its core, just a bundle of atoms. Consequently, the answers are obvious to: What is the value of an individual life? What is the value of Life, collectively? *Zilch*.

Always remember that the initial Mushroom Cloud event was the Warrior's Quester's defining heartfelt act, namely, to slay other humans. The Cloud's imaginative heritage is sourced in hatred and violence, and it remains nurtured by and in obeisance to those emotions. The Mushroom Cloud proclaims that there is no such concept as human intimacy. There is no "self" which is beyond defilement. No matter where you are, your person can be vaporized. There is no place to hide. No home to shelter you. At any moment, *Poof!*

The Mushroom Cloud vision of total human and earthly obliteration continues—sixty years after its debut—to discomfort humans. What is

notable to Earthfolk is that even the proponents of a Star Wars nuclear defense are uneasy about nuclear energy because they have come to learn, over the years and by playing brinksmanship, that the only way to win an atomic war is not to play the nuclear game.

Earthfolk realize that it is difficult to shift the way you imagine the world. No human can get up each day and feel healthy and whole by addressing the universe, saying, "I hate other people. Every other person is my Intimate Enemy. I will dominate and vanquish everyone I meet, anywhere, anytime. If it must be, may Earth be blown to smithereens, today!" Yet, this is what Earthfolk see as a practice which logically follows from the Big Story which is book-ended by the Mushroom Cloud and Starship Earth. What else must Warrior's Questers be saying to themselves and each other, every morning and every night?

We Earthfolk can only describe the Warrior's Quester who imagines the Big Story which has produced the Mushroom Cloud and Starship Earth as someone who is suffering from post-traumatic stress syndrome. How else to assess the situation? Or, should it be said that these Warrior's Questers have simply gone mad? That like a severely disordered psychotic, they are inflicting harm upon themselves? That they cannot cease from killing one another? That they cannot breakout of their mood of dreadful fear and the apocalyptic dream of self-annihilation?

Earthfolk Awaken On Starship Earth

Nevertheless, paradoxically and serendipitously, the Mushroom Cloud is one factor in the emergence of Starship Earth. For when it was understood that the Mushroom Cloud's Big Story is that we could totally obliterate ourselves, humans took to outer space, quested for the moon and beyond. It was to be humanity's "Plan B—Escape Into Outer Space." The quest for

the moon was fueled by the atomic race with the now former Soviet Russia—USSR. It was argued that if the *Rooskies* got the drop on America and caught us by surprise that we should have a fleet of rocket-ships ready to launch a team of space colonists.

It was more readily believed, back at the dawn of the Nuclear Age, that Earth's human ecology could be readily re-established on another planet. Few doubted that we humans could live unEarthed in space colonies. At the time, movies such as "2001" inspired many. And, experiments such as Biosphere did likewise. However, many, such as we Earthfolk, gathered from the astronauts experiences on the moon, in Skylab, and from the Biosphere experiments that Earth Life may be unique and not exportable.

The race to the moon was intended to showcase American technological, military and moral superiority. There was no intent for any astronaut to click "home slide-show pictures" to show his neighbors upon return. The snapshots of Earth were part of a military intelligence regimen. If ever there was an Unintended Consequence more significant than the main intention itself, it was this snapshot of Starship Earth. Thanks to the Mushroom Cloud Warrior's Questers, the Earthfolk caught the "first sight" of themselves.

Ironically, what humans discovered as they escaped the boundary of their planet and its gravity was a startling insight into what it means to be human. They discovered the human as an Earthman which laid the seed for the vision and imagery of Earthfolk. Instead of Escape from Earth, a new perspective on what it means to live on Earth arose, namely, that all we have—all we only and ever will have—is the Blue Marble. Our home and hearth is a Starship.

When the snapshot of Starship Earth was taken by the Apollo 8 astronauts on December 24, 1968, few would have said that the Earth was a living presence. Yet, that is what was made manifest and which was felt by us Earthfolk. While those living under the Mushroom Cloud appreciate that Earth is a Blue Marble, a planet teeming with living beings in the air, land and water, they still are seeing and feeling as Warrior's Questers. In this light, Starship Earth continues to be interpreted by many as an achievement and a validation of the Warrior's Quest's way of knowing and feeling. Many feel today as others did back then that, indeed, humans have taken the first step towards not only cosmic exploration but cosmic dominance.

Starship Earth: Alive—Precious and Sensually Precious

While Starship Earth was discovered by Warrior's Quest astronauts, who were primarily on a military expedition to see "if we are alone" and to lay the foundation for a cosmic defense against aliens, if they existed and if they attacked, the result for Earthfolk was the discovery that, indeed, we humans are not alone, that we have one another. It revealed that the Earth is intimately human and, for Earthfolk, precious.

For Earthfolk more was discovered than what appears to be the trite insight that all humans share the one cosmic dirt-ball tagged "Earth". Earthfolk were swept up and away by an unsettling sense of identity and a heartfelt emotion which we describe as feeling Sensually Precious. Feeling one's sensual preciousness describes the how of the Earthfolk experience. Namely, that full human sensing, understanding and imagining occurs within moments of intimacy when each of us knows our self through a precious Other. Here, the Other was Earth, itself. This sight of Starship Earth was a birthing moment. As Earthfolk peered and saw it so we

became fully aware—somewhat shocked and awestruck—of the precious intimacy which the living Earth is.

That moment's fullness of insight and intimacy was akin to watching a woman give birth wherein, back then, the body born was the Living Earth itself. We Earthfolk found ourselves enthralled and sharing the beat of a common heart as we peered at the snapshot of Starship Earth much like the first time a young child sees pictures of a babe in the womb. As we peered at the snapshot Earthfolk understood that "we came from there" just as a child points at her mother's belly with gleeful discovery. We claimed our Mother's belly to be the Earth. We proclaimed ourselves to be humans who are the passionate breaths of the Living Earth.

Through all births, Death enters. The child is alive but on his/her journey towards Death. In like manner through all dyings Birth enters. The person passing over is born within the Forever-Family in another manifestation of its immortality. The sight of Starship Earth brokered this sense of dying and being born. We Earthfolk knew ourselves as both Ancient and Newborn. The Ancient Call awoke us. What died within us was our presence as Intimate Enemy, and what awoke was our presence as precious and Beloved. Our awakening is a Creation Story. It is a story about the dying of the Warrior's Quest and the birth of the Earthfolk imagination of Sensual Preciousness. At once, we Earthfolk were present to ourselves as Forever-Family and so to our extended family that reached back to Ancient Times and forward to these New Times, which only you can imagine.

At our awakening we Earthfolk clearly saw through the eyes of the Warrior's Quest vision. We saw ourselves as unintended visitors in the

Warrior's Quest world, and we knew ourselves as sojourning aliens. We soon came to understand that key to our insight was understanding and interpreting the Warrior's Quest Creation Story of *Genesis*. As the Earthfolk vision and imagination of Sensual Preciousness emerged, explaining to you how Earthfolk awoke would require moving you to a deeper and unusual interpretation of *Genesis*.

With the astronauts, we Earthfolk rocketed up into "outer" space only to find that we had arrived at a peculiarly new inner space. It was so thoroughly a sensual feeling that all five senses were overloaded. Drenched. We found ourselves speechless, but swelling with a feeling of oneness with everything. The word "cosmic" could barely snare the moment's fullness. Indeed, we sensed ourselves as a new "we." Not a "we" as in separate from "them" or as a Chosen People. Rather, in a sense of fullness, with a "we" made present through embracing all people, through, amazingly, embracing the Earth, herself. It was then that we Earthfolk felt with a peculiar sense of heart our, Earth's and all people's sensual preciousness. It was when we knew the Earth as all and only what humans have. We grasped that there is only human space in "outer space."

