

Towards a Deeper Understanding of 9/11

by Richard Ramsbotham

Part Three of this article looked at truth itself and at the need for people to become aware far more widely that (despite what Kant and others would have us believe) we do have the means necessary to arrive at truth on any question¹ and must therefore not remain satisfied until we have become able to understand for ourselves the truth of any issue – in this case 9/11.

With regard to 9/11, though, because of people's rightful sense of moral outrage at what took place, it has remained almost impossible for many people to accept the extremely uncomfortable truth that the facts increasingly make clear.

Looking into the Telescope

One cannot help but be reminded of the story that Galileo asked the cardinals to look into his telescope – where they would see for themselves the truth of what he was saying – at which the cardinals *refused to look*.

The cardinals are hardly to be blamed for the fear they must have experienced. For to have looked into the telescope *would have*, almost literally, taken away the very ground they stood on. The situation is in no way dissimilar with regard to 9/11.

The evidence that Galileo wished to show them – to prove that the earth moved round the sun – not only threatened what they knew but also all they *believed in*. If true, it would make it impossible for them – for the foreseeable future – to make *moral sense* of the universe they were living in.² In today's relativistic culture, where 'anything is possible', we may even admire the intensity of the cardinals' response. It was justified, furthermore, that they found it difficult. For what Galileo was *not* providing them with was any way of making moral or spiritual sense of what he was showing them. (Nor, it must be said, has this even today been fully achieved. For Galileo's discoveries did *not* mean we are living in a soul-less and spirit-less universe, as many still believe; only that the previously existing way of relating to the soul and spirit in the universe was no longer sufficient.) Without this, without also seeing how to make inner sense of these new discoveries, *they could not understand them*.

And so too it is with 9/11. The 'facts' by themselves – for example that *no* buildings such as the three that came down on 9/11 have ever previously collapsed, in the way they did, because of fires – are, in many cases, not enough to bring about understanding. For these people, based on all their previous experience of what has – and continues to give – meaning to their lives, this *cannot be*.

Stated at its simplest, millions of people, whatever the wrongs that may have stemmed from the U.S. government, trust that the powers of democracy in the world *are*, somewhere, what they say they are, the spreader, if not necessarily of light, then at least of freedom and democracy – that they *are* working for good in the world. Whereas, if individuals within or close to the top levels of U.S. government had themselves in any way orchestrated events of 9/11, this would signify U.S. responsibility for acts that must unmistakably be recognized as evil.

It is this which many people have not been able to reconcile themselves to. Whatever the facts may be pointing to, many people have simply had no moral framework with which to make sense of these; they have therefore, like the cardinals, *refused to look*.

It is therefore no accident that many of the foremost researchers into 9/11 have been people with a very strong moral sense – who have therefore attempted not only to look at the facts themselves, but also to provide a moral framework capable of at least beginning to understand how something seemingly so unthinkable could have happened.

9/11 and Moral Truth

We increasingly see people, with regard to 9/11, stretching their moral and spiritual understanding not only in order to comprehend how such events could have taken place, but also in order to look for a different and better way forward.

This may ‘simply’ be a question of the value of truth itself – and the need to face up to it – whatever this may cost. An outstanding example is Kevin Ryan, who worked for a company.³ that certified and underwrote the steel components used in the World Trade Centre buildings. Ryan wrote to the ‘Metallurgy Division’ of the National Institute of Standards of Technology (NIST), who were responsible for the government-sponsored report about how the WTC buildings had collapsed. Pointing out that the steel used in the WTC buildings “will not melt until reaching red-hot temperatures of nearly 3000 Fahrenheit”, but that “the steel was probably exposed to temperatures of only about 500 Fahrenheit”, Ryan concluded his letter to the Deputy Chief of NIST’s “Metallurgy Division”: “This story just does not add up. If steel from those buildings did soften or melt... this was certainly not due to jet fuel fires... let alone the briefly burning fires in those towers. That fact should be of great concern to all Americans.”

Ryan went on:

“The events of 9/11 are the emotional driving force behind the War on Terror. And the issue of the WTC collapse is at the crux of the story of 9/11. My feeling is that your metallurgical tests are at the crux of the crux of the crux.”

Ryan was fired from his job for such questioning. In a later personal statement he said the following about the NIST report:

“To me, the report in question represents a decision point, not just for the US, but for humanity as a whole. *We’re at a point where we must decide if we will live consciously, or literally give up our entire reality for a thin veneer of lies.*”

He added: “All people lie to themselves. It’s one of the most important things we have yet to accept about our own nature... This lying is at the root of many of our problems (e.g. nationalism and racism). Until we see this, and strive to understand if not control it, the resulting problems will continue unchecked and the outcome will be certain. Any organism or society that makes self-deception its *modus operandi* will make many bad, and ultimately fatal, decisions. The day will come when we are collectively fooling ourselves in such a way that we essentially trade everything we have for what’s behind our fantasy curtain. It appears that day is near.”

Ryan then reiterates the central importance, in this regard, of the events of 9/11:

“The official conspiracy theory of 9/11 is a key part of our current self-deception. More importantly, this story may be our last chance to see just how critical our situation is so that we can all stop, and begin working together to solve the real problems we face.”⁴

Ryan’s approach is echoed by Paul Craig Roberts (former Assistant Secretary of the Treasury under Ronald Reagan and a former editor for the *Wall Street Journal*). Roberts writes: “When scientific evidence that challenges government veracity (is suppressed), we know that in America respect for truth is dead.” Regarding a context capable of understanding how this has happened, Roberts points to the world depicted by George Orwell:

“My generation was raised to believe in evidence and the scientific method. George Orwell and other writers warned us of the consequence of succumbing to government propaganda as a result of disinterest in the truth or government manipulation of one’s patriotism.”

Roberts concludes his article “9/11 and the Orwellian Redefinition of ‘Conspiracy Theory’” by saying: “A country whose population has been trained to accept the government’s word and to shun those who question it is a country without liberty in its future.”⁵

In a later part of this article I shall return to questions raised by 9/11 about politics and power and rightful and wrongful state governance.⁶ In this part, however, I am more concerned to explore the views of those who, in order to make sense of an event like 9/11, seen unambiguously by many people as ‘evil’, find it necessary to bring to it a spiritual framework of understanding.

