

# The Seventh Shrine: Spiritual Biography Continued / Orland Bishop and Host Michael Lerner, part 4

Speaker 1: Welcome to TNS, the New School at Commonweal, a collaborative learning project, exploring nature, culture, and consciousness. Join us now for a conversation with Orland Bishop and host Michael Lerner titled The Seventh Shrine, A Spiritual Biography Continued. This is part four of a four part series.

Michael Lerner: So, this is the beginning of our fourth and last formal session, speaking with Orland Bishop. We spent the first two sessions focused on Orland's extraordinary book, The Seventh Shrine: Meditations on the African Spiritual Journey from the Middle Passage to the Mountaintop.

We may actually come back to the book later in the conversation today. I feel certain that it is destined to be witnessed and recognized as a spiritual classic. It simply has those qualities. I've been reading spiritual classics for the last 50 years, and I think I have a decent instinct for what becomes a spiritual classic. So, I think, in decades to come, that recognition of it will grow, and its compactness, its precision of language and thought, its reflections of or Orland's spiritual journey, the hints that it drops throughout of things that it does not say, some of which we've been privileged to explore with Orland, which I'm very grateful that you were kind enough to give us deeper reflections on.

I think it will be a companion to those who want and choose to read deeply and carefully. So, I asked some of you to write questions and we have two. And so, that won't be the only thing we do, but we will certainly respond to those two questions. I have a few things I want to ask Orland. I'm going to begin with one. And then... I asked Orland if there were any subjects he wanted to return to. And he said he wanted to return to sacred hospitality. So, we'll be talking more about that. But Orland, before we begin anything else, I wanted to ask you. It's an obvious question that I haven't asked before. How long did it take you to write the Seventh Shrine? And what was your process in writing it?

Orland Bishop: The first levels were a series of meditations or contemplations that I had accumulated over a number of years, reflections on key relationships. So, the names of the people in there are specific to the role they played in my life in crossing different thresholds of initiation. So, I focused on the initiation community. I focused on the guidance that came in as a result of meeting certain people and places, because it wasn't so much for me to talk about my story, but the story that I discovered in my story.

So, the bigger story there is about a middle passage. The other stories is about the thresholds to the dead. The other story is really about the contemplative space in the higher mind and soul forces. The process is called Indaba. So, with areas where I wanted to tell something, I recorded it and then transcribed it, because my writing is scientific in form. I have been a researcher for so long that I still am researching my own work and I didn't want to do that. I didn't want to create a thesis. I wanted to create a narrative of my observation of very simple

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everyday realities that had something bigger behind them. And that's what this is.

Michael Lerner: When you recorded it, did you record it alone or with an audience?

Orland Bishop: Just sometimes with an individual.

Michael Lerner: Excuse me?

Orland Bishop: With one individual.

Michael Lerner: With one individual?

Orland Bishop: Or by myself.

Michael Lerner: Or by yourself. And after you recorded it, did someone transcribe it for you or did you transcribe it yourself?

Orland Bishop: Someone was trans... The editors transcribed it.

Michael Lerner: Okay.

Orland Bishop: And asked questions about it.

Michael Lerner: After they transcribed it, was there a lot of editing to do or was it minimal?

Orland Bishop: Minimum?

Michael Lerner: Minimal.

Orland Bishop: Minimum. Actually, one editor... We had a series of them. The first editor, the beautiful, beautiful young man was apprenticing with a publishing house. And he came and he would ask questions about certain things but would be lost in the conversation. So, we did nothing but talk. And the publishing house called him back and sent another one, because he'd be like, "I want to know that." I said, "They sent you to work."

But the helpful work came by one of the editors. She said, "Please don't change this form." The form of this was, for her, a critical shift in all the editing work that she had done, and asked that, "Let's keep this." It was complete in a relatively short time because it's not a large book.

Michael Lerner: What year was that?

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Orland Bishop: Oh wow. No. Well, I had it for seven years before I actually give it to the publisher. So, I can't remember how long it was completed. The manuscript was so large, they said I had three books. So, this is only a separated piece from a larger volume of material.

Michael Lerner: So, this comes out from Lindisfarne Books in 2017.

Orland Bishop: Yeah. So, I had it about seven years ago...

Michael Lerner: So, you-

Orland Bishop: ... by 2000.

Michael Lerner: ... had it completed by 2010.

Orland Bishop: Yeah.

Michael Lerner: And over what period of time did these dictations take place?

Orland Bishop: One year, over one year.

Michael Lerner: Excuse me?

Orland Bishop: Over one year.

Michael Lerner: One year. And you mentioned that there are actually three books of which this is one part.

Orland Bishop: Well, yeah. Well, material for three books. I don't think I'll do another one very soon.

Michael Lerner: Oh, you don't?

Orland Bishop: I don't consider my work in this form. I don't consider myself a writer.

Michael Lerner: There's this material that you have completed that... This required very little editing. And presumably, the other part would require very little editing.

Orland Bishop: Yes.

Michael Lerner: But you don't plan to release it.

Orland Bishop: I don't know. I mean, I don't know what it will serve if this one doesn't do this job. For me, coming to this was to give me a framework for work that I'll probably do for the next 20 years, in this book. There are things that's still for

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me to do. So, it wasn't a book for an audience alone, it was a book of telling someone what I would be asked to host.

Michael Lerner: Well, forgive me for functioning at the cognitive level here for a moment. But when I read this, it is so compact. It is so dense. It is so carefully reasoned that the fact that you can simply dictate it like this only increases my sense that it must be coming from an editor in the sky who has been... In other words, it's extraordinarily, carefully reasoned and thought out for something that was dictated.