There is only human space in that all space—outer and inner—is accessible. When the astronauts looked back at the Earth they saw the cosmos, not just a planet. For the Earth exists within a cosmic web that reaches into galaxies beyond counting. Henceforth, from the moment of their exploring sight, Earth can only be known through its cosmic identity. No longer can humans wonder if they are alone, for the astronauts woke us up to our Sensual Preciousness, which is a knowing and a feeling that being human is being cosmic. It is a knowing and feeling that the Earth

expresses the intimacy of the cosmos. What happened with that snapshot is that Starship Earth revealed itself as the only hearth *and* heart of and for the single ethnicity of humans. Such a feeling is one sensual aspect of what Earthfolk feel when we claim to be Sensually Precious.

Are You Aboard Starship Earth?

Earthfolk accept that all humans are still under the Bomb's Mushroom Cloud, and that presently most see themselves as aboard Starship Earth only proverbially, "as through a glass darkly." For many, the Mushroom Cloud image continues to successfully obscure full sight of Starship Earth as Living and Precious because it is still primarily classified in militaristic terms. The difficulty in accepting Earthfolk's perspective is that most still live as if everyone is their Intimate Enemy. Simply listen to the media shows and reports and you'll see and feel the dreadful fear of the Other as Intimate Enemy. Do you want to be aboard Starship Earth? If so, you will have to clearly understand your Big Story or Stories and how your personal Story makes you present to others. On board Starship Earth you are precious. All on board practice "living as if I am no one's Enemy" as the recurring thought and imagery through which they make their preciousness present to Others. Consequently, your gaining insight into the vision of the Mushroom Cloud Big Story and the heartfelt practices it commands is an important goal and task.

While you might conclude that Earthfolk are calling you, primarily, to an intellectual task, be forearmed with the emotional expectation that you might feel deeply discomforted, even anxiously disturbed, during this quest towards Sensual Preciousness. For Earthfolk's analysis of the Mushroom Cloud's Big Story requires that you look at both the wonderfulness and dreadfulness of that Big Story, and that you come to confront your personal Story and your role in sustaining and expressing

the wonderfulness and dreadfulness through your personal, intimate heartfelt actions.

At the end of *Sensual Preciousness*, while you may affirm or reject your previous acceptance of the Mushroom Cloud and Starship Earth's Big Story, it is Earthfolk's hope that you will, at the least, grasp more fully how critical and Life-saving are your personal actions.

Earthfolk's Practice of Sensual Immersion—Peering and Sitting in Silence

Earthfolk's analysis, evaluation and interpretation of the vision and range of heartfelt actions imagined by a Big Story comes from a specific sensual discipline which we practice. It is a holistic discipline wherein information gathered from the five senses is immersed in the emotions of an experience. Symbolically, it is the melding and melting of mind with heart.

The emotions of an experience include those known and experienced in both the Light and Shadow of a moment. Earthfolk peer and sit in silence to hear what is not said, see what is hidden, smell what is masked, etc. In sum, Earthfolk describe this as sensual immersion, an instance which can lead to making present one's Sensual Preciousness. From within such moments of sensual immersion do we Earthfolk form our deepest thoughts, unleash our intuitions, and free our imaginations.

To attain sensual immersion, we Earthfolk peer as we sit in silence. Sitting in silence is the practice of opening one's self to what is not apparent or obvious. It is an openness to hear the "sounds of silence" and to see the invisible which nestles the visible. Sitting in silence is a way of tuning one's senses to pick up information which lingers around, within and surrounds a commonplace image, word or insight.

Peering is not just staring or a visual act. It is also an act of acceptance, here, an acceptance of the Shadow, of the dark which accompanies light. It involves quieting the senses to open them to fuller input, from a trickle to a flood, of information and/or insight. This is a sensual discipline in that Earthfolk seek to evoke the full range and subtlety of emotion which accompanies peering and sitting in silence. We hold that until the emotion of a word, sound, image or insight is grasped in its robustness, the depth of information and truth is not properly tapped.

Earthfolk accept what a Big Story says about itself. Namely, Earthfolk peer through the vision and engage in the heartfelt actions which are core to a Big Story's message. Great effort is given to understanding a Big Story on its own terms, through its own self-evaluations and interpretations. Then, as when peering at a work of art, Earthfolk pause to see what is not said, not revealed, not heard, not able to be sensed through the Big Story. We surrender ourselves to the knowledge of the Shadow and the Big Story's dark revelations. Earthfolk labor exhaustively to sense and then value and interpret what this peering and sitting in silence approach presents. Throughout *Sensual Preciousness* this discipline of sensual immersion is applied. Your response to the claims of Earthfolk's discipline of sensual immersion will, hopefully, clarify what your Big Story means to you.

Most people have had an experience similar to Earthfolk's moment of sensual immersion where someone has asked them to "really look" at, say, a photograph which is familiar. "Do you see what I see?" the other asks. Quizzically, you look and concentrate and then, "Yeah, I do see that!" You were so familiar with the photograph that you had not

processed all the information it contained. You simply kept "seeing it" as you saw it in terms of the information it first gave you. Earthfolk would suggest that a certain emotion was attached to your original vision of the photograph, and that to slip into another perspective you had to adjust your feelings. Words, sounds, images, smells, touches, tastes are all more robust than anyone can savor upon first sensing. The same holds true for Big Stories.

We Earthfolk invite you to sit in silence and peer at the three Big Stories which dominate the imaginations of humans. You might ask, "Why should I spend time with "x" Big Story?" especially if it is a Big Story you basically reject? For example, Earthfolk peer long and hard at *Genesis*. Notably, the Rib story of the creation of Eve. We see what the Religious Big Story of which *Genesis* is a part has traditionally enabled people to see, namely, a world created by a Lone Male God. He creates the first human, who is also a Lone Male. Then, in an amazing and astounding way, you are given eyes to see that the male body is the birthing body, for, in *Genesis*, woman is created from male flesh.

Earthfolk peer and sit in silence with *Genesis* and share with you our discoveries. We discern the presence of a Mother Goddess in *Genesis*. We grasp that while *Genesis* appears to not address the issue of intimacy that, in fact, *Genesis* is a story whose main message is about intimacy. We conclude that *Genesis* is a story about Sensual Preciousness.

Sensual immersion engages each and all the senses. Upon first encounter, a spiritual vision appears to be a matter of thinking, understanding and then making a "leap of faith" to a set of doctrines that form a way of living. The truth in this "leap" is that the only way one

comes to preciousness is through accepting one's own feelings. Preciousness is, then, not as much a matter of mind as it is of heart.

In the Abrahamic tradition there is a specific approach to the senses and to sensual preciousness. As with other aspect of this patriarchal tradition, the specific approach is defined by several negative facts. Overall, using Genesis again, there appears to be no sensual preciousness, no sacred sexuality, and no Mother Goddess. Without comment Adam's body is presented as the birthing body. That of the feminine which exists in Genesis is totally derivative of the type of masculinity Adam, himself, is experiencing and manifesting.

Let's peer and sit in silence with Genesis' negative facts and peculiar understanding of the male body. As a Lone Male, Adam was not aware that he is lonely. It is his god who says that Adam needs a companion. Adam, apparently, did not sense his loneliness. He, also, did not "see" the emptiness of the Garden, what it was missing, namely, a woman. Adam lacks certain senses, the key ones being that of touch, taste and smell.