It is significant that among the people who are not 9/11 researchers, yet who have nevertheless courageously supported the demand for the truth to be uncovered about 9/11, are also to be found those who have shown a profound commitment over the years for what we could call ‘moral truth’.⁷

Michael Meacher

In Britain, the only politician that I am aware of who has had the courage to speak out in public about the need for truth about 9/11 is Michael Meacher.⁸ Meacher wrote the foreword to David Ray Griffin’s first book on 9/11: *The New Pearl Harbour*, praising Griffin’s “excellent exposé of... the deeply troubling questions that must still be answered fully and transparently if democratic control over political and military

leaders is to mean anything at all.”

In September, 2003, Michael Meacher had written in *The Guardian* newspaper about the agenda of the Project for the New American Century, (as set out in their document ‘Rebuilding America’s Defences’.) Meacher wrote : “This is a blueprint for US world domination... it provides a much better explanation of what actually happened before, during and after 9/11 than the global war on terrorism thesis... It seems that the so-called “war on terrorism” is being used largely as bogus cover for achieving wider US strategic geopolitical objectives.” He added: “the ‘global war on terrorism’ has the hallmarks of a political myth propagated to pave the way for a wholly different agenda – the US goal of world hegemony, built around securing by force command over the oil supplies required to drive the whole project.” Meacher then asked his British readers: “Is collusion in this myth and junior participation in this project really a proper aspiration for British foreign policy?” The article ended: “this whole depressing saga surely provides all the evidence needed for a radical change of course.”

Meacher’s article was a rare example of a politician speaking out on these themes in a national newspaper. The US government quickly responded, through an embassy spokesman in London, denouncing Meacher, in effect, in Orwellian fashion, as a *non-person*:

“Mr Meacher’s fantastic allegations – especially his assertion that the US government knowingly stood by while terrorists killed some 3,000 innocents in New York, Pennsylvania and Virginia - would be monstrous, and monstrously offensive, *if they came from someone serious or credible.*”⁹

What, we might ask, leads Michael Meacher to attempt to address these massive public lies and delusions, when so many others appear willing to go along with the prevailing ‘story’? It can surely be no accident that Meacher is also someone who has attempted to ask profound and searching questions about himself, the universe and the purpose of human existence.

In 2010 Meacher published a book called: *Destination of the Species. The Riddle of Human Existence*. It states at the very beginning: “There is really only one question for human beings that in the end matters. That is, what if any, is the purpose of existence, and what are we here for?” We are unable to explore this book further here, but he says, for example, later on: “Conditions may well be right, not for the death of religion now so confidently being predicted in some quarters, but for its renaissance, though only via a radically different exposition that speaks to today’s world.”

The final words of the book are: “The challenge now for humans is not to transform the world, but to transform themselves.”

William Sloane Coffin and other religious voices

In America one of the small number of people with a significant public profile to have spoken out about the need for the truth to be known about 9/11, is the protestant pastor and social activist, William Sloane Coffin (1924-2006). Coffin’s work led him to be considered: “the voice of American Protestant liberalism” and obituaries referred to him as “among the most important Christian leaders in American history.” Shortly before he died, he fully endorsed the research of David Ray Griffin into 9/11, stating: “All Americans who love their country enough to dig into the facts of these critical times will be well rewarded by examining Professor Griffin’s books. 9/11 Truth is a very important issue with the power to bring lasting change to our country.”¹⁰

Again, we might ask why Sloane Coffin could see through the public deception concerning 9/11 and also had the courage to express himself publicly about it when many others with a similar public profile have not. Again we discover that Sloane Coffin had what we might call a profound moral activism, both towards himself and to what he perceived of injustice and untruth.

In a talk in 2005, Sloane Coffin spoke of the need for “*a politically engaged spirituality*”: “Arthur Miller¹¹ (...)once wrote ‘I could not imagine a theater worth my time that did not want to change the world.’ I feel the same way about religious faith; it should want to change the world. The ‘blood-dimmed tide’ loosed in the last century claimed more lives than all wars in all previous centuries, and the present century is filled with violence and cruelty... Urgently needed for our time is a politically engaged spirituality... Christianity(...) doesn’t *have* a social ethic as much as it *is* a social ethic, called to respond to (...) mandates like truth-telling, confronting injustice and pursuing peace.”¹²

Such “politically engaged spirituality” is also found among many others who address the truth of 9/11, which should perhaps not be surprising, given the many different levels at which it needs to be addressed. A significant symptom of this multi-levelled need is the fact that the important book: *9/11 and American*

Empire. Intellectuals Speak Out (ed. David Ray Griffin and Peter Dale Scott) was followed up by a second volume: *9/11 and American Empire. Christians, Jews and Muslims Speak Out*. The three sections of the book respond, in turn, to the issues of truth about 9/11 from Christian, Jewish and Islamic standpoints. (Edited by John Cobb Jr, Sandra Lubarsky and Kevin Barrett, respectively.)

David Ray Griffin

The greatest single example of someone whose moral (or spiritual) standpoint enables them to unveil ever more thoroughly the events of 9/11 is David Ray Griffin.

Griffin's work on 9/11 is the most comprehensive of any researcher; he has written twelve full-length books on the subject (ten specifically on 9/11 – two on related themes), following on from some twenty-four previous books addressing questions of religion, spirituality, ethics, ontology, the origin of evil, and the practical implications of these with regard to how governments could or should be addressing the demands of the present.

It may be said that Griffin has gone as far as almost producing – or helping to produce – a whole new moral and spiritual framework with which to understand the seeming contradictions between religious worldviews and scientific views of evolution, the unity of world religions, the origin and evolution of evil, and the significance of this in divine and human history, as he sees these. This perspective is called 'process thought' or 'process theology' – of which Griffin is one of the most prominent representatives. Process theology is not only comprehensive in scope – there being, seemingly, almost no areas of human life it does not address itself to – but also *comprehensible*. It is rationalist in approach – confining itself to what can be clearly argued and expressed – and is not, therefore, offputtingly 'religious' for people – and has thus been able to become part of contemporary discourse on philosophy, the history of religions, what Griffin terms constructive postmodernist thought,¹³ regarding many areas of contemporary life,¹⁴ and most importantly for the themes of this essay, on the role of governments and contemporary political institutions.