Orland Bishop: Yeah.

Michael Lerner: I'm just observing.

Orland Bishop: Yes, I appreciate that, Michael. I don't think I've written anything that I've spoken in 30 years. All my presentations that are found online are improvisations. I prefer the intuitive work around around my-

Michael Lerner: I understand. But I have the same experience. Excuse me. I have the same experience listening to you that I have reading you, which is that your spoken words are equally compact, carefully reasoned and dense in the positive sense. So, for me, when I listen to you, I can't take it all in. I mean, I can take it in at the heart level. But at the cognitive level, there's more than I can mentally transcribe.

When I have the book, I can take the time. And so, what's striking to me is the relationship between your spoken work and your written work. And I would simply say that, for people like me who are readers and perhaps careful readers, that I hope you would at least reflect on the possibility that the rest of your manuscripts might serve a purpose. They might serve a true purpose.

Orland Bishop: Wow, thank you.

Michael Lerner: So, I just hope you will take us readers-

Orland Bishop: I hear that.

Michael Lerner: ... into...

Orland Bishop: Yes.

Michael Lerner: ... account, those of us who hear you but can't mentally process the compactness in its fullness. I mean, I hear you and I get it. But to understand it in its fullness, I've found this invaluable.

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Orland Bishop: Wow, thank you.

Michael Lerner: So, you mentioned, when I asked you at the beginning of the hour, that central to where you find yourself now is in this profound insight you have into the nature of sacred hospitality. Would you say more about that?

Orland Bishop: Yeah. I would like to read an invocation from the book, if I may...

Michael Lerner: Okay.

Orland Bishop: ... that prepares me in relationship to that work. This was one of the earliest meditative verses I had developed.

Michael Lerner: What page are we on?

Orland Bishop: On page six, invocation. Infinite space... sorry. Infinite stars, infinite space, source of the knowledge of the worlds, giver of thoughts that empower creation, transforming light into the elements of matter, radiates before my mind the seven keys that unlock the doors of the mystery temple, that I may enter and fulfill the purpose for which my birth initiates.

Now, this was, for me, an early petition before the keepers of the mysteries, the greater mysteries. And it had to do with, when we say the seven keys, seven keys had to open the door, because one key was only for one dimension. And the seven keys had to do with the framework that Dr. Alfred Lagan had prepared for us to be able to enter into our initiation. And so, this book is a construct of the pathway to my initiation, which could... one can say is the mountain top, but it's not like a finish. It's only there you can see the full breath of what is ahead, prophetically. So, it's only a place to enter into the super conscious. From there, the work is to serve what has to happen in the world.

So, my work is... My personal work is mostly finished. In the last year, I had to dissolve every attachment to everything to which I pursue no interest in anything other than the service from the mountaintop. The idea of sacred hospitality was to return with enough willingness to understand the complexity of our time and be in it with ease. I'm not rushing to do anything more. I have sufficient preparation for everything that I will do. And I feel confident that we have the people in the world now that can recapitulate the entire history of the world. That's what I'm pointing to in this invocation. The knowledge of the world is in the world. The guiding principles towards the higher development of human beings are in the world. And I am just looking for collaborators with this vision, because it's not my vision. It is what Sawubona is.

Sawubona is the idea that if you and I could see each other, we can agree in what we can see together. And this is... These are qualities of the togetherness. I actually joined Martin Luther King's vision in the last part of the book to say, "I

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know what you see." And he reviewed many, many epochs in his soul experience to say, if the creator was going to put him in different times in the world, where would he choose to be? And he said, "I would choose to be here at this time when the world is in chaos, because I initiate." Now, that is the best gift. You don't want a time in which you have nothing to do. That's not initiation. Development, in a certain way, is interest in the uncertainty in which other kind of the seven keys can come in.

So, the seven keys actually created our civilization, the western civilization, but only at a level of the intellect. Now, the intellect must do something with the heart and give attention to what these other bodies, these subtle bodies, are inviting in. So, sacred hospitality was in a meditative state in Switzerland, in Dornach at Steiners temple, in which one of his sculptures is a represent... we call a representative of man and is the Christ principle in his theology. But it was more than just being. A representation of a being was appointing to the being that we are becoming. So, we are all representative of a certain kind of future if we choose to host the miraculous transformation.

And one of the editors, the chief editor for the book, a lot of people attempted to figure out what I was trying to say, but who helped with the structure of the book was Christopher Bamford. And he was chief editor for Steiner Books many years, in this past year ago. But in conversation with him, about the practice of sacred hospitality that he had had emerged through the hetic cultures and through other religious systems was not only for the temple. Where they engaged the work with the deities was for the people who came to it and the pilgrims and such. And so, I chose to put my hospitality into the idea of the city.

Now, the challenge is that most cities are on the total duress of all forms of modernity, and it's at the heart of the complexity of the destruction of our planet. But that's for me, where I found the beings who feel most hopeful around the cultural challenge we are having, that if we can choose to make these places more refined towards all the collective destinies that are pouring in, there are enormous opportunities in it. And so, the forms of governance, the forms of economies, the forms of creativity, centers of creativity could be understood differently. We structure them in relationship to the lesser mysteries. I'm inviting us to host them towards the greater mysteries, meaning...

Imagine, rather than just putting the news online, we have a place where people share their dreams online. We'll get more out of the day if we review what came in from sleep to when injustice happens, to really talk about justice in a very different way. Karma brings a lot more people into trouble with each other than...