Let's reason backwards from what happens after Eve arrives. Adam sees her and hears her name. She is "woman." But there is no intimate or sexual relationship until the Serpent enters. Note that the Serpent is that of the male which speaks with the female. But let's broaden that insight. The Serpent is that of the male which touches, tastes and smells the female. What is your first visceral reaction to the image of the Serpent as a slithering creature? That it is cold, slimy and has a tongue which darts out, continually. The Serpent constantly "tastes" the air. It also has a poisonous bite. What this image provides insight into is that the Serpent brings to Eve the other male senses which Adam lacks.

What are the senses of intimacy? There is clearly sight and hearing. There is the beholding of the other and the calling of their name. Eve and Adam are at this level before the Serpent arrives. But then Adam and Eve know their nakedness. Their flesh touches in the interior ways of intimacy. He feels her with his totally skin. His touch is a taste of her lips. His feel is of her erotic movement and its issuance of fluids which evoke the scent of lust and the overwhelming moment of orgasm when he "loses" himself within her. They truly eat one another. They feast upon the Other with every sense. Intimacy is such a moment of sensual preciousness.

From that moment of naked intimacy, Adam and Eve are experiencing what Genesis, on its face, is denying, namely, the necessity of a male and a female for life to be. Their nakedness exposes the fact that there is a nakedness in Genesis, that there is both a statement about Sacred Sexuality and Sensual Preciousness, and it is that it is a Dark or Shadow or Shade nakedness. In their Shade nakedness, the Dark Father and Dark Mother, war. They use every sense to deceive, trick, betray and misdirect the Other because their ultimate intimate moment is when one realizes Dominion over the Other. The Shade Parents are always sexually warring. Their rituals are always ones of sexual abuse. Their intimacy is always a zone of Dominion.

Once Adam and Eve are sensually immersed within one another, they are expelled from the Garden. Their god attempts to stymie, stifle and, hopefully, suppress the insights about their intimacy which they have just discovered by cursing the two key acts through which Adam and Eve need to build intimacy. She is cursed in childbirth. He as to his ability to bring home food. To earn a living. Overall, this curse implies that life on

Earth is a dead life. The Earth as a Living Presence is hidden from them as, due to the curse, they will spend their lives distracted by other pressing needs of sheer survival. Life on Earth is miserable, one of suffering, and a quest to die and return to Paradise.

In the Garden the Serpent enabled Adam and Eve to sense one another with the senses of intimacy. They smelled one another as only lovers can. They licked and sucked, rubbed and tenderly hugged, drew deep breaths where they inhaled their lover's eyes and nose, ears and toes, they laughed, they rolled about, and they totally immersed themselves, one unto the other, as they coupled in orgasmic shudder.

Traditionally, the foregoing paragraph would be denounced as blasphemous. The Warrior's Quest interpreter would sputter and fume about the fact that it was, indeed, just such an intimate moment which led to the Fall. He would continue with the conclusion that you should learn from this that the flesh is evil, and that indulgence in the sensual leads one down the road to the fires of hell. Wild, orgiastic demons would infest you if you linger upon the feminine. Thus, in the Abrahamic tradition women have been veiled, draped, hidden within tents of all sorts, and, simply, made invisible. Consider the erotic power of a woman's senses in this Abrahamic tradition. Just a slight look, a glance and a male is understandably undone. Why else the shrouds? Just a wiggle and a walk, just a scent of her bodily otherness, and, again, the Warrior's Quester absolves himself the sins of erotic wildness because he was seduced!

In the Abrahamic tradition, menstruation and other specific female bodily moments, such as childbirth, are cordoned off. The Warrior's Quest male

struts about somewhere else, doing “male things,” as he waits for his women to stop being a woman. Of all things, he is not to smell her most womanly smells of blood and issue. He is not to be present with her as her skin expands to be the skin of all Life as a child is born. For his own “experience” of these womanly moments of blood and birth, the Warrior’s Quester follows the story of misdirection of his patriarchal forbearers and goes out and slays someone, even the women and children of another man. Only by slaying another can the Warrior’s Quester give balance in the peculiar way which balance is achieved in his world, through expressing Dominion over another, here, an Intimate Enemy.

Your first reaction might be, if you feel fully identified as a Secularist, “Why waste time with that fairy tale?” Or, “Why give that account so much weight and value?” In like manner, if you immediately identify with the Religious Big Story, you might ask, “Why waste time talking about Scientism?” Earthfolk invite you not only to peer and sit in silence with the Big Stories you reject, but, even more critically, to do so with the Big Story you already profess, confess and through which your identity, intimacy and range of heartfelt actions is grounded.

Heartfelt Actions

Earthfolk focus on the three Big Stories and select certain accounts within those Stories because of the heartfelt actions which flow from each Story. A heartfelt action is a defining action of a Big Story. It is how the Big Story is made manifest through the actions of an individual. A heartfelt action describes an act or group of acts which believers in a Big Story *must* do. A heartfelt action is not optional, it is required. It is the testimonial act which endows the believer with personal and group identity as a proponent or confessor of the truths of the Big Story. Heartfelt acts are both conscious acts and acts of conscience, with the

latter often driven by strong convictions of which the actor is not always fully conscious and aware.

One example of a Religious Big Story heartfelt act is recorded in Joshua, Chapter 8, of the Jewish and Christian bibles. There Joshua defines himself as Yahweh's chosen warrior through a heartfelt act of mass murder. He completely obliterates all human life in the city of Ai. For the warrior on the Warrior's Quest, slaughter and butchery of the Other as Intimate Enemy is an act of initiation which creates personal and group identity. Similar heartfelt actions which identify the Other as Intimate Enemy are defined and described in the Secular and Scientism Big Stories.

In the Secular Big Story, since nothing or anyone is considered precious, the image of the sexual other is as a sex-toy. Sexual interaction's goal is primarily pleasure and secondarily, or never, for procreation. Sexual acts are ones of mutual-masturbation, a phrase which a Secularist would not find offensive, for masturbation, itself, is considered the most satisfying form of pleasure. The Secularist range of heartfelt actions is bounded by concerns for sexual health ("safe sex"), and, at its best but not necessarily, for sexual safety, that is, sexuality's violence must serve the goal of pleasure.

In Scientism, whatever is claimed to be true has to adhere, as best it can, to empirical testing and rational analysis and evaluation. Its heartfelt practices are modeled on actions which can be judged objective and disinterested. In this vein, tests on human subjects which are conducted without patient permission are acceptable if the results prove beneficial to the greater good, which often is defined as new knowledge. However,

since there is no Scientism Pope or absolute authority, there is no necessary boundary to Scientism's heartfelt acts.

Scientismists, as we Earthfolk understand them by looking at their heartfelt actions, model their heartfelt actions on a version of "Might makes Right." In brief, anything—living or inanimate—can be probed, analyzed, dissected, etc. Expert knowledge endows the Scientismist with the credentials and authority to experiment without restraint. While this might sound like an overly-simplistic caricature, Earthfolk merely point to The Mushroom Cloud and ask, "Who, if anyone, ever said, *When is enough, enough?*" Or, *"Although we can create this Bomb, should we?"*

Of critical significance is our Earthfolk interpretation and conclusion that the most telling characteristic of the three Big Stories is that they commonly describe a singular heartfelt action which results in imagining a world in which humans live in dreadful fear. This singular heartfelt act is that which defines and initiates a Warrior's Quest, namely, the act of identifying and fearing the Other as Intimate Enemy. To fear the Other as Intimate Enemy is a foundational tenet and the source heartfelt act of the three dominant Big Stories.

