

Dear friends in the Contemplative Society,

New Year's greetings and blessings to all of you! I wish to share with you my great Christmas news. I have been invited to participate this March 6-10 in a special conference in Jaipur, India, sponsored by the Global Peace Initiative of Women and called "Making Way for the Feminine." (You can check out the website at www.GPIW.org). Women spiritual leaders from all the world's sacred traditions will be meeting for six days to pray and strategize in seven key areas: visionary leadership; *ahimsa* and *satyagraha* ("non-violence and "holding to truth"); oneness; healing; educating the whole person, economics of compassion; and environmental issues ("honoring earth's systems"). I am honored and eager to be a part of this groundbreaking undertaking.

Following the conference, a small delegation of us will make our way on to Dharamsala for teaching and a private audience with His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

My transportation expenses for this event are being covered by a wonderful foundation in the United States dedicated to "the spread of Christ consciousness throughout the world." A goodly part of my accommodation expenses while in India will be covered by the Christmas gift that has just arrived in my bank account from all of you in the Contemplative Society.

As I reflect back during this New Year's passage, my thanks to my Canadian friends goes deeper than merely for financial support (though this is MUCH appreciated). This year is an anniversary of sorts. In early January ten years ago I broke camp in Colorado and headed to Salt Spring Island to take up residency among you. So much was unknown at that point—untested and still to be shaped. I see now that the shape my life now takes was largely molded during my time in Canada, in the teaching, retreats, and interactions with all of you. For better or worse, the Contemplative Society has been my midwife, and I am deeply grateful. Wherever I go—into deeper solitude and writing, or into the InterSpiritual work that our planet so desperately needs—I carry what I learned in British Columbia with me and draw on it every day.

I am overjoyed that things have worked out in such a way that I will be back among you during the fall of 08. Given the rate at which time seems to fly these days, fall will soon be upon us. I can't wait.

Thank you again for your continuing love and support. May all New year's blessings be yours.

Warmly,

Cynthia