Michael Lerner: Orland, a thought came to me as we've been talking and experiencing the extraordinary sense of community in this room together. I think you and I both

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know that, when dedicated groups of people come together and recognize each other, provide sacred hospitality for each other, that not only individual consciousness but collective consciousness in the group can move forward.

Orland Bishop: Yes.

Michael Lerner: Yeah. So, I do not intend to put you on the spot, but I want to ask an open question. If this community would welcome the opportunity to continue to explore these thoughts with you over time, can you imagine that that would be part of what you feel is yours to do right now?

Orland Bishop: Yes. Building, co-creating an ecology around all the consciousness work that is happening on this planet is amazing. The practices are simple as this. We...

In working with an elder, two elders, in the country, Burkina Faso, we were able to ask them to use their knowledge to point to where water is on the ground. Now, the thing about the elders with those kinds of knowledge, they can point to where water is on the ground, but they do not have the technology to bring it up. We provided the support for a small well to be dug at a point in which an elder whose trust for what we are doing guided it. It is the purest water, the deepest well, the most water that has ever flowed in the village in a long time, first time in the entire year there's water flowing. This is what I'm talking about.

It did not cost as much to do that. But in relationship to sacred knowledge and trust, water is flowing. And that's the kind of world I'm thinking about. We have a lot of sacred knowledge in the world. Wars in certain countries have disrupted the care of shrines, where people can't go to the shrines or people... The sacred is left unattended in many places. Peacemaking is not only for the reduction of violence in a certain place, it is to recollect the wisdom of the world.

So, this is... All this is sacred hospitality. There are economies waiting to emerge because human beings could be in a different kind of agreement. The fundamental basic needs of human beings are not for material objectives. It's actually for trusting our sensitivity.

Orland Bishop: It's actually for trusting our sensitivity to be in proximity of a dream that's bigger than our aspirations, our individual aspirations. And people want to share a bigger dream. It offers more when we know there's an economy for it, and these are all principles within the ideas of sacred hospitality. There's no enemy in it, there's no scarcity in it.

PART 1 OF 4 ENDS [00:23:04]

Michael Lerner: So I'm trying to imagine, since you responded affirmatively to my question, if we were to design and collectively reach agreement that we wanted to pursue these explorations, these studies with you. Both for whoever could assemble in

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person, but because we record them also for others who might wish to do so. Do you have any sense from your experience of what that might look like? In other words, if we were to select a period of time for such a initial thing, would it be a year? Would it be six months? What would it be temporally? And then, we spoke of the importance, not of being perfect, but of discipline. What would be the collective discipline that we all sought to agree to? Some words like that.

And I'm imagining that we would try to come together from time to time. So, I'm just sketching this out with you in live time. These are usually the conversations that take place privately, but I think it's instructive to ask them in our community, and we can always edit the tape and take them out if there's a reason to do that.

Let me speak for myself, I have done this work with you for 11 years. I've admired you greatly for a very long period of time, but I feel that, and you've come and been part of our fall gatherings and different roles have been very beautiful. But I, at least, feel called to say, "I know there are some of us, I'm one of them who would welcome the opportunity to have a shared sense of this exploration of intent and purpose together." So, I'm asking you just to imagine and we can change it or anything else. If you were to suggest the form that that might take, might it be a year long process, might it be a shorter one, how would we check in or just any thoughts you have about what the instructional, collaborative learning process might be?

Orland Bishop: Yeah. I appreciate it's totally the gift of this. We were joking at the table at lunch that Victoria plans most of these things for me to do. And the trust in it is immense.

Speaker 3: You're listening to a TNS conversation with Orland Bishop and host Michael Lerner.

Orland Bishop: The thing about looking at a year or such doesn't work for me.

Michael Lerner: All right.

Orland Bishop: Here's why, I don't believe that to be. The how, the consciousness that I'm talking about.

Michael Lerner: All right, excellent.

Orland Bishop: Right. So we begin.

Michael Lerner: We begin.

Orland Bishop: We begin, and then from the beginning we see what emerges.

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Michael Lerner: That's beautiful-

Orland Bishop: And the discipline is added to what of the emerges.

Michael Lerner: I'm a Wabi-sabi guy, this is my way of functioning.

Orland Bishop: And then from what emerges and the disciplines around that, Woods can say, "Who else are knowers around this reality?"

Michael Lerner: I get it.

Orland Bishop: Because I don't like to be a teacher. I'm an accompaniment, I was in the high school band, so I always liked my instrument and I liked to listen to the other people's instruments to feel the resonance of-

Michael Lerner: What did you play in the high school?

Orland Bishop: I played the baritone horn.

Michael Lerner: The ballone-

Orland Bishop: Baritone.

Michael Lerner: Baritone horn.

Orland Bishop: Yeah. And for me, the ensemble is a critical intelligence for the collective consciousness. However, the particular keys that I know helps people to remember their own gifts. And that's really what I'm attending to. And the next level is in, and I think it has more to do with your part in it, is what are the premonitions, the sole premonitions?

One of the things we studied at the Nasic school was the 84-year cycle. So, every seven years until 84, we are in the matrix of the contemporary world. And by age, we being moving where you're going, the veil opens and you get a chance to forecast what the afterlife is. And this has to do with the wisdom of the beings who have observed your devotion to your life. And not it has to be finished or we have to finish something in this world, is what has been prepared, what has been prepared by your lived experience that will serve the earth in a way that no other person can interpret. So for me, it's important that people who reach this 84 year cycle understand that they will give to the earth something for its evolution, for the evolution of the earth, for the intelligence of the five spirits within the earth.