Seen through Earthfolk eyes, it is not an accident that the iconic images of the Mushroom Cloud and Starship Earth are fitting apocalyptic expressions of these Big Stories. If you strongly identify with either the Religious, Secular or Scientism Big Stories, anticipate that you will vigorously disagree with Earthfolk's interpretation of your own and possibly all three Big Stories. But it is just these Earthfolk claims and interpretations which are the points to be explored.

Big Stories are about Interiority and Intimacy

Earthfolk find that the concepts of interiority and intimacy are the primary and defining concepts of a Big Story. This is one of Earthfolk's key interpretive claims. Namely, that how you understand the concept of your interiority, e.g., of your self or ego or person, determines how you understand and value your intimacy. Your intimacy is discovered, notably, only when you are in relationship. Interiority is an individual's self-awareness, her/his self-identity. Intimacy can only occur when two share their interiorities in such a way that each experiences their own preciousness as they are embraced as a Beloved. We Earthfolk use the imagery of two candles merging their flames to form a third which is a oneness of a couple who then become, as they move apart, separate identities, again. For Earthfolk, intimacy cannot be experienced alone. It is a communal presence. The Big Stories exist to enable you to form your interior identity and to experience a defined range of intimacy.

Earthfolk gained this insight into intimacy and Big Stories as we saw a thread developing between the Religious Big Story and the other two, the Secular and Scientism. Peering and sitting in silence with *Genesis* made clear that the primary purpose of *Genesis* was to answer the Big Questions, "What to do with women?" and "Where is intimacy grounded?" The Big Answers were that women were subordinate to men, since they were created from male flesh. And, that intimacy is an act of Dominion, wherein the woman is to submit to the man.

Genesis "tells" a woman that her meaning as a woman is found through a very peculiar and constrained relationship of intimacy where her sole purpose is to sexually serve her man. This is expressed in theological imagery by the absence of a Mother Goddess. Without a Mother Goddess image, a woman has no way to envision herself as a precious being. Her

spiritual and physical, her mental and emotional self is totally derived from her man's maleness. At her core, *Genesis'* woman exists as a curious form of maleness. There is no greater "revelation" in *Genesis* than this revelation about male-female intimacy.

Interiority defines and describes a singular, personal experience of identity. You express your interiority to others when you make identity statements, such as, "I am a Minnesotan and a conservative Lutheran serving as a senior manager for General Mills." In contrast, intimacy is an engaged, communal experience. From another direction, intimacy is relational, and is created by your engaging an Other. Your intimacy is how you are known through your heartfelt actions with others. Intimacy is known, also, through how others describe your heartfelt actions in terms of relationships with an Other, for example, "She's a good person. Always volunteering." Or, "He's a patriot. Willing to risk his life for others." Or, "They're such loving parents, always taking time to be with their children."

As we Earthfolk read the three dominant Big Stories they, with a common hand, seek to foster a very restrictive notion of interiority and strive to annihilate the experience of intimacy. Their notion of interiority is bound up with their solitary identity as Warrior's Questers. Warrior's Quest interiority is restricted to a very constrained identity of "me" over against a ubiquitous and abhorred "them." For the Warrior's Quester, Earthfolk's vision of intimacy is seen as a threat to the dominant Big Stories fundamental definition of relationship as an act of Dominion. However, explaining this relationship between interiority and intimacy is yet another key Earthfolk task.

We Earthfolk will explain how the Mushroom Cloud and Starship Earth are expressions of both Warrior interiority and intimacy. More, we will show how the transformation of human consciousness, which is core to the Earthfolk way, is linked to our vision of human interiority as precious and the Sensual Preciousness rituals of intimacy which make present the Beloved.

Communal Feeling Determines Vision

Another key Earthfolk insight is that how humans communally feel determines what and how an individual sees. Earthfolk find that the main impact of a Big Story is that it evokes this communal feeling. An individual's feelings are responses to communal feeling, and communal feeling defines the range of possible individual thoughts. Moreover, for an individual to breakthrough and move beyond the communal feeling entails an experience of breakdown of his/her Big Story.

Earthfolk's insight, however, counters a defining theme of the three dominant Big Stories which holds that the individual is a solitary being whose personal thoughts and feelings are his/her own. In this view, the group sees and feels only what the individual wants to share. It is held that an individual can choose not to share her/his personal thoughts and feelings. Moreover, that there is no obligation for them to do so. From this perspective, it is the solitary atomic thinker who brings his/her genius to enlighten the group. The Manhattan Project, which created the nuclear bomb, is an example of how individual geniuses collaborate and create. Earthfolk reverse this perspective and claim that it is communal feeling which is the source of an individual's vision and heartfelt moral and spiritual actions.

The insight into communal feeling, which Earthfolk's experience of Starship Earth revealed, is that *everyone's thoughts and feelings count*. No one is an isolated being, rather, everyone exists as an individual in relationship, that is, as part of a communal experience. "Being human" is a communal status. More, that *everyone's thoughts and feelings are active forces in the ongoing creation of everyday reality*. While no human is solitary, everyone has a keen sense of their named, personal identity. For Earthfolk, this is a sense of separateness and of personal named identity which has meaning as it manifests communal feeling and communal identity.

While the three dominant Big Stories present the individual as an isolated identity who chooses to engage in relationship, Earthfolk see that "relationship," defined as a two-way interaction and/or communication of thoughts and feelings, is the defining characteristic of being human. The sight of Starship Earth startled Earthfolk with this simple feeling that all humans are born from and exist within relationship. We saw that there is only one Earth, which is home to all living creatures, and, notably, a singular human family. So, why do the three Big Stories define their vision and feeling in terms of such isolated individual experience? Only peering at and sitting in silence with the iconic Mushroom Cloud and Starship Earth provides Earthfolk with plausible answers.

In the three dominant Big Stories life is presented as an individual's quest to find happiness, whether that happiness is defined in terms of psychological integration or spiritually as union with their god or career-wise in terms of personal fulfillment. For example, in the Christian spiritual tradition there is the focus on "me and Jesus." Of being Saved and living happily in eternity in heaven. In like manner many secular

psychological movements stress individuation or self-realization. Personal success is also realized through becoming Number One, "Numero Uno."

Most Earthfolk were raised in a Big Story whose heartfelt actions were described in terms of individual, not communal, moral and spiritual acts. Each of the three Big Stories focuses upon the individual, for example, it is the individual who is a sinner and must repent to be saved. Likewise, the source for socio-economic inequities is laid at the feet of the individual who is held responsible for their own lowly social or economic status. It is also claimed that the genius of individual inventors and entrepreneurs is the engine which drives the market economy to success. So any failures are, logically, the failures of individuals, not of a group or communal imagination. As globalization advances, the challenge is laid before third-world peoples to become independent, self-actualizing and self-directed individuals which, they are told, is the ticket to becoming happy and successful.

Big Stories Speak When the Individual Cannot

The necessity of understanding the vision of a Big Story by opening to its communal feeling was grounded in our Earthfolk observation that the defining individual and communal reaction to the icon of the Mushroom Cloud is an act of denial which is accompanied by the deep numbness of dreadful fear. When Earthfolk pose the question, "Are we not in the midst of an ongoing nuclear war?" many people simply cannot comprehend the question or they stare vacuously. It is not an answer which an individual can provide. It is a Big Answer which only a Big Story presents through communal voice and feeling.