Griffin on 9/11 and American Empire

Griffin's most detailed book, specifically linking these themes, is *Christian Faith and the Truth Behind 9/11*.¹⁵ Griffin explores how Christianity, in its true nature as represented by Jesus,¹⁶ shows human beings a path which one must call the opposite of any kind of imperialism. Griffin then shows how the drive to create empires – and not least the current drive for an *American Empire*¹⁷ – must be seen unambiguously as 'evil' or 'demonic'.¹⁸ This is seen most clearly by the brutal and violent means by which these imperialistic ends are achieved.

Griffin gives example after example demonstrating that: "U.S. foreign policy has not, any more than Rome's foreign policy, aimed at the promotion of freedom, democracy and human rights."

Griffin is aware, of course, that the neoconservatives (of the Bush years) presented themselves as having rectified many of the wrongs of previous administrations, and that they spoke, therefore, like Robert Kagan, of: "the benevolent hegemony exercised by the United States" which "is good for a vast portion of the world's population." But turning his attention to the 2003 war in Iraq, Griffin states:

"All the attempts to rationalize this war in Iraq, to show that it was a noble effort, or at least a defensive necessity, have been exposed as false. This war has from the first been based on lies, greed, and imperial lust. To see it accurately is to see that it is an unmitigated evil."

"Demonic Power"

Towards the end of his book, in the chapter: 'The American Empire, Demonic Evil and 9/11', Griffin refers to the popular American characterization of the Soviet Union (during the Cold War) as an "evil empire" – "American political leaders maintained that Soviet Communism was evil because it was ideologically driven to rule the world."¹⁹

Griffin then speaks of Nazi Germany: "The other regime that Americans regularly call evil, even demonic, is the Nazi regime... We rightly consider the Nazi regime demonic."

Griffin then turns the whole labour of the previous 175 pages firmly on the devastating imperial actions of the U.S.A.:

"But if we apply the same criteria to the American Empire, how can we withhold the judgement that it, too, is an evil, even demonic empire? *America has overthrown the governments in more countries than Germany and the Soviet Union combined*... Neocon thinkers and U.S. military documents openly proclaim

that a global *Pax Americana* is the goal. If it would have been evil for the Soviets to want to dominate the world, is it not evil for Americans to seek this kind of domination?”²⁰

Griffin remarks how the Western powers-that-be would very much like us to believe that: “whereas a Soviet-imposed global empire would have been evil, an American-imposed global empire would be good.” But “this part of neocon ideology is patently and massively false. U.S. foreign policy does not act on behalf of civil and political rights; it does not honour the basic economic right to subsistence; it does not respect the results of democratic elections when the ‘wrong’ candidates win; it does not promote freedom and the general good.” For “whereas Soviet and Nazi leaders were each responsible for over 50 million deaths, American leaders, besides being responsible for millions of deaths through their interventions in Central America, Indonesia, Vietnam, Iraq and elsewhere, are, by virtue of their leadership of the global economy, ultimately responsible for some 180 million deaths from poverty-related causes *each decade*.”

Griffin adds evidence upon evidence to this picture, before finally being obliged to conclude that we have no option other than to face up squarely to the fact that the American Empire is “*the principal location of demonic power in our time*.”

He fully justifies, within his own terminology, such an expression, defining the ‘demonic’ as – “creaturely power that, besides being strong enough to threaten divine purposes, is exercised in ways that are diametrically opposed to those purposes.”

Griffin acknowledges, though, the profound difficulty many people may have in coming to terms with this perspective:

“This perspective, to be sure, requires an enormous shift in our understanding of the relation between our country and our God. Most Americans who believe in God have been brought up to assuming that America is at least basically on God’s side, perhaps even the chief instrument of divine purposes in the world. To go from that understanding to the view that our country is instead the chief embodiment of demonic power, hence the primary threat to divine purposes on our planet, is not an enjoyable conversion. But it is, I believe, a conversion that is necessary if our beliefs are to correspond to reality and if we are to be in a position to turn our country, and hence our world, in a different direction.”²¹

Griffin then revisits the significance of 9/11 within this context. The events of 9/11, as Griffin sees them, play an essential, defining role in all he has described as the current “American Empire.” (This is surely the case, as the events of September 11th, 2001, right at the beginning of the millennium, launched the global ‘war on terror’, and however one understands these events they clearly formed something like a ‘founding myth’ at the start of what was heralded as the ‘New American Century.’)

Griffin therefore states: “The attacks of 9/11, understood as a false-flag operation orchestrated by forces within the U.S. government can be taken, I suggest, as the chief revelation of our time. Not a divine revelation, to be sure, but the chief revelation of the demonic – to the extent to which it has taken control of the American government.”

Just as we must understand the full scale of the intentions for American hegemony and empire, if we are to understand the ‘false-flag’ operation of 9/11 necessary in order to achieve these; so we can only fully grasp the brutality of the intentions of America’s ‘global domination project’²² when we perceive the truth about 9/11.

Christian Faith and the Truth Behind 9/11 is a remarkable book. Peter Dale Scott said about it, understandably: “Even though it makes some claims and arguments I disagree with, I consider this one of the most significant and original books I have ever read.” It was published by the presbyterian Westminster John Knox Press, whose President and vice-President lost their jobs as a result of the furore caused by its publication.

American Faith versus Christian Faith

In a further book, written for the tenth anniversary of 9/11,²³ Griffin added to these thoughts a significant new emphasis, in a chapter called: ‘Nationalist Faith: How it Blinds America to the Truth about 9/11’.

“We normally think of the primary form of faith in the United States as Christian faith. But I suggest, in agreement with theologian John Cobb, that the primary form of faith in America is the American version of nationalism, which could be called ‘Americanism’.”

