

World Religious Figures Gather at Mt. Saviour

Pine City — "An extraordinary and miraculous assembly," as Alan Watts called it, took place Aug. 27 - Sept. 1, at Mount Saviour Monastery, the Benedictine community near Elmira. Watts is president of the Society for Comparative Philosophy.

A symposium on Spiritual Formation East and West was co-sponsored by the monks and the Center for Spiritual Studies. The latter became widely known for its sponsorship of ecumenical yoga retreats at Annhurst College in 1970 and 1971.

More than 150 persons attended the "invitation only" symposium which featured 22 monks, artists, community organizers, hermits, yogis and teachers.

Also present were students and campus chaplains.

According to John-David Robinson, director of the symposium, "The inner flow of events was determined by heightened attentiveness to the ontological dynamism of the confrontation — to the Spirit, in Christian terms. Nothing was rigidly pre-determined, but enough structure was provided to support spontaneity, and to ensure texture and variety to the days.

"There were moments of Apollonian clarity; there was also the Dionysian darkness of the fertile night. In the experience of another tradition, one suddenly recognized his own. Many hearts met during these days. And they met along many different ways. From the silence of mystical awe to the 'absolute uproar' of a good time," to quote Alan Watts once more.

"The meeting arose from hidden fullness, discovered manifestations of fullness in different religious Ways, and concluded with openness to the recognized fullness of the future. Quite possibly the most lasting effect of the symposium was the meeting of hearts among spokesmen for so many religious traditions — fullness meeting fullness, mystery meeting mystery," Robinson said.

At the close of the symposium,

Father Martin, prior of the community commented, "I would like to thank publicly all who participated and helped with this event, especially Chancellor Murray of Elmira College."

"I was impressed by the sincerity and religious development of everyone there," another monk said. "It was lots of work, and we had some anxious moments, but it was worth it."

Another monk said, "The effect overall was very positive. It deepened my understanding of my own religious tradition and seemed to show that unity can be reached by going deeper into that tradition."

Among the participants at the conference were:

Dr. Alan W. Watts, president of the Society for Comparative Philosophy, Dr. Watts is the author of more than twenty bestselling books.

The Archimandrite Kallistos Timothy Ware, professor of Eastern Orthodox Christianity at Oxford University, England, monk of the Monastery of St. John the Theologian on the island of Patmos in Greece.

Pir Vilayat Inayat Khan, head of The Sufi Order in Europe and the United States.

Yogiraj Sri Swami Satchidananda, founder and director of the Integral Yoga Institute, with yoga centers around the world.

Yogiraj Sri Swami Venkatesananda, long-time secretary and biographer of Swami Sivananda, founder of the Divine Life Society, with disciples around the world. Swami Venkatesananda came to the Mount Saviour symposium from Rome where he was received in private audience by Pope Paul.

Prof. Raimundo Panikkar, writer, professor of Religious Studies at the University of California at Santa Barbara.

Reverend Joshu Sasaki Roshi, priest of the temple in Japan where the famous Zen master Hakuin received enlightenment, and master of the Cimarron Zen Center, Los Angeles.

Baba Ram Dass Alpert, whose personal pilgrimage has taken him from Harvard psychology professor to LSD magus to faithful yogi.

Father Francis Martin, hermit in the community of Madonna House, center for missionary layfolk, in Canada.

Mrs. Sarah Small, an associate of the late Dr. Martin Luther King in the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and now co-director of Packard Manse, the Boston ecumenical community.

Rabbi Shlomo Carlebach, composer, singer in the Hasidic tradition.