Your education was probably like most Earthfolk's, and it did not include any approach to or understanding of communal voice and feeling, of

learning through the holistic experience of sensual immersion. You might have participated on teams and even led collaborative projects, but no one sat in silence with an opening to group inspiration. Though meditation is a trans-cultural practice, it is rare to find any group which seeks to find a communal voice for their vision, and since they lack this communal voice they cannot "hear" what their communal feeling is.

Though it might appear that Religious Big Story followers have a tradition of monastic meditation and contemplation, and that "The Church" articulates their communal voice, the patriarchal, authoritarian structure of the major religions negates involving the individual as a creator of the communal voice. Consequently, as Earthfolk use the term, this is a "collective voice" and not a communal voice. As part of the collective, the religious individual is trained to mindlessly echo what the "Church Fathers" set forth as catechism. They rotely voice the "Church's voice." In like manner, when in the military, the individual repeats what he/she is told to voice. There is no call for the individual soldier to become part of a process which issues in a bottom-up warrior voice. The Chain of Command is top-down, and the soldier's voice is that of a "grunt."

For Earthfolk, "communal voice" arises from the conversation among individuals who are seeking to discover the transforming voice evoked through communal embrace. That is why we Earthfolk invite you to experiment with a ritual, since without your participation our Earthfolk communal voice cannot arise, nor can its communal feeling spread. The significance of this distinction is that the three Big Stories' communal voice is hidden. As with their denial of the communal feeling of dreadful fear, the three Big Stories deny that their communal voice is that of Dominion.

Though Earthfolk see that communal feeling is part of the vision and rituals of the three dominant Big Stories, these Big Stories are in denial about their communal feeling. Indeed, once our own communal feeling of being peacefully and comfortably at-home on the Living Earth was evoked by Starship Earth, only then did we Earthfolk know that icons always express a communal feeling and “speak” the communal voice, even if these are hidden, “in the Shadows,” so to speak. With this insight we Earthfolk began to re-explore and re-examine the three Big Stories in a search for their hidden icons and moments of communal voice and feeling.

Icons Are A Part of Communal Expression

We Earthfolk began to look at the Big Stories and their traditions with an eye for the most ancient icons and their Shadows. We sensed that the Mushroom Cloud and Starship Earth were flowers of other ancient iconic seeds. And, we anticipated that we would only find them through a communal act of sensual immersion. While this might strike you as peculiar, it is a way open to everyone. Yet, communal sensual immersion is not a conscious venture of most major social groups. Though religious sites (synagogues, churches, mosques, sacred groves, etc.) are, in Earthfolk view, communal sensual immersion venues, such is not part of their self-awareness. And, they, more than likely, will never become self-aware on this point. Why? Because their historical traditions, doctrines and rituals are focused on re-enforcing the sense of living as if on an isolated individual quest, that is, the Warrior’s Quest. In short, the Earthfolk practice of communal sensual immersion is alien to the basic theme of the foundational accounts in the three Big Stories.

What do Earthfolk sense is being communally felt by those followers of the Big Stories for whom the Mushroom Cloud and Starship earth are icons? On its own terms, Starship Earth was a snapshot taken by military explorers who were seeking to conquer not only the Earth but outer space. This icon affirmed the superiority of Western culture. At the time, America bathed in the glory of having won the Space Race. This victory demonstrated, as did being the first to create an Atomic Bomb, that America would outlast the attack of any Enemy in that, as a last resort, it would be Americans escaping on rocket ships to seed other planets.

As Earthfolk peered at the icons we could feel the peculiar sense of communal security that these two icons conveyed to Americans. With the explosion of the Atom Bomb there was a national sigh of relief that the war was finally over! The world was once again safe. With the capture of Starship Earth there was a collective slap on the back as human survival was ensured. Even if the Earth were to face the annihilating impact of an all out nuclear war, the human species would be saved. While Earthfolk sensed the communal feeling these icons effected, we also reflected upon why Warrior's Questers and others seemed unaware and/or silent about the Shadow side of these events.

Rituals of the Warrior's Quest

We Earthfolk peered and sat in silence with these Big Stories with the hope that we would gain some insight into why communal sensual immersion was so powerful yet so hidden. One of the criteria for focusing on the selected three Big Stories was that they addressed this issue of communal sensual immersion. As stated above, the three Big Stories addressed this issue, but they did so by denying it, that is, they placed primary emphasis on the individual's quest and sensing. Yet, the denial

enabled Earthfolk to see the shape and form of the communal feeling which was actually put forth by each Big Story.

Earthfolk found that the Big Stories' focus on the individual's quest was intricately linked with key rituals which re-enforced that focus. Though it may sound odd and peculiar, the initiating ritual of the individual's quest, in all three Big Stories, is that of warring. Group identity and individual worthiness are achieved by warrior acts. All heartfelt acts are defined in terms of the Warrior's Quest. This is a very narrow definition of what could possibly count as meaningful acts. It meant that only ritual acts of violence, especially sexual violence, counted. This is a claim that *Sensual Preciousness* will address many times, that is, that war is a ritual act of sexual violence, actually, a Shadow Sensual Preciousness ritual. As an icon, the Mushroom Cloud reveals that the people who created it are focused on warring, notably, warring for global dominance. But, what does it reveal that they are communally feeling? What does it show about how they direct the resources of their collective imagination and wealth? For answers, Earthfolk went back to the first Big Stories humans ever told, that is, the Religious Big Stories.

The Abrahamic Tradition

What Earthfolk found, and what we hope you will both understand and experience through sensual immersion, is that what the Atom Bomb unleashed was another way of expressing the defining emotion of the Religious Big Story, that of dreadful fear, which is the prime emotion for the Warrior's Quest. The Atomic Bomb is the communal emotional expression of a millennia old Religious Big Story which is sourced in the communal feeling which founded the Abrahamic warrior tradition, that is, the tradition of the children of Abraham, the Biblical patriarch of the Jews,

Christians and Moslems. This communal feeling is one of exile. It is a feeling suffused with guilt for an offense termed an Original Sin.

This Original Fall from grace, so the Big Story states, is caused by sexual temptation. Earthfolk understand this sexual temptation as the invitation for humans to develop intimate relationships. Consequently, the punishment for seeking intimacy is not only that of being exiled, but it is an act which cursed human sexuality. The curse cast the act of human sexuality in terms and images of sexual violence. Women were forever cursed in that violent suffering defines and describes the act of childbirth. For men, they are to "labor by the sweat of their brow," which means that they are to violently suffer when they work. In the ancient story this meant as they farmed or shepherded the land or, in Earthfolk terms, spent time mid-wifeing the Earth, bringing forth food.

Earthfolk's Communal Feeling of Being "At-Home" on Earth

It is necessary to remember that we Earthfolk gained this insight, not from intellectual analysis, interpretation or argument with the Abrahamics, but at the moment of Starship Earth's startling awakening. In that moment, Earthfolk felt different. We did not feel that we were exiles. Rather, we felt comfortably at-home on Earth. It was a moment which redefined our interiority as we were present in and through our intimacy as precious and to each other as Beloved.