I won't go into all the details of what the Second World War had to do with this particular knowledge, but the process for me is, more time with you'll be great

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at any time. And within the community, for me, the healing work, there are resources for understanding what happens with people going into remission. It was the fall gathering maybe, the Healers retreat. My brother had just been diagnosed with cancer, and we explored with him what is behind this for you? And by Thanksgiving, he'd gone back for his checks up and they could not find anything. So, he is asking, he used a zen practitioner, so he went into his own care. But all the supplements of things that I took to New York for him, he had not used, but he used something else.

So, every time we put an intention towards a person's life, it doesn't always fulfill itself in a physical sense, we put it into their etheric life. So a lot of prayers, a lot of meditations were brought to his meditation life and he absorbed them. So the doctor's asking, "This is a miracle. What happened?" Well, that's not a question. I was, "What would you like to happen with all the people that are ill? How to reverse the question, would you like our help with all the other people? Because that's what we want to do."

- Michael Lerner: So, I'd like to ask the community gathered here, if you'd like to continue this exploration with Orland, if you just raise your hand, Orland, can you look around and...
- Orland Bishop: I see Victoria.
- Michael Lerner: Yeah.
- Orland Bishop: What a gift it would be.
- Michael Lerner: Well, it is.
- Orland Bishop: Yeah, it is.
- Michael Lerner: And notice what happens when we reach this agreement to the consciousness in the room, because we just formed and affirmed a collective intention. So, something happens to the consciousness, right?
- Orland Bishop: Yes. And it starts now, right? The course starts now.
- Speaker 2: It already started.
- Orland Bishop: Right. You raise your hands, so you started it.
- Speaker 2: Yes.
- Michael Lerner: Yeah.

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Orland Bishop: Because in a way, the exercise, again, we are not the only ones in the room and they saw us create something. Now they're far more interested in maybe, at this point that we are, and they will cause a lot of things to start revealing themselves. So, look for the signs of the course, because it's not paperwork that we are looking for, we are looking for dreams, we are looking for inspirations. And this is what happens when two or more agree. And within the larger context of world destiny, if you're taking up something that really matters to the world, we have a lot of help.

Michael Lerner: Let's just go quiet for a moment. Peace. Here's a question for you, we each have distinct destinies in this room, and is there a destiny or task we share? How interesting, how might you give voice to what that is? I hadn't read this before but we all reached an agreement. And the first thing that comes to my eyes is the question for Orland, we each have distinct destinies in this room, and is there a destiny or a task we share?

Orland Bishop: Yes.

Michael Lerner: How might you give voice to what that is? It seems like a perfect question.

Orland Bishop: Very. Oh, so Claire. It's almost like everything, everything on this planet is a common destiny. Everything about the earth is a common destiny. Sustaining the ecologies of nature is a common destiny. Opening up our awarenesses to the cosmos is a common destiny. What we receive as our individual purpose in it, is only preparation for co-creating, collaborating. So, we do that in our economy, we do that in our politics, we do that in our social arts already.

But we've, again, because we constructed those relationships in the world with lesser parts of our collective world knowledge, we think it's just our careers that we are here to do. No, we are here to receive messages for the world, dreams for it. And again, human development, real human development instructs the person's closest to you to protect your human rights. So, if everyone reads the International Declaration of Human Rights, you'll realize how important it is that I take care of another human being as to minimize the risk about what we are facing as a planet of humans. Our understanding of what lives within this amazing text around human relationship, that a person that's most likely to violate your human rights lives in the home with you, and you love them probably more so than anyone else, but they don't understand how fundamental it is for us to support each other's dreams and destiny.

It's such an amazing responsibility that we came collectively to understand by 1945. And the task was given to governments to make sure that these development things happen, they can't or they won't do it. We now are inviting civil society to understand the value of human rights, the value of human dignity, because it's not rights as we think, you are entitled to. This is how we enter into the sacred. How we refrain from even judging those who offend the

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rights, so that they could be supported to return to their own aspirations. And I think the question really is what Alice Bailey was pointing out in her Seven Reason Initiation, because that was part of the effort at that time, was to see how people would identify their careers, not as just a diplomat or minister in some government, but someone who understands how light comes into consciousness and what it points to in the world.

So, those treaties were critical to bringing a worldview in which we call, cultural creators could actually engage, because the wisdom came from initiates on the higher levels of ancient civilization, who from time to time reappear to put us back in touch with the collective aspiration that the question points to.

Michael Lerner: For Orland, what is your experience of working with non-human earthly communities? How do you relate with nature plants and animals as communities holding medicine for our souls? Can these non-human earthly communities fulfill the purpose? You spoke of finding completion for initiation in community, or do you find that to be a uniquely human capacity?

Orland Bishop: Yeah. In our lived existence, our lived existence as human beings, we have all of those communities in us, mineral plants, animal, we have nature in us. When nature was not to remain in us only as nature, because our chemistry, the human chemistry, when we eat our food, when we eat anything from nature, we actually dissolve it completely and rebuild something that is not that thing we ate. The human chemistry builds the human being, so it's not we shouldn't engage nature, but we take responsibility for what we do with nature once it enters us. Because once nature transforms itself into the human being, we then have access to far more powers in the creative will that we misuse as human beings, so we don't give back to nature.

We still take, we have the knowledge to replenish nature and protect nature, protect the sacred. We know how, we have enough knowledge to provide real nourishing food for people, why don't we do it? Because we created a conception of light, a substitute for light that we have far more interest in accumulating, call it money, we talk about it yesterday. We've created powers that we are far more interested in than nature, and part of my interests as well, is to put nature back in the context, how nature presented itself to us in the first place.

