

Dear all: (and Art – any way to send to participants today?)

I want to clarify and elaborate on my comment today during Hector Garcia's CACOR presentation.

The book *The Wisdom Pattern*, by Richard Rohr is an explicitly Christian Book and as a Franciscan this is hardly surprising. Yet his central thesis speaks to a pattern which he suggests is relevant to all civilizations and can be found in the histories of both civilizations and also through reflection of our own lives. He calls for a letting go of the present order which takes us into disorder and eventually toward the possibility of a new order.

The current order he argues is driven by our small egos – the one that needs external validation, that thrives on an ideology of individualism, that values the material and subscribes to more and better and always growth. It is predicated on fear – fear that we may not live up to expectations, that we will be out-competed, that we will not be valued and that meaning is tied to the material or to power which allows us to gain material. The small ego is awash with fear which turns quickly to scapegoating, to creating enemies, to hatred of the other or the opposing group. It is characterized by a consciousness of scarcity.

But an alternative can emerge if we allow ourselves and our societies to own their own shadow-side without the need for fear or scapegoating or projection leading to hatred. The alternative recognizes the givenness of life and leads to a sense of connection with others – sometimes with all others and breeds compassion not competition. It discovers not the small ego, but the Larger Self linked to the whole – which all spirituality names in various ways. It allows for projects to flourish focussed on the common good, the preservation of the whole, the sustaining of life and ecosystems, projects linked to reclamation, rejuvenation etc. It rarely comes just from information because information must pass through the filter of the ego- so the ego requires a journey towards identification of a wider purpose. Women in most cultures have less involvement with the egos link to competition and material wealth as Jean indicated and more links to relationship, empathy, and compassion - however no one is excused from the journey to locate the centre of both their personality and their wider social goals in the common good. This often is facilitated with personal journeys through the darker parts of us as literature around the world testifies too. Servant leadership or crusades for new visions that take into account the most vulnerable of both people and species are often led by such emergent leaders.

I'll stop here lest I risk an essay. But these journeys require companions on the journey and do not arise from just sharing the facts. Perhaps CACOR offers some prospects for those on the journey both young and older.

Cheers
David Pollock