

A NEW YEAR – AN OPPORTUNITY TO LIGHT THE WORLD WITH HOPE
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A little over a year ago, Lt. Col. Shane Kimbrough sent a message from the International Space Station, orbiting 200 miles above the earth. He commented that “during the 90 minutes it takes to circle the earth, the crew members did not see any borders or boundaries. From our vantage point, solving the world’s problems seem less daunting.”

Now they have returned to a world where borders and boundaries, disputes and wars, financial crises and growing unemployment and homelessness plague our nation and our world. The view from above confirmed their belief that another world is indeed possible. These problems were created by humans over the years, and they can and must be changed by humans across the planet in order to create a more humane, compassionate and just world for the whole human family. This awesome task begins in our minds and hearts and moves from imagination to intention and finally, to action. It can involve all of us from the very young to those advanced in years and start in small ways like a spark that ignites a fire, it can grow and spread beyond our imagining.

Today there are thousands of young people who are looking for ways to make a difference. They want to get involved to reduce poverty and misery at home and abroad, to address the HIV/AIDS crisis, to provide more jobs and health care and many other issues. Col. Shane Kimbrough notes that “today there is a renewed courage that is sweeping the world. People are dreaming boldly, and more importantly, they are ready to turn their dreams into actions.” The question is can we work together with our young people and direct them and help them make their dreams come true.

What would a transformed world look like?

It will begin with a deeper spiritual consciousness that will help to heal and transform our world and restore a moral sense to guide our individual and corporate lives in all the decisions we make. It will be a world without wars, violence and poverty, where the economy is based on the common good and not dependent on wars for its success and sustainability. Michael Lerner talks about “a new bottom line that embodies the values we profess, where the power of love will replace the love of power.” The environment will be protected for generations still to come. There will be ample opportunity for full human development for all people, including the physical, emotional,

intellectual and spiritual aspects. People will learn about and respect others, across lines of culture, class, creed and other differences.

WHERE DO WE BEGIN?

1. We can start with young children and youth. Model for them the values we want to implement and teach them the values and habits that are life-giving and responsible. Today, many children learn destructive habits from the adults in their lives. Listen to the voices and hopes of our youth in their search for community, spirituality and opportunities for service.

2. The business community, especially the young professionals, can make a major contribution by sharing their gifts with the community and modeling just, sustainable and responsible practices with the common good in mind.

3. All of us can influence our elected officials to redirect our national resources toward human needs such as health care, a good education, housing and other basic needs so that all can enjoy a full human life. War as a means of solving problems is not a viable way into the future. There are peaceful means that have not been tried. We can practice conflict resolution, starting with the very young and in all levels of society.

4. Practice care for the environment and use scarce resources with moderation. "There is enough for everyone's need but not enough for everyone's greed" said Gandhi. Children need adults to show them the way to environmental responsibility.

We need a responsible use of power, not power over but power with, and help others claim their power that is God-given and rightfully theirs. Then the power of love will be greater than the love of power.

5. Faith communities can model and promote justice in all walks of life and reach out to the lost and forgotten and the despairing all around them. Prayer too, is an important part of the solution.

There are many signs of hope. In a shattered economy, more people are reaching out to help each other, to start small businesses and farmer's markets. Many are reaching in to the divine life and power always available to us.

Marshall Rosenberg reminds us "what we do and say next will change the world." Moral and spiritual gifts are available to all of us for claiming and

can release torrents of hope and truth on our parched planet. Together we can create and sustain a peaceful world. No contribution is too small. Even one small light placed in a darkened room can light up the whole environment. You are invited to be that light in a broken and often bleeding world. Let us begin this day with courage and great hope.