“Truth, ‘Faith’ and 9/11” (John Cobb)

This is, surely, a startling statement – and one that, if true, would clearly have colossal implications. The source for what Griffin is saying, as he points out, is a significant essay called - “Truth, ‘Faith’ and 9/11”²⁴

– by his friend and long-term colleague, John Cobb.²⁵

Cobb's essay represents, I think, almost the pinnacle of this whole range of work, addressing the spiritual significance of 9/11, written from a perspective which is religious, on the one hand, and rational, on the other.

Cobb's aim is to become clear about the role 'faith' plays with regard to how people understand 9/11.

He begins by describing what he means by 'faith'. Growing up into a particular society and culture we take into ourselves, completely unconsciously at first, a whole range of assumptions about and responses to the world around us. Such a relationship to the world Cobb refers to as 'a faith': "We may call the largely unconscious underlying and overarching view of the world as well as the more conscious beliefs in which it is expressed 'a faith'."

This does not exclude, says Cobb, the possibility for "critical reflection on a range of topics, particularly those on which members of the society disagree. *But the deeper context of those debates will not itself be brought into discussion.*"

Cobb then describes the main 'faiths' that have led to present-day American culture, and particularly, for the purposes of his essay, that American culture that goes along with the 'official version' of what happened on 9/11.

For a thousand years prior to the Renaissance, says Cobb, "the 'faith' of the great majority of Europeans was Christian." This faith began becoming "problematized" with the Renaissance, and the era of the Enlightenment (approximately between second half of 17th Century and 1800) "introduced a new form of faith", namely, the "Cartesian view of nature." (Taking its name from the philosophy of René Descartes.) This Cartesian view, however, still saw the world as: "self-evidently created by a God whose special concern was moral goodness." The philosophical scepticism of Hume (1711-1776), a little later on, exposed and threatened to completely undermine people's unconscious assumptions regarding both their relationship to the natural world and to God. According to Cobb, the intellectual authorities of the day were little troubled by Hume's undermining of people's religious (Christian) faith, but definitely could not accept Hume's equally strong skepticism about our ability to know anything scientifically. The Cartesian view of nature had been replaced by a deeply held trust in the approach of science and the "*belief that science provides truth was beyond question.*"

(Such was people's belief in 'science' that they saw less and less cause for philosophy or epistemology. Where people did continue to concern themselves with philosophy, as Cobb points out, this mainly happened under the influence of Immanuel Kant, 1724-1804.)

According to Cobb, a further factor also led to the steady undermining of Christian faith. Partly as a result of the new era of exploration (beginning in the Renaissance), partly as a result of political power coming to replace Church power, *national identity* became increasingly important for people: "Wars over religion gave way to national conflicts. It became self-evident that one should be ready to fight and die for one's country... *Virtue was redefined as patriotism.*" This has continued up to the present day, where: "Public debates pro and con Christianity are fully acceptable. But... there is no public debate about national loyalty. In short, the dominant 'faith' of most people in the modern world has been nationalist."

Cobb then turns specifically to American 'nationalist faith' and to the way it has determined responses to 9/11. The objection might be made that there is plenty of criticism aimed at the way the American government behaves, even within the U.S., but, as Cobb stated from the beginning, a "faith" does not imply there can be no criticism of those who belong to it, only that *the underlying faith itself* cannot be criticized. In this case that: "*the United States is a fundamentally virtuous nation that is also basically invincible*" or that "*Americans enjoy a unique freedom that is worthy of defense at any cost.*" (Any criticism of a particular government's actions can only therefore state that: "the nation's actions are not in its true interests or do not accord with its true character.")

Cobb pursues these thoughts to much relating to American foreign policy, culminating in his examination of the events of 9/11. Speaking of the vast body of evidence demonstrating the impossibility of the 'official version' of what happened, Cobb states that the utter refusal of most Americans even to consider this evidence: "shows how powerful is the hold upon them of their nationalistic 'faith.' They do not want to hear that members of their government may have deceived them on a matter of such importance. They do not want to examine the evidence. They 'know' in advance that the questioner is out of line. They 'know' because the alternative does not fit in with their 'faith'."

This is also relevant to the 'taboo' we referred to in the last article [*New View*, Spring 2012]. It is not at all

the case that people who reject the evidence put forward by the 9/11 'Truth Movement' do so having openly considered this evidence. There is a taboo on doing so. Such evidence is therefore often responded to as people might have, in the Middle Ages, on hearing some unspeakable heresy or blasphemy. Upsetting people's nationalistic faith, in this way, says Cobb: "is felt to be a violation, in religious terms, a 'sacrilege'."

(Perhaps the clearest possible example of such a response is that of Ryan Mackey. Mackey, a research scientist at the NASA Jet Propulsion Laboratory, has often been trumpeted as a champion of rationality, who has disproved, 'scientifically', all the claims of the 9/11 Truth Movement regarding the way the WTC towers collapsed, etc. Underlying his response, though, is precisely such an irrational horror at what he sees as a violation of his most fundamental 'faith'. This is how he describes his first experience of hearing the claims of the 9/11 Truth Movement, through an acquaintance:

"This conversation was somewhat uncomfortable. Imagine, if you will, striking up a discussion with an old acquaintance at a party, until an hour later your friend suddenly blurts out an earnest belief in reptilian shapeshifters living among us. What does one do in this situation? My initial response was one of incredulity ("surely my friend doesn't actually believe this tripe") followed by bemused curiosity. I watched the video presentation, and it left me torn between laughter and concern for my friend's mental well-being."

Given the utter subjectivity of his response²⁶ it is clearly impossible to imagine that Mackey has approached the evidence put forward by the 9/11 Truth Movement with, in any way, an unclouded and unbiased mind.)

'Faith' and faith

Cobb repeatedly puts "faith" in inverted commas – by which he means a faith that has not been recognized as such, but which functions nevertheless as faith does, colouring and determining the way its followers view the world.