Earthfolk's feeling of being comfortably at-home is a communal feeling which simultaneously makes individual identity knowable. Human identity is familial. Everyone shares the same family name, that is, Earthfolk. Home is that communal place where humans understand the peculiarities of their specific individual identities as they encounter their family. Home is where family is experienced as immortal, that is, as past, present and

future. We Earthfolk call this the Forever-Family. Our gasp at the sight of Starship Earth was such an emotional sense of the immortal Forever-Family being comfortably at-home on Earth.

In this light, Earthfolk comprehend that it is communal feeling which determines the scope and boundary of a Big Story's vision. Of equal significance is that a vision defines the boundaries of acceptable heartfelt actions. That is, the scope of a vision defines and describes the possible range of acceptable moral and spiritual acts. When tasked with responding to significant moral or spiritual challenges, individuals respond with thinking and believing claims, which are, as Earthfolk hold, sourced in identity defining communal feeling statements.

When pressed or persuaded, people will begrudgingly surrender their intellectual positions, but never their feelings. "This is how I feel," is uttered as if validating an unassailable and immovable state of being. For example, the last defense against a skeptical or contrarian attack is often, "I don't feel that I can do that because humans are by nature corrupt." Or, "I do that because I feel that human nature is not fixed, that it can change." Or, "I feel that God always has a hand in things that happen to me." A person's convictions are anchored in and an expression of his/her deep feelings. And these deep feelings are sourced in the vision of the Big Story which the individual uses to answer Life's Big Questions.

This Earthfolk insight as to the primary emotional basis of a Big Story arose from our primal gut response to the two iconic images which bookend the three dominant Big Stories, namely, the iconic mages of the atomic Mushroom Cloud and the first astronaut's snapshot of Earth from outer space, of Starship Earth. We found that there was no way to

intellectually persuade someone about the dreadful apocalyptic meaning of the icons if the emotions evoked were solely those of dreadful fear. Our Earthfolk claim that we were comfortably at-home, living as if no one's Enemy made no sense, and still does not, unless the icon of Starship Earth awakens the communal feeling of being comfortably at-home.

Earthfolk experienced communal sensing quite serendipitously. Since most of us were not raised with an awareness of communal sensual immersion, it happened as we experimented with rituals. What was known was that rituals arise over time to connect conscious awareness with deep feelings. Rituals were and are the way individuals engage in communal sensual immersion. This is one reason we Earthfolk invite you to experiment with a Sensual Preciousness ritual or two. It is the only way that being with Earthfolk is initiated.

Earthfolk: At Home on the Living Earth with Forever-Family
Earthfolk are at-home on Earth. Comfortably.

We Earthfolk responded with jaw-dropping amazement to the snapshot of Starship Earth—"It's alive!" We felt the Earth alive. Alive not only through the obvious plant and animal life forms, but alive as the whole of which each person is a part. Being "at-home" is a special moment and feeling. It is comfortable and comforting. Home is the place you come from and to which you return at day's end. It is the hearth, that source of warmth which is sensual, bonding, and precious.

Earthfolk at-home around the hearth makes present family. A family which is at once very local as it is global. It is from family that all come and it is into the Forever-Family timelessly present that each passes. This image of Forever-Family is a key to understanding how Earthfolk feel. It

is a core heartfelt image. As core as are the iconic images of the Mushroom Cloud and Starship Earth.

We Earthfolk feel the presence of the Forever-Family whenever we see or embrace another human being. It is through the simple act of embracing that humans nurture their immortality. It is through the bonds of the family that humans experience their immortality. Individually, humans experience themselves, over time, as the family's child, then its adult, then its aging grand-self passing over. Individuals pass away, but there is always a child being parented and so family is. For each and every human is immortal in that they are Forever-Family. Embracing another as Forever-Family is a primary Sensual Preciousness practice.

We Earthfolk feel comfortably at-home, happy to know others, and sensually pleased in preciousness through the familial embrace.

In contrast, at its core, the Mushroom Cloud sets humans feeling ecstatically afraid. It is an icon that provokes a transformation of the human heart and imagination, but with a vision of majestic darkfire beauty. It evokes a serenity of absolute terror, and it thrills with an almost giddy delight in the macabre fascination of self-annihilation—the the obliteration of the Earth, itself, by human mind and hand.

Mushroom Cloud humans ground their personal Story in the feeling of being warriors who are in a state of never-ending war, oscillating between hot and cold war periods. They live in a tribal world of national enemies, divided into small plots of land inhabited by "Us" and "Them." As warriors in the never-ending war, Mushroom Cloud humans interminably roam, at

worst raping and pillaging, never truly at home, every morning breaking camp.

As did the Mushroom Cloud so did the Starship Earth image alter human brain chemistry. It set humans wondering about Earth as our only home. *Do we need to travel to other planets? What do we truly know about our own spatial locality, this Blue Marble?* It was then that we Earthfolk were summoned forth and came to know ourselves as a people. Then, that we found ourselves sharing the heartfelt emotions of living in joy, inviting one another to build the Earth, and being ecstatically pleased by a life which is Forever-Family.

The Earthfolk sense of being at-home within the Forever-Family is source for the practice of Sensual Preciousness. For those who live and feel in the Mushroom Cloud, "sensual preciousness" is a nonsensical phrase. For them, the whole Earth is not home, only a small part, their nation, is. Their focus is on Homeland Security. Their sense of family is restrictively local; narrowly genetic. They talk of bloodlines, using the word "family" to separate and distinguish themselves from others, even their neighbors next door.

Quite differently, Sensual Preciousness is a practice which stems from the experience that every other human is Forever-Family. That every person is child, a precious Other. And that this Precious Other is a heartfelt presence whose personal, intimate self is source of the primal energy, the bonding love of vital zest which created and continues to create the world, reality, our humanity. Every child grows through the act of parenting, of embracing others as precious. When embraced as precious, the Other becomes a Beloved. "Forever-Family" is an inclusive phrase which

identifies each of us as a precious child who is welcomed to sit at the hearth. In the Forever-Family there is only one bloodline and it is human.

The Human Sense of Preciousness and the Nurturing Embrace

The iconic Starship Earth image stunned the gathering Earthfolk as we sensed that other human bodies were our own. That every other is a precious Other, and that through embracing is how everyone's precious Otherness is evoked. When the embrace of the precious Other makes present each as Beloved, we Earthfolk call it the "nurturing embrace." The discovery of the precious Other as Beloved is another aspect of sensual immersion. It is a sensing that redefines and re-images who we are as individuals and who we can become in group identity, namely, a Forever-Family of Beloveds.

The five common senses of touching, tasting, smelling, seeing and hearing can become, individually and combined, ways to sensually immerse and so break through to that ecstatic heartfelt "more" which so many desire. Through Sensual Preciousness rituals which image the Other as precious, each sense opens to the fuller Sensual Preciousness of the Beloved. Practically, Earthfolk became aware that they could *only* learn, know and fully be through sensual immersion, that is, through a nurturing Embrace.

For example, Earthfolk practice a ritual of Inviting. Inviting is a relational act, not something which can be experienced solo. To Invite another is to simultaneously open oneself to your and the other's Preciousness by sensually giving and receiving. Preciousness is only evoked through relationship, it is not a presence achieved when alone. When two humans are inviting, they open to the nurturing embrace.

The nurturing embrace, here, is not just a hug but the offering of your skin as a ritual instrument of intimacy. You offer your preciousness through every sense, and receive it likewise. The actual details of inviting are specific to each event. At times, two approach one another with an emphasis on the merest of fingertip touching. They do so imaging the other as their own skin and slowly exploring and delighting in every aspect of preciousness. At other times, multiple senses are engaged. The meeting space is festooned with flowers, candles, scented oils, and there is a swarm of sensual delights. In either case, and in every case, the invitation is for the other to "get under my skin," to so become attuned to the Other that he/she melds with you into Belovedness.

