

48 Different Ways of Describing The IPCR Initiative

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The Interfaith Peacebuilding and Community Revitalization (IPCR) Initiative
(compiled February, 2010)

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48 Different Ways of Describing The IPCR Initiative

1. An urgent need to build bridges and increase collaboration

The IPCR Initiative is aware of an urgent need to build bridges and increase collaboration between diverse communities of people; both as a response to the implications of global warming, ecological footprint analysis, and the “peaking” of our finite supplies of oil—and to be proactive about individual spiritual formation, interfaith peacebuilding, and the creation of ecologically sustainable communities.

2. A need for problem solving on a scale most of us have never known before

The IPCR Initiative understands that the complexity associated with building bridges and increasing collaboration between diverse communities of people, the urgent need for resolutions to a significant number of critical issues in the near future—and *the seemingly chronic nature of many of the challenges of our times*—suggests a need for problem solving on a scale most of us have never known before.

3. Three key propositions of the IPCR Initiative

The IPCR Initiative is an accumulation of documents, resources, and observations brought together to support the propositions that we—collectively—have both the need, and the potential, to be

- a) much more organized and deliberate about “... bringing to the fore what is often hidden: how many good people there are, how many ways there are to do good, and how much happiness comes to those who extend help, as well as to those who receive it.”
- b) much more multifaceted and participation-friendly in our approaches to peacebuilding, community revitalization, and ecological sustainability
- c) much more resourceful in the use of the accumulated storehouse of wisdom and “embodied energy” which is now accessible to us.

4. The IPCR Mission Statement

The Interfaith Peacebuilding and Community Revitalization (IPCR) Initiative is an effort to facilitate the practical application of the Eight IPCR Concepts (“Community Good News Networks,” “Community Faith Mentoring Networks,” “Spiritual Friendships,” “Questionnaires That Help Build Caring Communities,” “Community Visioning Initiatives for Peace,” “Spiritually Responsible Investing,” “Ecological Sustainability,” and “IPCR Journal/Newsletters”)—at the community and regional level—as a way of contributing to the following goals:

- a) “... bringing to the fore what is often hidden: how many good people there are, how many ways there are to do good, and how much happiness comes to those who extend help as well as to those who receive it.”

- b) increasing our collective capacity to encourage and inspire individual spiritual formation— with all the beneficial consequences that follow for individuals, communities, regions, etc.
- c) building trust among people from different faith communities and cultural traditions
- d) increasing our capacity to be responsible stewards of our time, energy, and money
- e) increasing our capacity to access what is necessary for basic human needs and quality of life through principles and practices of ecological sustainability and permaculture, especially in light of the implications of global warming, ecological footprint analysis, and the “peaking” of our finite supplies of oil
- f) increasing our awareness of the countless number of ‘things people can do in the everyday circumstances of their lives’ which will contribute to peacebuilding, community revitalization, and ecological sustainability efforts, in our own communities and regions—and in other parts of the world
- g) reducing the incidence of violence—and all the costs associated with war
- h) increasing emergency assistance to people with basic human needs
- i) reflecting an understanding of the value of silence
- j) creating local community and regional publications that provide a format for sharing the good news which would be identified, encouraged, supported, and sustained by contributions to the first 9 goals

5. The contributions the IPCR Initiative hopes to make

Specifically, the contributions The IPCR Initiative hopes to make, are as follows:

- a) inspire, encourage, and support the creation of many local community specific and regional specific variations of the “1000Communities²” proposal—so that Community Visioning Initiatives take place in as many ways and in as many communities as possible
- b) introduce The Eight IPCR Concepts (“Community Good News Networks”, “Community Faith Mentoring Networks,” “Spiritual Friendships,” “Questionnaires That Help Build Caring Communities,” “Community Visioning Initiatives for Peace,” “Spiritually Responsible Investing,” “Ecological Sustainability,” and “IPCR Journal/Newsletters) through workshops offered at the local community level

(For an overview of these concepts, see the Section 5 of this IPCR Workshop Primer, or the IPCR document “Brief Descriptions of The Eight IPCR Concepts”, at <http://ipcri.net/images/1-Brief-Descriptions-of-The-Eight-IPCR-Concepts.pdf>)

- c) actively develop the concept of “Questionnaires That Help Build Caring Communities”, administer such questionnaires at the community and/or regional level, and then share compilations of the responses (with summary and conclusions)