Nature didn't presented itself to us as a risk, it presented us as a teacher. We learned who we are from nature, and we could find a very unique, we say, a element in nature that supports our personality and the human creativity to balance itself, is either one of four, earth, water, fire or air. If you want to go Chinese, you can say water or metal or dagger, you can say nature or mineral. But five things can balance the human psyche from being greedy and destructive to this planet, five things from nature in the right composition.

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There used to be rituals for some people, and we were talking about certain elemental rituals. And you put a person in water, fire, not literally into fire, but close to it because these things have more to do with the chemistry of our life, not the information that we focus on in our lives. The human being as an information body is not as meaningful as an energy body. And I agree that the fields of intelligence is within nature, some or most of them still invisible to us or imperceptible to us. Elemental beings follow us around hoping that we'll do the right ritual for them to be able to expand their influence within nature itself. And a lot could happen, I trust that about our way of hosting. I don't know if I got all the question in...

Michael Lerner: Yes, you did. I think you did. So, what I'd love to do now is to harvest, hopefully from everyone who would like to speak in the room with a certain zen brevity, final reflections that we can capture.

I know that for me over these four conversations that things have moved in me, that I could not anticipate in the nature of this dialogue. And I know that it will take me time to reflect deeply enough to understand what has moved. But I felt that our collective intention to continue these explorations with you was heartfelt for everyone in the room. So, I thought, and again, we're capturing this on video as part of the experience. So, I thought it would be really useful if we could hear with hopefully great brevity from each person so that it doesn't go on too long, but a sentence or two or some brief version of that about what is emerging for you in this room right now, in this experience that you've had over these past days? And that will culminate in our closing circle tomorrow, and that will then take out into the world. So Susan, if you'd start and then pass it to Angela behind you, yeah.

Susan: What has really come forward for me is thinking about how we live in love in a very earth earthly way, and how we bridge that. And also what you brought up about people on the edge, many of whom are we are coming into the center with what we have and bringing it into the center and not being repelled by what we see, but edgy people coming in.

Michael Lerner: Yeah, thank you.

Angela: I want to share that I feel we are in the presence of infinite numbers of translators, interpreters, and this day has kind of capped off four sessions that actually have been very clarifying for me.

Speaker 4: ... that actually have been very clarifying for me. I see something much more clearly in our relations up to now, and going forward.

PART 2 OF 4 ENDS [00:46:04]

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- Speaker 5: I'm not quite sure how to put this into words, but I'm sitting with an awareness that nothing gets lost, and the curiosity of how, what role we might play in helping whatever sacred knowledge that still exists and always has existed into the world to come back to the surface and to be known. So, yeah.
- Speaker 6: I feel a great sense of accompaniment that is unusual in a setting like this that is so intimate, but feels so much larger and pulls from my childhood and my people. And to feel that happening for others, and to be sharing that in each moment that I'm stopping and talking prismatic and kaleidoscopic and very precious, really grateful to feel Commonwealth bloom in that way while I'm here.
- Speaker 7: I'm very awkward with words, speaking, but today has inspired me to really channel my intuition, and to look around to the nature to see the beauty that can reflect what the two of you have been speaking to. And I feel I find so countless visual cues from the nature that I'm so excited to sensitize hope keepers to something that the world cannot describe. So, thank you
- Speaker 8: Heart medicine, curating dream escapes. Reflecting them back into the world, into the consciousness that is needing them and exchange. I feel this exchange going on here with all the beings that are now part of this here in the room and beyond. This phrase keeps coming to me. It's a zen phrase, giver, receiver, and gift, all at the same time. Thank you.
- Speaker 9: I feel surrounded by beings who love to make things, who love to create things, who love to gather people together to paint and draw and sing, and do whatever we should do in ritual together. I'm inspired to take their nudges and see what I can do with it in terms of visual art, and I'm so excited. Thank you.
- Speaker 10: Echoing what Adam said. I've always loved something that Henry James said, be one upon whom nothing is lost. I feel like you have issued that invitation to us, and being here has been that way. For me, the invitation is to grow in trust of what is beyond words. And I am inspired by two things collectively, by the power of a collective aspiration. If we could hold that, and I really do think we're watching the birth of the future of Commonwealth. I felt that strongly here, and I hope we can talk about that tomorrow. Thank you.
- Speaker 11: I feel like this is a conversation, if I can say this right, that I didn't know I need to have until I had it. I needed to have this conversation. I needed to be in this conversation. It has touched something very deeply in me. I feel some sense of awakening as well, and the words sacred hospitality resonated so deeply. And I feel like something I'm supposed to do with that. I don't know what that is yet, but thank you for that, because that was a significant blessing to me. Thank you.
- Speaker 12: Thank you, thank you, thank you. Just the profound gift, and like Lisa just said, the invitation to the inquiry of sacred hospitality feels like home. And I also didn't know that being turned inside out could bring so much joy today.

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Speaker 13: Before this weekend, I thought that I had to wait, and I had to wait in a blank openness and lean into this feeling of patience. And in hearing that we are the prayers of the ancestors of these various realms, that we are their religion. That was such a invitation to trust what is being shared collectively and energetically. So thank you so much.