For Earthfolk, the inviting nurturing embrace is a key heartfelt act that breaks open the Warrior's Quester's titanium padlock which the Mushroom Cloud places upon human feeling and imagination. The Warrior's Quester's padlock locks-out. It secures a dead-bolt upon an individual's heart, and locks him/her into an imagination of dreadful fear. Into a primal fear of inviting another into one's intimacy. The Warrior's Quester is, in imagination and ritual, locked into "living as if everyone is Intimate Enemy." In contrast, inviting is most often the first act of the day between Beloveds. Inviting is your opening your preciousness. It is a giving through receiving. It is an act of vulnerability, of open-heartedness, and fearless surrender to your Beloved.

Offering the nurturing embrace is a simultaneous invitation to accept and receive. While we Earthfolk live amidst the Warrior's Questers and their Mushroom Cloud and the militarized version of Starship Earth, we sense that we can live "as if I am no one's enemy." To do so, Earthfolk image even the Warrior's Quester as precious Other, and invite him/her to be

comfortably at-home with us on the Living Earth. Although Warrior's Questers may call Earthfolk their Enemy, we hold that we must risk our very lives through "living as if I am no one's enemy" in the hope that the Warrior's Quester will breakthrough to their own preciousness. Indeed, we Earthfolk hold that every human is embraceable, although we realize that offering the nurturing embrace is an act of invitation; it can never be forced.

As the Warrior's Quester imagines and practices "living as if everyone is Intimate Enemy," we Earthfolk practice embracing the Other as precious. *Why?* Are Earthfolk just overly-sentimental, "feel good," or touchy-feely types? Hardly. The nurturing embrace is, pardon the word, a deadly serious act. Earthfolk hold that every human is precious, but more significantly that every human has within his/her intimacy the only power which can offset that of nuclear annihilation, namely, their Senually Precious vital zest. It is important to grasp that vital zest is all, and more than, that which is conveyed by the word, "erotic."

Vital zest is not "erotic" as popularly cited on the Internet as the lust of pornography. It is not just body "heat." Nor is it "love" as sentimentally acclaimed, which is a toss-away word of seductive banter. Rather, Senual Preciousness' vital zest is the primal, seething, explosive and morning calm fire which rises as the Sun does and rests as soothing Moon glow. It is the energy/force/power which is the thrill that makes Living an ecstatic and eternal moment. Senually Precious vital zest is like molten steel which can destroy human flesh with just a splash, but if artfully guided and formed, pressed and molded, can be used to make-real fantastic wonders of the human imagination and heart.

Through Sensual Preciousness rituals the precious hearts of humans yield this primal preciously intimate and erotic energy of vital zest with which humanity as a people imagines and creates their Big Stories. For Earthfolk, the world-transforming event of conscious evolution (as opposed to the world-ending self-annihilating apocalyptic event) is effected through the deepening of each person's intimacy and consequent release of vital zest. Note, that we Earthfolk hold that Sensual Preciousness rituals can be engaged by every person. When you are comfortably intimate with all people, when you see and experience them and yourself as precious, then you cease to live in fear. You will begin to feel as Earthfolk feel, comforted and comfortably at-home on the Living Earth. You will live with a zestful vitality!

We Earthfolk invite you to see as we see, to feel as we feel. In brief, to feel Sensually Precious. Yet, this will only happen, for most, after wrestling with what you have been taught that your Big Story says and means. Note that Earthfolk interpret the three globally dominant Big Stories as integral parts of the Abrahamic tradition. That is, the Religious, Secular and Scientism Big Stories are sourced and molded within the visions and heartfelt experiences of the children of the Biblical Abraham (including Jews, Christian, Moslems). Yet the Abrahamic imagination is not simply of historical interest. Rather, Earthfolk see the Abrahamic imagination as driving today's engine of globalization as well as fueling the apocalyptic vision of nuclear holocaust and the desperate plan to escape to other planets. Consequently, for you to evaluate Earthfolk's vision of Sensual Preciousness requires a deep understanding of their analysis and interpretation of the Religious Big Story.

Comfort and Sensual Preciousness Rituals of Sacred Sexuality

Embracing the precious Other and making present each other as Beloveds through sensual immersion led the Earthfolk to practice rituals of Sacred Sexuality, which are a sub-set of Sensual Preciousness rituals. Under the Mushroom Cloud sexuality is imaged as a war. As stated before, the Big Story which is source for the Mushroom Cloud forwards a spiritual vision whose main storyline is that there is no such thing as Sensual Preciousness. Rather, it holds that there is and can only be a War between the Sexes—a condition imposed upon them as punishment by their god. In this Big Story there is no precious Other. There is no vision of Beloveds. In this Big Story humans are not comfortably at-home on Earth, rather they are in exile. Key to their punishment is that they experience sexual intimacy as the cause for their exile and punishment.

In bold contrast, Earthfolk grasp that Starship Earth also made present in human minds and hearts the knowledge and feeling that home is where precious intimacy is made present. That what is sensed through sensual immersion is the intimacy of the Other. And that this intimacy is source for preciousness. Earthfolk hold that family is source of and expresses this primal precious intimacy. More, that the source of family is the precious intimate, erotic act of coupling which makes present, gives birth to other humans whose presence continues the Forever-Family.

In this light, the Earthfolk vision pivots on the insight that all life, all creation, everything which is earthly and human is, has been, and always will be—more, *can be*—fashioned through the inspiring moment of precious intimate embracing. Beloved and precious humans are, then, the Living Earth, itself. They are Earthfolk as a familial presence, a forever living presence.

Inspired by the iconic Starship Earth, Earthfolk sense the preciousness of the Living Earth itself. Earth pulses with living presences which create, destroy and procreate life as forever presences. Among all these living presences, the embracing throb of human copulation is the heartbeat of intimacy which is at once that of an individual couple as it is themselves as Forever-Family, as sensually precious parents. Intimacy describes an experience of one's self as it is experiencing itself as a precious Other. Humans are the Living Earth's intimacy. We are its consciousness, its imagining, its heart, and its conscience.

Within a sacred sexual union vital zest pulsates. Within a sacred sexual union humans sense how Life itself flows through their distinct and indivisible presences. For Earthfolk, each of us, in our flesh and person, is a ritual instrument of intimacy. The primary coupling act of Sensual Preciousness' sacred sexuality evokes the presence of that love which never ends, has always been right here, as close as a kiss, as everyday as embracing. When humans parent—couple in a Sensual Preciousness ritual—they enjoy ecstatic foreverness.

Sensual Preciousness' sacred sexuality rituals begin with the invocation of an inviting ritual. Two invite each other into precious intimacy. As will be discussed in more detail later in Section 3, to practice Sensual Preciousness rituals, and especially those of sacred sexuality, is to make one's self present, in flesh and person, in a way never before imagined in any Big Story or practiced through any personal Story.

Big Stories Present Spiritualities of Intimacy and Sacred Sexuality Rituals

We Earthfolk imagine and tell a new Big Story which is sourced in the emotion of comfort. It is the feeling of being comfortably at-home on Earth, and it is also the feeling of being comfortably at-one in sexual

communion with a Beloved. Through Sensual Preciousness rituals human sexual acts evoke precious intimacy. Intimacy has many aspects and dimensions, one is the ritualized moment where sexual lust burst into vital zest. In this light, vital zest is evoked through a movement between two Beloveds which has the rhythm of a duet.