- d) help to establish, and contribute to, local community points of entry acting as “clearinghouses”, where residents can discover more about the countless number of “things people can do in the everyday circumstances of their lives” which will contribute to peacebuilding, community revitalization, and ecological sustainability in their own communities and regions—and in other parts of the world
- e) identify, develop, and create enough descriptions and examples of the 117 fields of related activity (see Appendix 1—Parts B and C) and generate enough regular feature material in categories such as local community and regional model projects, workshop and conference listings, committee reports, resource reviews, letters to the editor, “community journal” postings, and links to other useful information and organizations to justify monthly local community specific publications of an IPCR Journal/Newsletter (or a similar publication with a different name....)
- f) and combine the resources created by “clearinghouses,” and “community newsletters” to link many associated efforts, such as those in Appendix 1—Parts B and C (“Starting Point Links for Learning About 117 Related Fields of Activity”)

—and thus assist with outreach, partnership formation, consensus building, and development of service capacity associated with a significant number of peacebuilding, community revitalization, and ecological sustainability efforts, all at the same time.

The IPCR Initiative is providing this assistance as a result of believing that any community of people, however small in numbers, who follow through on most or all of the practical assistance described in the seven steps mentioned above, will contribute a “multiplier effect” of a positive nature on *whatever goals are decided on at the local community and regional levels.*

6. More and more opportunities to encourage and support each other in the process.

Workshops introducing The Eight IPCR Concepts (“Community Good News Networks,” “Community Faith Mentoring Networks,” “Spiritual Friendships,” “Questionnaires That Help Build Caring Communities,” “Community Visioning Initiatives for Peace,” “Spiritually Responsible Investing,” “Ecological Sustainability,” and “IPCR Journal/Newsletters”) can be a starting point for many practical collective efforts, based and sustained at the local community and regional level, and representing contributions towards the goals listed in The IPCR Mission Statement. This writer is confident that applying these concepts—at the local community and regional level—will provide for each of us more and more opportunities to contribute towards such goals, more and more understanding about why we would want to contribute—and more and more opportunities to encourage and support each other in the process.

Participating in IPCR Concept Introduction Workshops at intervals—over a long period of time—will make it possible for participants to come in contact with a valuable variety of input and experiences relating not only to the IPCR concepts, but to many other peacebuilding, community revitalization, and ecological sustainability initiatives as well.

7. Growing a “Community Moral Compass”, not imposing one

“The meaning of life, therefore, of its purposes and values as understood by the educator, primarily determines the nature of his work. Education aims at an ideal, and this in turn depends on the view that is taken of man and his destiny, of his relations to God, to his fellowmen, and to the physical world. The content of education is furnished by the previous acquisition of mankind in literature, art, and science, in moral, social, and religious principles. The inheritance, however, contains elements that differ greatly in value, both as mental possessions and as means of culture; hence a selection is necessary, and this must be guided largely by the educational ideal.”¹

And yet, when we wish to discuss matters of religious, spiritual, or moral education, we often find ourselves in the same position as Prof. J. S. MacKenzie, as he expressed it in 1908:

“The subject of religious education is one on which it is difficult to say anything at present without appearing to take sides in those unhappy wrangles to which there seems to be no end...”²

And, as mentioned in the section “Problems That May Arise...” of “The Twilight...” document—see p. 14):

“In some cases, one group may come to view the beliefs and actions of another group as fundamentally evil and morally intolerable. This often results in hostility and violence and severely damages the relationship between the two groups. For this reason, moral conflicts tend to be quite harmful and intractable.”

The IPCR Initiative understands that the complexity associated with building bridges and increasing collaboration between diverse communities of people, the urgent need for resolutions to a significant number of critical issues in the near future—and *the seemingly chronic nature of many of the challenges of our times*—suggests a need for problem solving on a scale most of us have never known before.

This writer feels that *somehow* many people have—unfortunately—learned to mistakenly equate flaws in human nature with the practical wisdom and compassion associated with religious, spiritual, and moral traditions. This writer also feels that, with enough experiences of a positive and mutually beneficial nature, many people can come to learn more about the practical wisdom and compassion associated with religious, spiritual, and moral traditions and less about the flaws in human nature.

The challenges of our times are such that it is now critical for us to access the storehouses of wisdom which have accumulated over the many centuries of human experience, and which have been confirmed again and again as essential to individual well-being and social harmony by the saints, sages, spiritual leaders, and sincere practitioners of all faiths and moral “world views”.

The IPCR Initiative is a “constellation” of initiatives which provide a “trellis” for communities of people to “organically grow” towards their own collective definitions of “spiritual formation” and “right livelihood”.