As Cobb points out, whilst people with a secular view of the world frequently consider that others following traditional faiths are blinkered in their vision, they themselves often fail to see that "something very similar shapes their own way of being in the world" – be this through 'faith' in science, nationalistic 'faith', or other unacknowledged 'faiths'.

And what of John Cobb himself? Or David Ray Griffin? (who stated that he agreed with Cobb's perspective). Through what lens do they view the world?

Cobb relates himself – and thereby also Griffin and William Sloane Coffin – to the 'prophetic tradition' in our time.

He is referring to the Hebraic 'prophetic tradition', where religious 'prophets' continually faced a people and its leaders with the most unflinching of truths about the rights and wrongs of the paths they were taking. Cobb does not see it necessary for this 'prophetic' approach to remain connected today to a particular religious tradition; many who speak and write today with an equivalent truthfulness and courage see no need to relate themselves in any way to the Bible; but, says Cobb:

*"where the deep influence of the prophetic spirit is lacking, 'faith' typically reasserts its control on the boundaries of inquiry."*²⁷

For the *prophetic spirit*, as Cobb sees it, is *beyond any particular 'faith'*. It is almost, even, beyond *faith*:

"we in the prophetic tradition use the word 'faith' in a different way. We call for faithfulness to a God who transcends every culture, tradition, and nation, who cares equally for all people and judges all impartially. God is Truth, and our commitment to that God is our faith."

Such a faith, says Cobb, provides the necessary basis for "our critical relationship to everything finite and our efforts to overcome excessive trust in religious and political institutions and beliefs in human leaders."

"God is Truth, and our commitment to that God is our faith."

The above statement is, without question, a noble ideal and vision – and is shared, in different ways, by many who are connected to the 9/11 Truth Movement – such as David Ray Griffin, Kevin Barrett, Senator Mike Gravel (who has sometimes referred to himself as a "unitarian universalist") and even, perhaps, by Michael Meacher.

But this motto still speaks in terms of faith. A faith not subject to the negative aspects of many of the existing conscious or unconscious 'faiths'; an *inter-faith* faith, not bound by any particular faith;²⁸ a faith that is defined as a commitment to truth – but that terms itself, nevertheless, *faith*.

Noble as these aims are, they are, ultimately, insufficient, if we are to apprehend the realities behind the

intentions that brought about 9/11.

Process theology

Cobb and Griffin are the foremost living exponents of ‘process thought’ or ‘process theology’. The greatest single influence on this approach is Alfred North Whitehead (1861-1947) This thought is in many ways very remarkable indeed. Reading it, it can appear indeed as if everything can be rationally comprehended by it. It is, however, speculative. Whitehead himself says of his approach: “Speculative Philosophy is the endeavour to frame a coherent, logical, necessary system of general ideas in which every element of our experience can be interpreted.”²⁹ This *includes* realities that were previously considered to be the domain of faith or religion. Cobb himself, in a brief history of Process Theology, describes what it was about the work of the Englishman, Whitehead, that proved so influential on American thinkers when Whitehead moved to Harvard in 1924: “(Whitehead’s work) was far more complex and systematically rigorous than that of American thinkers. It was closely related to mathematical physics, and *it offered an integration of the findings of the sciences with the evidence of religious experience that had come to seem almost impossible.*”

This points very clearly to what it is in process philosophy and theology as a whole that has continued to prove endlessly fascinating and inspiring for people. Its ability, on the one hand to describe, in a scientific manner, all aspects of the universe as inherently related, and its ability, on the other, to speak clearly and rationally of truths of religion, as well as its ability to interlink the two approaches of science and religion, has made it seem well fitted to answer many of the ills that beset humanity and our planet.

Beyond belief

There is a limit, however, to how far the approach of process thought (and other comparable approaches) can reach.

This applies also to our understanding of all that lies behind the events of 9/11.

In Part Three of this article [*New View*, Spring 2012] we addressed the need for an epistemology enabling people to arrive, by themselves, at a sure and certain experience of truth regarding whatever they encounter or the questions they address themselves to. Without this, people will be ever less able to discern what is true amidst all the conflicting ‘stories’ told to them.

I spoke, in this regard, of the gap (or threshold) described by Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) between what knowledge may apprehend and what may only be apprehended by faith. (Knowledge and faith were, however, seen as being ultimately reconcilable.)

I described how Kant exacerbated and perpetuated this gap, stating: “I have found it necessary to deny knowledge in order to make room for faith.”

I then described how Rudolf Steiner, in his epistemological work, set himself the goal of overcoming Kant’s division – and showing that we do have the means to *know* – through strengthening our *experience* of thinking and bringing this active thinking to bear on what we encounter through perception. This ever-developing ability to know, furthermore, is not limited by what our physical senses can perceive – (our thinking, without which we cannot know anything, is *already* not something we experience through our senses) – and therefore even the gulf described by Aquinas is steadily able to be overcome. Steiner opens the door to our being able to carry our *knowledge* into realms we could previously only receive intimations of, through faith.

The approach, then, initiated by Steiner, is *not* a matter of faith – or of religion. His work, in all the infinitely varied areas to which he turned his attention (after his earlier epistemological work) is in no way addressed to our belief but to our knowledge. Steiner knew his work to be a furthering of science – albeit one that did not limit science’s domain only to what is accessible to our physical senses. Extending the boundaries of existing natural science, Steiner therefore named his work spiritual science.

Fourteen points

I had intended, at this point, to make a more detailed description of the differences between the work of Steiner and of Whitehead, before then going on to look at the different perspectives we can gain on the intentions behind 9/11 in the light of Steiner’s research into history and the deeper background of current events and at what these can add to the perspectives already offered by Griffin and others in the light of ‘process thought’ and ‘process theology’, owing their inspiration, as they do, to Whitehead.³⁰ There is only the space though, to do this extremely briefly.

Something, however, must be said. For Steiner and Whitehead, who were born 12 days apart from each other,³¹ were *not* attempting to do something similar to one another. It is important to understand this, for otherwise we may fail to take notice of the immense contribution made by Rudolf Steiner towards a penetrating, detailed and wide-ranging understanding of current affairs.