Speaker 14: Thank you both so much, and thank you all so much, because the experience of this time together is made by all of us. I want to honor and thank all your ancestors who've been here this whole time, just kind of cheering us on from wherever we are. And I've been feeling the delight of the various earth beings. I loved that you said something about they're just waiting for us to be in ritual with them, so that their influence and their co-creation with us can also be expressed. I feel really grateful to be in this community. I feel really grateful to be embarking on a work with Ben and Victoria, specifically, and that this is very much at the beginning of our journey, because this is who I am. I couldn't be in our chat work outside of this cosmology, I can't, it's not possible for me. So it feels really sacred to have been here with the two of you, and with the non-human realm that's been swirling around this whole thing.

There's a lot of gratitude to all of you, a lot of gratitude for the impulse that is pulling us together for collective dreaming, and it feels like such an affirmation of just different prophecies and teachings that indigenous soldiers have given me. It just feels like we're not supposed to do it alone. We're not supposed to do it out of relationship with each other, without love for each other, and we're not supposed to do it without relationship to the non-human relatives. And so it just feels like so much affirmation and love of just how connected in love we are, and that anything is possible when we're in that flow and stream of love and connection. So thank you for the gift of being here with you.

Speaker 15: Thank you. I love the word, this bringing of host. What are we hosting? Because it's dual meaning, or it's multiple meaning of what am I hosting, and what am I hosting. And sensing into the multiplicity of so many of the ideas that were brought. They exist in the personal, the interpersonal, they exist in the layers, and so I'm feeling that almost fractalization that's built into their expression. For the amount of what I would call distillation that's been shared, this distilled energy or medicine that I feel like, especially today, Michael, you gave us some of your medicine today, you've put the book down and gave us some of your medicine, which I'm so thankful for. And the medicine that you are providing for us, this distillation, it has brought a clarity and an ease into me that feels like that shouldn't be possible, because of what I know is coming. In the most balanced way, I'm like, everything's going to be all right. Not in a checked out way, but in a, I see what's coming. I'm present. And everything is going to be all right. So, thank you.

Speaker 3: You're listening to a TNS conversation with Orland Bishop, and host Michael Lerner.

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Speaker 16: I'm going to continue a theme here because it has just been so deep on my heart. Ideas of radical hospitality and sacred hospitality have been dancing with me for years, and for the first time I feel like I am having the experience of it in a profound way. It started from the invocation on the opening night, where I saw all of the beings that were hosting us, and who had prepared the space for us to be here, and for light to flow between us. The land which is always a co-conspirator with us in opening and awakening the openness of the hearts of every person who has held and witnessed the beauty of each other through our stories, the ways in which Michael you have held with such tender care and reverence, the work of Orland and this community, and the vision that you had, even walking this land, however many years ago. What it looks like to be embodied service of hosting that which wants to be known and wants to be seen, to bring transformation into the world through your work, Orland.

And the willingness to share it and host it all with us, I am in deep fear and awe of what it means that we are forever hosted and held over and over and over again by everything that is. And I am grateful. Thank you, thank you, thank you, thank you.

Speaker 17: With all of this is happening, I feel that my soul has been nourished. I feel that my spirit has been fed, and I want to thank you all, and Michael, and everyone here, and all the spirits around us, because now I can go from here and do what I'm called to do. Having been given this gift of being with you all this weekend, and I give my greatest gratitude to you all. Thank you.

Speaker 18: I am so grateful to have been able to participate. Thank you for everyone who is here. And what I'm really sitting with is the greeting of I see you, and how meaningful that can be from one individual to another, and how powerful that shared sight when two people or more see each other can be. And it has given me a beautiful perspective, and I am so grateful for seeing each and every one of you here. So thank you for creating the safe space, and the time for all of us to be vulnerable, and sharing that site.

Speaker 19: I'm not great with words. I'm not much of a talker. I'm so tempted to say, what Millicent said, and have that be my comment. But thank you all for welcoming me so warmly into your community this weekend. Orland, thank you, thank you, thank you. I now know why I pursued you so relentlessly. It was for this weekend. It was for this weekend. It's been such an amazing pleasure to meet you, and to see your heart. Thank you, Michael.

Speaker 20: Yeah, first Michael and Orland, thank you. You're both so good with words, and you've created a space of vulnerability, which has been really beautiful. And to be with everyone else, who all are so good with words. Even you, don't ever say you're not. But I think what's been most interesting for me, is how those words have transformed and been just a little bit of what happens here, and what we've really been dealing with is how to work with the unseen, invisible, and the

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unspoken worlds that we all kind of Intuit that may be there, but many of us, I'll put myself there, maybe I'll just say myself, don't have access to until they start to be reminded that that's what's happening. And so to all of you, my heart goes to every one of you, because I've found that this is the most amazing community, and I really appreciate having been included. So, thank you.

Speaker 21: Yeah, thank you. Yeah, Michael and Orland. I have a feeling of awe, I think is a way to describe it, and a sense of awe at what is here in the room with us, who is joining us, and an invitation to explore a reality much larger than I walked into this room with. I have a strong sense that there has been an invitation and an intention that has been set to explore some of this work of the heart and light, in the work that I do personally. I suspect this intention is in the work that this group does collectively, and a sense that this intention also will also inform Commonweal's work moving forward. And in your sense, Orland, I have a sense this is a powerful intention that has been said, so, thank you.

Speaker 22: I could become an echo chamber right now. All the beautiful things have been said. I happen to, Adam Horowitz, resonate with you, filled with joy. I am. And I feel that we've all been invited to a threshold, and we all walked through it, and it's home on the other side. And the thing about landing at home, even if it's fleeting or longer, you understand deeply why you hadn't felt at home all those years before. Deeply clarifying. And I want to also echo the acknowledgement of the invisible presences with us, human and not human, and the ancestors. And just say that I brought the holy papers of my own ancestors and their relatives that Orland will understand with me to all the sessions. And they're here now, and just acknowledge my friend Esther, who's been guiding me for so long.