The IPCR Initiative believes that any initiative hoping to build bridges and increase collaboration along the lines of individual spiritual formation and interfaith peacebuilding must offer well-organized, peaceful, constructive, and ongoing community building processes, which result in the accumulation of more and more opportunities for people to practice spiritual wisdom in the everyday circumstances of community life.

8. Advocate for comprehensive Community Visioning Initiatives

The IPCR Initiative is an advocate for comprehensive Community Visioning Initiatives, which can assist in maximizing citizen participation in identifying challenges, and in solution-oriented activity.

The IPCR Initiative offers free access to a 161 page proposal for comprehensive Community Visioning Initiatives (titled “1000Communities²”), which includes

- a) A Summary of the Potential of Community Visioning Initiatives
- b) 15 Step Outline for Community Visioning Initiatives (see also Section 8)
- c) 15 Suggestions for Preliminary Survey Questions (see also expanded version in Section 10)
- d) Comprehensive Section on “Problems That May Arise” (see also expanded version in Section 11)
- e) Over 150 quotes and excerpts from relevant sources

The following description of the “1000Communities²” proposal is from Section 2, p. 6, of the “1000Communities²” at <http://ipcri.net/images/1000Communities2.pdf>

A. The “1000Communities²” proposal may be summarized as follows:

“1000Communities²” advocates organizing and implementing Community Visioning Initiatives in 1000 communities (communities or segments of rural areas, towns, or cities with populations of 50,000 or less) around the world

1) which are time-intensive, lasting even as much as 1½ years (18 months), so as to give as much importance to developing a close-knit community as it does to

- a) contributing to accumulating and integrating the knowledge and skill sets necessary for the highest percentage of people to act wisely in response to challenges identified as priority challenges
- b) helping people to deliberately channel their time, energy, and money into the creation of “ways of earning a living” which are directly related to resolving high priority challenges
- c) assisting with outreach, partnership formation, and development of service capacity for a significant number of already existing (or forming) organizations, businesses, institutions, and government agencies
- d) helping to build a high level of consensus for specific action plans, which will help inspire

additional support from people, businesses, organizations, institutions, and government agencies with significant resources

2. which establish a significant number of local community points of entry called “Community Teaching and Learning Centers” [if use of the particular description “Community Teaching and Learning Centers”

is permitted by the organization “Teachers Without Borders” (see <http://www.teacherswithoutborders.org/pages/community-teaching-and-learning-centers>)] to act as information clearinghouses, meeting locations, classrooms for ongoing workshops (on a broad range of topics related to the Community Visioning Process, and building the local knowledge base), practice sites for developing “teacher-leaders”, a location for an ongoing “informal” “Community Journal”, a location for listing employment opportunities—and to provide a means of responding quickly (by changing the emphasis of workshop content) to new urgencies as they arise

3. and which suggest—as a way of emphasizing the need for an exponential increase in compassion for our fellow human beings—that communities (with the resources to do so) enter into “sister community” relationships with communities in other countries where there has been well documented calls for assistance with basic human needs.

9. Maximizing citizen participation in identifying challenges, and in solution-oriented activity

Many of us will be familiar with the problem solving strategy of identifying problems and brainstorming solutions. Well organized efforts to identify problems and brainstorm solutions are a universally recognized approach to problem solving which is commonly used in family, community, business, and government settings in every part of the world. In its most basic format, a Community Visioning Initiative is simply a more comprehensive variation of the above mentioned approach to problem solving.

Structured brainstorming and prioritizing meetings, which are carried out in a number of central locations in a particular community, would be an integral part of the kind of Community Visioning Initiatives described in the “1000Communities²” proposal mentioned above. To be specific, there would be a series of meetings which focus on five particular areas: challenges, prioritizing challenges, solutions, prioritizing solutions, and creating action plans. Combined with ongoing workshops and much formal and informal educational activity, these meetings, though only a part of the Visioning Initiative, may last 4-6 months. These more comprehensive Community Visioning Initiatives require steering committees, preliminary surveys or assessments, workshops, task forces, collaboration between many organizations, government agencies, businesses, and educational institutions—and seek to build up consensus in the community for specific goals and action plans by encouraging a high level of participation by all residents.

One of the main goals of these kind of Community Visioning Initiatives is to maximize citizen participation in identifying challenges, and in solution-oriented activity.