David Ray Griffin has written an article called: ‘Rudolf Steiner’s Anthroposophy and Whitehead’s Philosophy’, in which “a brief summary of fourteen similarities between the positions of Steiner and Whitehead is given.”³² I have, so far, not found it possible to find a copy of this article, and so am not responding to anything said there by Griffin, but for the purposes of this article I see it as important, rather, to become clear about the *differences* between Steiner’s and Whitehead’s work (and by extension that of Griffin and Cobb also, who are, in a sense, furthering Whitehead’s work.)

I can do this here, as I have said, only very briefly and, even, aphoristically.

A review of one of Griffin’s books - *Reenchantment Without Supernaturalism: A Process Philosophy of Religion* – gives a good impression – albeit colloquially – of Griffin’s achievement: “Griffin covers a simply massive range of topic... The book... like a fantastic novel... exposes new ideas and forces the intellect to work in new ways. *It is a work that essentially outlines the creeds of a different religion, albeit a religion which is designed to go hand-in-hand with others.* It touches on nearly every area of philosophy of religion, from religious language to natural theology.”³³

Steiner, as I have described, does *not* “outline the creeds of a new religion.” Steiner does not attempt any rationalization of faith (“philosophy of religion” or “natural theology”) but furthers, rather, directly experienceable knowledge, even when this is of realities that were *once* seen as only being accessible by faith.

Whitehead’s (and also Griffin’s) *linking* of science and religion is, in essence, just that. Their work is both scientific and religious at the same time. Although it is not hindered by Kant’s restrictions on what it is possible to describe, it achieves, albeit in very modern form, something akin to Aquinas’s reconciliation of faith and knowledge. On the one hand, there is the activity of a scientific, even mathematical intellect – addressing itself to every detail of earthly phenomena (we may think, for example, and in a very positive way, of the unparalleled detail and extent of Griffin’s research into 9/11); and on the other the attempt of “redefining the divine” – to use the words of a significant interview with Griffin on these themes.³⁴ The attempt to clarify, in other words, through all the powers of one’s speculative reason, what one understands of the divine. Thus, as one scholar of Whitehead puts it: “*Both the clear and distinct consciousness of rationalism and the vague feeling of divinity* at the base of any radical empiricism are important in Whitehead’s scheme.”³⁵ This “vague feeling of divinity” is closely allied to faith and to a religious sense. “*We are essentially religious beings*”, says Griffin, in the above-mentioned interview.

This is very different from Steiner’s approach – which is not to *link* science and faith, but rather to transform science itself (or to transform our cognitive faculties), so that this Thomistic need to reconcile knowledge and faith is itself overcome. Faith itself is gone beyond, as we eventually become able to know, through our immediate and cognitive experience, spiritual realities.

The philosophical, cosmological and theological views of Whitehead, Griffin and others are endlessly fascinating – going far beyond countless other more limited and limiting perspectives. But they do not *cross the threshold* into the world of directly experienced spiritual realities. They dance, we might say, fascinatingly, *at* the threshold, where different aspects and disciplines within the physical world, the different religious ‘faiths’ even, merge and are seen to be connected, but they do not consciously cross this threshold. Nor do they claim to. But they should not therefore claim that Steiner’s work and theirs accomplish something similar. This is no criticism of the work of Whitehead or of Griffin. Their work is unquestionably remarkable. But what Steiner achieved is such a vast step forward in what our faculties of knowledge are capable of that many people cannot yet shake themselves free from their own ‘mindsets’, regarding this, and thus wake up to what Steiner made possible. In the meantime, it is not helpful to blur the distinctions and make out that Steiner’s work was something other than it was.

This difference between Steiner’s work, on the one hand, and Whitehead’s and Griffin’s on the other, is clearly described I think, in some words spoken by Steiner in 1920:

“It is necessary to know that we live in three realms, three streams: namely, the physical world where we perceive and process the perceptions with our intellect that is brain-bound; then, the world at the threshold where the intellect is no longer adequate to explain the experiences; and lastly, the world on the other side of the threshold where one comes into contact with spiritual beings. Humanity as such stands at the threshold.

Everything of nature and the outer world that is around us is on this side of the threshold, but we can ask ourselves where we can find the experiences of the threshold revealed. We find these mainly in the religious confessions of the most varied kinds...

The experiences at the threshold have something confusing about them. That is because everything that we bring with us from the sense world loses its meaning there. The modern religious denominations... want to penetrate everything with the intellect, which must fail there... The confusion, which arises because everything brought with us from the sense world loses its meaning, ceases only when the light from the other side of the threshold rays into this confusion."³⁶

In the light of this, we may say that Whitehead and Griffin each offer, in their own ways, scintillating displays of intellect; there appear to be no limits to what they address in thought. These thoughts, however, at the limit of what the intellect is capable of, though they frequently dazzle, by their own brilliance, at other times dim through their inability to be illumined by "the light from the other side of the threshold."

In art the real statements of power are those in which the whole intellect is involved, first in a suspension of power, and then in a renewal of that power through grace.

(Vernon Watkins)³⁷

Rudolf Steiner's research is *not* based merely on the thoughts that he offers to us. His path, as he describes in many different ways, is one where the activity of thinking itself becomes concentrated and intensified, so that it may cease to think conceptual thoughts and yet still remain fully conscious of its own activity. This awakened inner activity – or *living thinking* – is then able to become conscious of spiritual realities or spiritual beings whose existence is beyond the threshold of what our intellect can apprehend.

However, this does not mean that we have no way of knowing these realities until we ourselves can directly perceive them, spiritually, beyond the threshold of our ordinary consciousness. (This is partly comparable to the fact that we do not need ourselves to be artist of genius in order to be able to recognize great works of art – or even, in a lesser way, to the fact that we do not need to have carried out someone else's scientific research before being able to appreciate it.) For the *language* in which Steiner expressed the results of his spiritual scientific research is accessible to our healthy and active thinking. If we apply this to these results, and bring towards them our 'whole intellect', then we too may experience, with regard to them, something like a "suspension of (the) power" of our ordinary intellectual knowledge, followed by "a renewal of that power" through a living understanding of what is being described. We can and must *think* the results of Steiner's research – and we may then come to know them for ourselves – as they relate to all our previous knowledge and questioning. Approaching Steiner's spiritual-scientific research through faith – or through less than our "whole intellect" – will not enable us to understand it.