Speaker 23: My heart is just like [inaudible 01:06:35]. I love the fact that I feel so connected to all of you, and I am so happy to have new friends. And I want you to know, Orland, that I used to play the trumpet.

Speaker 24: You're not starting a band, are you?

Speaker 23: Yes. We are, and we're taking the show on the road. But I also want you to know, and I'd seen this, and Michael, I mean, what you did early on with the spiritual biography, I listened to all of that, and it was just so beautiful. And I also want to say that I heard you voicing or wanting an even deeper commitment to Orland, and to Orland's work. And you, Orland, were here, because at the full gathering, you saw this, and you said, let's do more. We need to get this. And so here we are. And I want you to know that I'm here for you, Orland. That I am committed to you, and I am not going to allow the distraction of the world to steer me away from this commitment. I am here.

Speaker 25: Gosh. Well, I guess I just want to bring into the room my deep appreciation for the subtle with a capital S, and in a world that's just so loud and kind of grabby-

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Speaker 26: -and grabby appreciation for and rededication to listening to that.

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Speaker 27: I like when you said we create our own meaning and we create meaning. It doesn't matter what it is. If we don't create the meaning, it just becomes stuff. And I think that same thing with words and our actions and our deeds and that's why there's so much importance, was the intention and the will behind our actions and what do we hope to bring to a greater consciousness.

And I always felt like the human beings are capable of so much. And when we're at our best, we're creative and when we're at our worst, we're destructive and that's all in our power. And that's where we create heaven on earth, where it's our creativity, our building. And you come to a space like this and you're reminded by that is the creative power of our beauty and our wisdom. When we come together we can do something so special, rather than the latter and it's all in our power.

And that's why when you said our deities are praying to us, this is a representation of Michael, you did it. You created something. Why the deities were praying to you to put this special spiritual place together and create a space where like-minded individuals can come together and create and build and go into this world where it is noise and it is echo chambers and it will refuel us and empower us to do right and to be better people and to lead a way and to shine a light to people that are in the dark.

So I am appreciative and grateful for this space in Orland. My initiation was very messy and it started in 2020 and you jumped right in there to help lead me. And I was like, "What in the world is going on?" I woke up into some crazy initiation that all these people want a piece of me and you came... You're like a shining light and came into that world and was like, these are some of the practices you can start doing right away. And you offered me a way when there was just complete chaos and messiness. So thank you, thank you so much. And I am honored to be here with so many like-minded individuals and people that want to share the light. Appreciate it. I'm so grateful. Thank you all.

Speaker 28: My heart is full for sure. I get that busting heart wide open. What comes to mind right now is love and light, dreams and destiny. I am here and I had a great sense that the beings were with us and if the beings had mouths they'd be smiling on us, so much gratitude for everybody here. It's really been remarkable. Thank you.

Speaker 29: We are those deities. Time is not linear. We are being prayed for, but we're also doing the praying. Well soon, we will all having a religion of this world. So part of what comes is that we're cultivating the world, the shrine that we will be praying for soon. And there's an image that came when we were in Los Angeles.

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Stan was there, a few of you were there and we were talking about the physical space and what came from you. And I drew it. It was something that grew out of the ground. It was giant and it was like a tree. We're talking a redwoods, imagine 100 times. And it starts as a tree and it turns into light and it connects between a physical world and another.

And the other image that came to me today was that on this non-existent roof, there's a mural that you would see in the Catholic Church of Sky painted by artists like Wiley and Caravaggio and it's a non-existent roof, but there are all these beings that are us and others and they're all light. And I feel that as we cultivate the religion that we will be praying for, we are building this shaft of light. And that this community has so many angels and there's so much light that it is powerful enough to connect and to bring us almost to ourselves and to others.

Ken: This is really tricky because I'm working. So as I'm sitting here holding this camera for the last 30 minutes and just feeling the energy from the individuals and having that mesh with what's going on within me. And I feel ancestors behind me. At a certain point, I couldn't really hold the intensity of believing it or not believing it. I don't have the answer to that. I know that when I have participated in artistic endeavors in the past few years, it's the most close to God I think I've ever felt. Being this other thing just moves through me and I'm not holding on to anything. I'm just being and it's just flowing. It feels like I am at source with the concept of will. And so thank you for letting me share that with you and for-

Speaker 29: Thanks Ken.

Ken: -being the fly on the wall for so many of these-

Michael Lerner: Thank you, Ken. [inaudible 01:16:09].

Ken: Sorry about... Not zen brevity, that's for sure.

Michael Lerner: But Ken, you've walked with us through hundreds of these conversations.

Ken: Thank you.

Michael Lerner: They're up on the web because of you and Kara. Wonderful. Have we heard from everyone? I think we have. So Orland and I will sit down and do a close with you now. So there's a deepening of shared consciousness in the intersecting webs of life and meaning and a shared intention to develop... Or to allow it to serve life. And I think if you would ask me my highest purpose at this point in my life, I think that would be it. I think it is, as I said earlier, the word Commonweal means the wellbeing of the community. And to the extent that the organization called Commonweal and the community that convenes around

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that community, around that organization and others, to the extent that we are able to skillfully serve life, our work will continue. Because you know that the Bailey work and Alice Bailey's sense that in every community around the world there are what she called world servers. Do you resonate to that?

Speaker 30: Absolutely.

Michael Lerner: Yeah. So do I.

Speaker 30: Yeah.