Sheik Shahnaz Stephen Durkee, artist, creator of multimedia total experiences,



Among the leaders of the symposium at Mt. Saviour were: (standing, l.-r.) Sister Ann E. Chester, Kresge House of Prayer Center, Detroit; Miss Kaplana Das, Centre Monchanin, Montreal, Canada; Rabbi Joseph H. Gelberman; Sheik Shanz Durkee, of the Sufi Order; Jemila Inayat Khan; Pir Vilayat Inayat Kahn; Shahida von Breisen; Yogiraj Sri Swami Satchidananda; Pir Seraphael Inayat Kahn; Father Martin Boler; John-David Robinson; Rev. Joshu Sasaki Roshi; (seated, l.-r.) Mildred Thomas Johnstone, founder of the New York City branch of the Urasenke School of the Japanese Tea Ceremony; Professor Raimundo Pannikar; Sri Swami Venkatesananda; Rev. Gesshin Cheney; Sister Jose Hobday.

founder of the spiritual community, Lama Foundation in New Mexico.
Shahida Frances Van Briesen, one of the original members of the Lama Community in New Mexico.
Rev. Gesshin Cheney, Abbot of Mount Baldy Zen Center in California.
Rabbi Arthur Green, member of the Boston Havaurat Shalom community.
Sister Jose Hobday, follower of St. Francis, teaches Native American Literature in the American Indian Cultural Center at the

University of California at Los Angeles.
Reverend Thomas Berry, member of the Congregation of the Passion, professor of History of Religions at Fordham University, founder and director of the Riverside Center for Religious Research.
James Forest, writer, co-founder of the Catholic Peace Fellowship.
Reverend David Kirk, founder and president of Emmaus House in New York City, East Harlem.
Ms. Linda Parsons, founder and director

of the Thomas Merton Center in Quebec, Canada, a farming community designed for a common life of Christians and Buddhists.
Rabbi Joseph H. Gelberman, modern Hasidic teacher of the Little Synagogue in New York City, center for Kabbalistic meditation. Founder of the Midway Counseling Center.
Brother David F.K. Steindl-Rast, monk of Mount Saviour, doctor in psychology from the University of Vienna, chairman of the Center for Spiritual Studies.

Letter from Bolivia

A Busy Time for Missioners

Well the team is back together again. Ed is here; Pete is here for a few days — he's buying mules to take back to the colonization project. They have to walk the last 10 miles by foot and so whatever they need in the way of supplies must be carried by hand. The mules will add to the project and certainly cut down on some of the back-breaking labor. We hope that Father Deckman knows how to drive them. Father Dan Tormey is studying very diligently as is our layman from the diocese, Tim McCluskey. All the help here are fine and doing well and constantly pray for you and wish you well.

August was a busy month and many things happened. A professor from Brockport State University, Miss Jeanette D'Agostino, visited us for a couple of days. The same day she departed three priests from Syracuse, Fathers Peter Creed, John Godfrey and Paul Keebler, contemporaries of Father Deckman, arrived to spend a week with us. They were wonderful guests

and Father Creed made sauerbraten for us the night they left. It was delicious, too. We take the opportunity again to extend an invitation to you to come down and visit us. We try to explain what we're doing and what it's like here but words are impossible. The whole situation has to be seen to be believed.

We had elections in the zone where we live. The winner turns out to be something like a ward leader in the States. Unfortunately there are still some bitter feelings between the various candidates and we ask your prayers that all might resolve their difficulties so that we can get on with the business of mak-

ing the zone a better place to live.

The gate in front of the church is now finished and finally after six years we can enter the property with the Jeep. The street, if you can call it that, that we come up is something else again. Fortunately the Jeep has 4-wheel drive and so we can make it. The other night an old woman sent her boarder out to dig up the sewer pipes in front of her house. Pity was that she didn't tell anybody about it and when we returned about 11:30 from a meeting we drove the Jeep right into the ditch. It was stuck for the night. Bright and early the next morning the four priests

from Syracuse and ourselves dug and pushed it out. So Father Deckman was able to leave for his appointment in a village about three hours from here with some interested colonizers. Guess that's what you call the sufferings of the missions.

Fathers Golden, Deckman and Freemesser

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