This is one of the chief reasons why Steiner's work has remained so unrecognized. One might think that if he has really managed to develop knowledge in this way, then everyone should be immediately startled by the results. But if they depend on our free and individual activity of knowing then they *cannot* startle in this way – we ourselves must exert ourselves to discover them. They depend on our own power of questioning. Steiner says regarding this:

"It is generally still easier to be effective among human beings by means of force, control, and injustice than by means of freedom. The truth that is to be proclaimed through spiritual science is permitted to count only on human freedom. It must find people who ask questions. One certainly cannot say, 'Why doesn't this truth possess in itself the strength to compel human souls by virtue of divine-spiritual power?' It does not wish to do that; it cannot do that. The reason is that it will always consider inner freedom, the freedom of the human being in general, to be something absolutely inviolable. If the human being is to come to spiritual science out of his own judgment, he must become one who asks questions; out of the innermost freedom of judgment he must convince himself. The word of spiritual truth will be spoken to him; convincing himself of it is something he must do on his own."³⁸

Questions

What, then, finally, does Steiner have to say, that could be pertinent to our understanding of 9/11, (which took place 76 years after his death), that has not already been examined in the vast amount of research already carried out into 9/11?

To see this, it will clearly be necessary to: "*become one who asks questions.*"

This article arose from a request by *New View* to write an article for September, 2011, relating to the tenth anniversary of 9/11. It has unexpectedly grown considerably beyond a single article to a series of them. It will perhaps need to become a small, separate publication in due course. The deeper aim of this series of articles so far has only gradually made itself clear: to try and make a bridge between all that has been brought to light concerning 9/11 by individuals connected to the “9/11 Truth Movement” and a spiritual-scientific understanding of history and current events. Thomas Meyer,³⁹ for example, gave a public lecture in Basel, Switzerland on the fifth anniversary of 9/11, entitled: ‘9/11 as a challenge to develop a new kind of thinking’ (*9/11 als Herausforderung für ein neues Denken*).⁴⁰ The present essay could be seen as attempting to create a bridge between the perspectives of some individuals within the ‘9/11 Truth Movement’ and spiritual-scientific perspectives such as those Meyer presents in this lecture.

That bridge has, I think, in this Part Four, finally managed to reach the ‘other shore’: it has arrived at the point where we can now begin to look at the perspectives to be gained by spiritual science. It has, though, I am aware, only just touched down on this shore – and has not begun yet with the exploration of what we may discover there.

From here we shall begin to ask such questions as: what are we to make of Cobb’s and Griffin’s remarks concerning ‘American Nationalism’ and ‘American Empire’? What wider perspectives can we gain regarding this, and regarding America’s rightful role or position within the wider world? How may we come to understand the fact that what Griffin terms ‘Americanism’ has been presented as valid for the entire globe? Is there any further way to understand how intentions of this kind, intentions that do not serve the whole of humanity but that serve, instead, the aims of a particular group or particular direction, could even lead to an event such as 9/11? If it can be seen, in this way, that a one-sidedness has presented itself as if it were the whole, what might the *whole* picture look like? What might this look like historically and in terms of a rightly understand geo-politics (or spiritual geography)? In other words, what is the wider, alternative, historical ‘narrative’ that the ‘narrative’ of the ‘official version’ of events has attempted to conceal and replace? What, finally, may we learn from all this about possible ways forward in future?

Endnotes

1. Even if this may involve a long journey of inner and outer work before arriving at it.
2. If some choose more sceptically to think that members of the Catholic Church were also concerned about their livelihoods, in the face of what Galileo was showing them, then this is also not wholly irrelevant to 9/11. As Upton Sinclair said: “It is difficult to get a man to understand something, when his salary depends upon his not understanding it!” (From his 1935 book: *I, Candidate for Governor: And How I Got Licked*.) Even here, though, I would suggest that fear of losing one’s livelihood manages to connect itself to what one believes.
3. Environmental Health Laboratories (EHL) – a division of Underwriters Laboratories (UL).
4. *A Personal Decision* by Kevin Ryan – available at: <http://911review.com/articles/ryan/personaldecision.html>
5. “9/11 and the Orwellian Redefinition of ‘Conspiracy Theory’” by Paul Craig Roberts - at GlobalResearch.Ca. Earlier quotations from: “Does 9/11 Truth Have a Chance?” (2011) – Paul Craig Roberts – at: informationclearinghouse.com.
6. I am, therefore, not referring here to all the many people who, without question, experience huge moral outrage at the events of 9/11 – but do so, primarily, with regard to the wrongs and abuses of political power that they reveal. Their work – that of Gore Vidal, for example – is very often both courageous and instructive – and offers great insight into the activities and workings of global power. In this present section, however, I am focussing on some of the spiritual (moral) perspectives by which people have attempted to understand 9/11, in order to try and lift a veil on what lies behind the events of 9/11. In a later section, I will attempt to look again at some of the political perspectives. I have mentioned Paul Craig Roberts’s views here, not in order to explore his political or economic perspective, but because of his use of the world depicted by George Orwell as a framework by which to understand 9/11 and the political climate it gave rise to.
7. By this I am not referring to the adherence to outer, ‘moral’ precepts. I am referring to the steadily growing experience of moral or spiritual realities – both in the wider world and in ourselves.