Michael Lerner: And to me what that means is that there is no enemy, that no matter how much I may differ politically or for other reasons with other communities around the world, in every community, every community there are world servers. And as the Quakers say, there is that of the divine in every human being, which is very much your teaching, that we have that of the divine. So my identification for much of my life, but especially now, is with the truth that all over the world there are people like us who seek to serve life and that in this extremely difficult time... And as you say, we're only... We're fortunate to be born into this period of time precisely because of the immensity of the challenge.

Somehow, for me, you are one of the people who in the most authentic way gives voice to my hope, both for my own personal life and for our collective work together. That is how do we hold personal hope and collective hope that in the face of the immensity of the challenge that we will be able to utilize this global wounding as an opening for the light and that whatever cost we may need to pay, that it be in the service of becoming a mature planetary community of life and part of the infinite web of communities of life throughout the universe? And if we have to pay a terrible price to achieve that, I'm willing to pay that price, but I don't want the suffering to go for naught. I don't want the suffering just to take us down.

I hope and pray that we minimize the suffering as skillfully as we can, but that we are truly in the service of humanity becoming what the gods intended us to be. And I have a sense that that's possible. So somehow your voice and your capacity to speak to all of us feels, as you say, you simply are an accompanist, but you accompany in a particularly useful way. Let's just put it that way. And somehow your voice speaks to all of us in a way that feels immensely inclusive of us. So I'd love to end with your reflections on these four conversations and our shared intention to move toward hope and love and purpose together.

Orland Bishop: Wow. Thank you. My voice has been moving through all kinds of things. And the four sessions recapitulated 40 years or more of what came into my life. It honors the elders who invested certain things into my life. The time together invites me to do more with my life in the sense that I know how to ask the higher worlds of what to do and where to go. What I haven't done much of is

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asking what to do with it after that in terms of the distribution, because often most of my work was requested only when there's a crisis. And I just didn't like warning people. I didn't like just preparing for the bad day. I remember [inaudible 01:22:36] telling me that when you go this path, you will see things that you can't change.

You might even resent having insight to realities that may never be fulfilled. So prepare for losses, but also invest in the hopefulness of one moment of every day in a person's life when the right thing can be given at the right time and their reality changes. I only look for one moment of a day prophetically to guide what I do. I don't want to run around or LA, drive around doing all kinds of things that on the end of the day does not change the values of who we are. And I learned in the mentorship work when the angels of people wake them up, many of them used to call me at a particular time of the day and I know who is calling based on the time of the day sometimes without looking at the messages.

And some of them go all the way into the late mornings, 2:00, 3:00 in the morning because that's when the angels want to talk. And so I will get the call and this is the only time when they could hear some reflections about what is pursuing them, not only what they're pursuing, what is pursuing them, what is the appointments that they have in destiny? So I'm grateful that we are time beings. We're sensitive to time. We're sensitive to spaces, we're sensitive to patterns, we're devoted to certain states of consciousness. We are influenced by beings known and unknown. We actually are a self-conscious entity, meaning we could reflect on our past, present and futures.

And we have ahead of us time to manifest realities that require love and loving the time in which we live. I could imagine Martin Luther King knowing that the work that he started is not finished or will never be forgotten or lost. Many others who are committed to the longevity of the struggle of recovery and redeeming this human effort. This planet is a mystery and it's magical and walking some road, we'll step on a stone and that stone will remind us of everything.

There's so much on this earth to recover and I think those who are looking at the stars are doing a great job. I'm really glad that NASA did something like that. But imagine 10,000 people collaborating for one instrument, one satellite, 10,000 scientists to build these fantastic machines, thousands of people. We could recruit. We could recruit people to do good because it's in our collective best interest. This is not a hard task. It's a loving task and I think one that we will be grateful that we've entered into agreement for. And I want to say, Michael, your generosity and hospitality has been with us, with me and so many others and I'm glad that the dead could wave you from the other side. I'm glad that those who've transitioned from this world, because you provided a sanctuary for the reunification of their higher purpose.

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And even if they didn't complete the healing in the physical sense, the spiritual has fulfilled its purpose, to be a guide toward Commonweal will continue to bring into the world. So I'm at service to you, Orwen, Commonweal and Toto, for sure. Oh, this is... I'll tell you the joy that Toto raised to my heart does... Every single time, we just hug and go separate ways and it works really fine. Angela, thank you for always the inspiration to hold these spaces that we do for so many.

Angela: Yeah.

Orland Bishop: Particularly the younger ones. One of the things I really want to be careful about is that what I cultivate, I really want another generation to understand, a younger generation, because I think the unborn is far more critical to my future than the dead. Meaning that those who will see this community and say, "I want to be born that time to be part of their legacy and to their truths. I'm prepared for those who are coming back." And I have so many [inaudible 01:28:30] children in the world. They're piling on because in a certain way they choose. They choose me, they tell their parents, "That's who I want to learn from." And so I know it's coming. A better day is coming to our world and we'll share it together. Thank you for these sessions. There have been sleep full and sleepless and really, really joyful to be. It's a ongoing ceremony.

And I have to say thanks for the flowers and every time I look at you, they come into our aura. And this is what I love about sacred spaces. Everything fits. It makes sense, including the rain, which I love and the sun when it comes out from time to time.

Michael Lerner: Thank you Orland Bishop. And let's just go into quiet together for a moment. Peace, peace, peace. Thank you all for being here. What a joy. What a gift. Thank you, Orland.

Orland Bishop: Yes, Michael. Very welcome.

Michael Lerner: Take care.

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