Earthfolk focus on rituals of sacred sexuality because of a very peculiar characteristic of the dominant Big Stories. This is a very peculiar yet defining characteristic, as we Earthfolk assess, of the core revelation of the three Big Stories. Namely, that *each professes that there is nothing which is Sensually Precious, and that preciousness can never be experienced through sexual intimacy*. This is imaged in a negative fashion by the most telling (and curious) characteristic of *Genesis*, namely, that there is no Mother Goddess. *Genesis* appears to be all about making it absolutely clear that a Father god—who Earthfolk call the Lone Male god—created everything. More, that His first creation is a male, and that women, the feminine, what most humans consider the birthing body, is actually derived from male flesh. In this light, *Genesis* is stating that sexual acts of intimacy between two lovers have little to do with preciousness, and are, in essence, acts of genital pleasure, not of intimate human transformation or transmutation. Instead of being a duet, Abrahamic sexual intercourse is modeled as a warrior duel.

For many, this might be Earthfolk's most controversial and disturbing claim, namely, that there is a Sensual Preciousness sacred sexuality spiritual vision and practice at the core of the three dominant Big Stories. Reflect and assess, *Is this true of the Big Story you profess?* We Earthfolk hold that all Big Stories practice a Sensual Preciousness and are, in essence, spiritual visions of intimacy. This Sensual Preciousness is,

however, artfully concealed. To expose the depth and reach of the three Big Stories' Sensual Preciousness is why Earthfolk are so focused on the Religious Big Story of *Genesis*. For in *Genesis* there is more to learn about Sensual Preciousness and sacred sexuality by understanding what is *not* said and who is *not* seen.

On its face, what is seen in *Genesis* is what Earthfolk term the Lone Male god and his Lone Male creature, Adam. There appears to be no act of Sensual Preciousness or sacred sexuality from which the world and life, itself, is created. There is no Mother God. Adam, himself, exists alone. His Eros, or Life Force, is expressed through his Dominion over Earth and all living creatures. When a female is created, which is a decision made by his god and not a conscious request made by Adam, she is created from within him, from his flesh. Eve is Adam's bodily derivative. Both Adam and Eve are created beings. Neither is birthed from a mothering source. The message is that there is no sacred sexual act as source of Creation. Or, so it appears.

Earthfolk peer at and sit in silence with *Genesis* and find a Sensual Preciousness of Shade Warrior's Quest Eros. It is an Eros which is expressed through practices of sexual violence and abusive parenting. The sleight of hand in *Genesis* is that it appears to be an atheistic account. That is, there is no Mother Goddess. But an utterance from another Creation account, in *Genesis* 1:26, "let *us* make man, someone like ourselves ...," provides the interpretive key. Namely, that there are gods and goddess. That there are many aspects of femininity and masculinity present in the world. As Earthfolk peer and sit in silence, we call attention to our sighting of the Mother Goddess who is veiled though fully manifest in *Genesis*. She is the Shade Mother. The consort of the

Shade Father. Both are Warrior's Quest parents who raise their son to be a Dominator, and who so sexually abuse their daughter, Eve, that she has no sense of self-worth or value. Eve only experiences her female sexuality as she "sins," that is, when she listens to the Serpent and makes Adam aware of their nakedness, which is a metaphor for the sexual awakening to their intimacy.

Earthfolk hold that because Adam and Eve became aware of the power of intimacy, so were they exiled and cursed. We ponder, "How powerful must be human intimacy that a god would punish humans for experiencing this power?" Earthfolk see in the exile and god's curses an affirmation that it is through human intimacy that the Sensual Preciousness which does create Heaven and Earth, that does sustain Life forever, is made present. While this is explored in depth in Volume 2, sighting the Shade Mother and identifying the Lone Male as Shade Father and so unveiling the abusive intimacy which is present in the Garden of Eden is a momentous discovery upon which all Earthfolk interpretation and evaluation of the Religious Big Story is grounded.

Contrary to traditional Abrahamic self-interpretation, *Genesis* is not simply the story of a lone, monotheistic, patriarchal Father God. Rather, it is a story of Divine Parents, but they are the Shade god and goddess. This, however, is *not* simply an insight which applies only to the singular story of *Genesis*. It is an insight into how the whole Abrahamic tradition unfolds. It especially throws light on the hows and whys of the Christian interpretations of Jesus, his birth, the role of Mary, and the meaning of his death on the Cross.

At this point, simply ask yourself, *What type of parents are pleased by the agonizing death suffered by their Son on the Cross?* Jesus' death on the cross is proclaimed as an act of salvation, and one that satisfied the Father (expressed in a traditional interpretation called the Satisfaction Theory of Salvation). Only abusive parents claim that their violence is salvific! Finally, it is this Warrior's Quest Sensual Preciousness of sexual abuse which links the Religious with the other two Big Stories. The other two re-express this Shade Warrior's Quest Eros. As Earthfolk have found, the other two Big Stories do not deny nor reject *Genesis'* Revelation that Sensual Preciousness is based upon rituals of sexual abuse and sexual violence.

Carefully reading and hearing *Genesis* as we Earthfolk do is probably the most painstaking challenge you face. For if you peer and sit in silence with *Genesis* as we do, you will have to confront the Shade Warrior's Quest Eros drenched Sensual Preciousness of sexual abuse which you have been practicing. And, then, you will be faced with making a heartfelt choice whether you want to continue to live within its imagination and enact its rituals.

Earthfolk realize that our analysis and interpretation of *Genesis* is radical and daunting. Nevertheless, your evaluation and acceptance of the Earthfolk interpretation of the type of Sensual Preciousness at the core of *Genesis* will determine, to a great extent, your acceptance of the Earthfolk vision. So, it is especially critical that you seek to understand Earthfolk's take on this old, old Biblical tale.

Beloveds in Embrace and Forever-Family are Earthfolk's Icon

While Starship Earth is an Earthfolk icon when it is felt as a living presence in whose embrace humans are at-home, the countering icons to

the militaristic Mushroom Cloud and Starship Earth are the Beloveds in embrace and the Forever-Family.

This means that you as Beloved and when, through embrace, you make present the Forever-Family, so are you Earthfolk's icons. This is why you are invited to participate in an Earthfolk ritual with your precious Other, hopefully, to break-through and experience one another as Beloveds.

As Beloveds in embrace you not only are iconic, but the energy which you unleash, the preciously erotic vita zest, is the creative energy, the creative Eros of Life, itself. Once you are Beloved you are not only in embrace with your precious Other but, together, as a new presence, you two are embraced by the precious Otherness which is the Forever-Family.

Earthfolk's fuller intellectual analysis is offered in Volume 2. In this volume, a summary evaluation of the three dominant Big Stories follows. As stated before, Earthfolk find Biblical *Genesis* as source for understanding the vision and heartfelt practices of the Warrior's Quest and the emergence of the Mushroom Cloud and Starship Earth. While those who hold solely to a Religious Big Story might claim *Genesis* as "theirs," since it is in a book of scriptures called the Bible, Earthfolk see *Genesis* also as the historical source for the Scientific and Secular Stories, both intellectually and imaginatively. We claim that *Genesis* is the source for the heartfelt practices which define the Warrior's Quest. This claim, however, is part of Earthfolk imagining. Coming to see *Genesis* in this light is an Earthfolk way of seeing with sojourning alien eyes.