8. Michael Meacher M.P. was environment minister from May 1997 to June 2003.
9. “Meacher sparks fury over claims on September 11 and Iraq war” by Ewen MacAskill, *The Guardian*, Saturday 6 September 2003. (My italics.)
10. Endorsement at the beginning of *9/11 and American Empire. Intellectuals Speak Out* edited by David Ray Griffin and Peter Dale Scott. (Arris Books, 2007)
11. Arthur Miller (1915-2005). American playwright and essayist.
12. *A Politically Engaged Spirituality* William Sloane Coffin. April 28, 2005. Yale University Commons at http://www.yale.edu/divinity/coffin/coffin_transcript.shtml
13. As distinct from ‘deconstructive’ postmodernist thought.
14. Griffin was the overall editor, for example, of the considerable Suny Series of Constructive Postmodernist Thought..
15. *Christian Faith and the Truth Behind 9/11. A Call to Reflection and Action.* (Westminster John Knox Press, 2006.)
6. Griffin specifically does not refer to Jesus as Christ.
17. Among the many who have explicitly spoken of the present-day American Empire are Charles Krauthammer and Paul Kennedy. Krauthammer wrote: “America is no mere international citizen. It is the dominant power in the world, more dominant than any since Rome. Accordingly, America is in a position to reshape norms... and create new realities. How? By unapologetic and implacable demonstrations of will.” (February 26th, 2001. ‘Inside Policy’, CNN.) Paul Kennedy, having described America’s empire as unrivalled in history, stated: “Charlemagne’s empire was merely Western European in its reach. The Roman Empire stretched farther afield, but there was another great empire in Persia and a larger one in China. There is, therefore, no comparison.” (February 22nd, 2002. ‘The Eagle has landed.’ Financial Times.)
18. Space does not permit a further discussion here of Griffin’s understanding of evil.
19. Quoted by Griffin from Gary Dorrien’s 2011 book: *Imperial Designs: Neoconservatism and the Pax Americana.*
20. *Christian Faith and the Truth Behind 9/11. A Call to Reflection and Action.* (Westminster John Knox Press, 2006.) Page 175.
21. Ibid. Page 180.
22. See the interview: Resisting the Global Domination Project: An interview with Prof. Richard Falk. April 18, 2003. At: http://www.wagingpeace.org/articles/2003/04/18_falk-interview.htm
23. *9/11 Ten Years Later. When State Crimes Against Democracy Succeed.* Haus Publishing. London. 2011.
24. In: *The Impact of 9/11 on Religion and Philosophy: The Day that Changed Everything?* ed. Matthew Morgan (Palgrave Macmillan, 2009) Available at: ‘Religious Leaders for 9/11 Truth’ website.http://www.amazon.com/Impact-11-Religion-Philosophy-Everything/dp/0230608442/ref=sr_1_8?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1232566674&sr=1-8
25. “John B. Cobb, Jr. (born February 9, 1925) is an American theologian who played a crucial role in the development of process theology. He integrated Alfred North Whitehead’s metaphysics into Christianity, and applied it to issues of social justice.” (From Wikipedia.)
26. Mackey also describes his clearly unfortunate experiences in elementary school, where his teacher: “bought wholeheartedly into extraterrestrials, psychic abilities, and other ‘new age’ beliefs” in which “I was encouraged to believe.” Among the “many hobbies” of the director of the school, furthermore, were: “Egyptian, Kabalistic, and Hindu mysticism, tantric yoga, hypnosis, and paranormal phenomena.” Mackey’s writing clearly shows that not only does he undiscerningly view all these “hobbies” as one and the same, and views as one and the same also “such an insane topic as a conspiracy theory” (in other words the 9/11 Truth Movement), but also that he is still far from free from a strong subjective reaction to these childhood experiences. (These quotations are from Mackey’s 2011 paper: ‘The Great Internet Conspiracy’, available at: http://www.911myths.com/tgite_1_0_final.pdf)
27. Cobb states that the term ‘prophetic’ has become so misused that it has become necessary instead to use the term ‘progressive’: “Many who call themselves ‘progressives’ would prefer the label ‘prophetic,’ but we are deterred from public use of this term because the religious right has led the public to understand prophecy as prediction of the events of the end-time rather than as critique of

- falsehood and oppression.”
28. Many of those we have discussed, who are prominent in the 9/11 Truth Movement, are also strong advocates for ‘inter-faith’ policies and networks.
 29. See first paragraph of “Speculative Philosophy” (1929); a lecture forming the introductory chapter to Whitehead’s book, *Process and Reality*, available at: <http://urantia-book.org/sources/whitehead1.htm>
 30. Other thinkers have also influenced process theology, but Whitehead is acknowledged as having been the greatest single influence.
 31. Alfred North Whitehead (born February 15th, 1861 – died 1949) ; Rudolf Steiner (born February 27th, 1861 – died 1925.)
 32. See Robert McDermott: ‘An introduction to Rudolf Steiner and American Thought’, available on McDermott’s page at CIIS website. Griffin’s article was based on a talk at a conference in 1991 (sponsored by Laurance S. Rockefeller) on “Rudolf Steiner and American Philosophy”.
 33. (My italics). The review by Joseph Wartick, posted under Griffin’s book at Amazon.com, humorously ends: “I highly recommend this book. It is one of my favorites. My only regret is that I find it so off the mark.”
 34. “Redefining the Divine. In postmodern spirituality, redefining the divine is a crucial step toward reinventing the human.” An Interview with David Ray Griffin by Alan Atkisson. Originally published in *Earth & Spirit (IC#24)* Late Winter 1990.
Available at: <http://www.context.org/iclib/ic24/griffin/>
 35. “Whitehead, Eternal Objects, and God.” Matthew David Segall – at his: ‘Footnotes to Plato’ website. (My italics.)
 36. From: Esoteric lesson of February 17th, 1920. The quoted passage is a written report of someone present at this lesson, and is not to be seen as presenting Steiner’s words, verbatim.
 37. “Articulations, May 1955” – In *Poetry Wales*, Spring 1977, Vol. 12, No. 4, page 56.
 38. Rudolf Steiner, *Materialism and the Task of Anthroposophy*, GA 204. Lecture of April 17th, 1921.
 39. Author and publisher (Perseus Verlag, Basel) of many books on spiritual scientific themes and of the monthly journal *Der Europaer*.
 40. Published (in German) as a CD by Perseus Verlag, 2011. A collection of Thomas Meyer’s essays about 9/11 and related themes is available in English: *Reality, Truth and Evil. Facts, questions and perspectives on September 11th, 2001.* (Temple Lodge Press, 2005.)

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