Many cities and towns in the United States have carried out visioning initiatives or strategic planning exercises; however, this writer does not know of any particular examples which are meant to be responses to most of the multiple challenges mentioned above—or which have been as time-intensive as the “1000Communities²” proposal suggests. In 1984, the non-profit organization Chattanooga

Venture [Chattanooga, Tennessee (USA)] organized a Community Visioning Initiative (“Vision 2000”) that attracted more than 1,700 participants, and produced 40 community goals—which resulted in the implementation of 223 projects and programs, the creation of 1,300 permanent jobs, and a total financial investment of 793 million dollars.³ (Note: “Vision 2000” was a five month long process.)

The IPCR Initiative is an advocate for comprehensive Community Visioning Initiatives which may require as much as 18 months to complete (see Section __ for a description of the “1000Communities²” proposal). The IPCR Initiative hopes to provide sufficient information and inspiration so that

- a) more Community Visioning Initiatives are organized and implemented as a way of responding to the challenges of our times
- b) residents of communities where Community Visioning Initiatives are being organized and implemented are encouraged to participate in as many ways as possible—and *encouraged to help and support others who are making sincere efforts to contribute to the process.*

10. How much we really need to be on the same side, helping each other

Some residents may feel uneasy concerning the problem of residents who are less educated and less informed having as much of a say in Community Visioning Initiatives “process-voting” (votes which prioritize challenges identified, solutions identified, and steps in action plans) as those who have spent years working on these issues. This is a fundamental problem, which is not confined to Community Visioning Initiative processes; *as people who are not sufficiently informed about critical issues are everywhere, and they are investing their time, energy, and money—voting—all the time.* If we are honest with ourselves about this issue, we must admit that there are very few people who have successfully aligned all of their investments of time, energy, and money with all of the principles, practices and codes of conduct associated with the religious, spiritual, or moral tradition they feel closest to. This writer believes that there are many serious challenges before us now, and that we will need to invest our time, energy, and money very wisely to overcome these challenges. How can we do it? We must help each other.

The IPCR Initiative offers free access to a 161 page proposal for comprehensive Community Visioning Initiatives (“1000Communities²” at <http://ipcri.net/images/1000Communities2.pdf>) which are time-intensive, so that we will have time to learn much more than we know now about how to help each other.

The IPCR Initiative provides a “constellation” of initiatives which can help us sort out what the real challenges are, and what are sound and practical solutions—and does so in a way that helps us to realize how much we need to be learning so that we can be part of the solutions... and how much we really need to be on the same side, helping each other.

11. A just transition to patterns of investment which in many ways represent solutions to prioritized challenges.

The job fairs which come at the end of the Community Visioning Initiative process provide opportunities for all key stakeholders in the community (businesses, organizations, institutions, government, etc.) to

demonstrate their upgraded awareness—and their interest in the welfare of the community—by offering and facilitating new employment opportunities... and thus helping with a just transition from patterns of investment which in only limited ways represent solutions to prioritized challenges to patterns of investment which in many ways represent solutions to prioritized challenges.

As mentioned on p. 125 of the “1000Communities²”, at <http://ipcri.net/images/1000Communities2.pdf> one aspect of this just transition can be that people who do deliberately focus their investments of time, energy, and money towards solutions identified by the Community Visioning Initiative being carried out in their community may receive, as encouragement, local currency. *And then such local currency can, in its turn, be redeemed in ways which will be particularly helpful to people transitioning from less solution-oriented employment to more solution-oriented employment.*”

The IPCR Initiative encourages and supports a just transition from patterns of investment which in only limited ways represent solutions to prioritized challenges to patterns of investment which in many ways represent solutions to prioritized challenges.

12. The accumulation of more and more opportunities for people to practice spiritual wisdom

This writer understands that some people may be skeptical that Community Visioning Initiatives of such a comprehensive nature can succeed. Such people may think it is naïve to imagine that people will come together in such a way, and not only encourage, but participate in, a high percentage of constructive thinking and constructive action in response to the difficult challenges ahead. From this writer’s point of view, such skepticism and cynicism depend for their existence on doubts as to whether it is possible for people to achieve highly advanced forms of wisdom and compassion through genuine instruction and sincere effort.

The IPCR Initiative believes that we are at a critical point in the evolution of spiritual understanding.

The IPCR Initiative believes that there is a profound and critical need for as many people as possible to be exercising as much love, understanding, and forgiveness as possible—in as many ways as possible.

The IPCR Initiative believes that a person is capable of cultivating a certain type of personality by choice and design.

The IPCR Initiative believes that the most advanced societies are the ones which are successful at integrating spiritual wisdom into the everyday circumstances of community life.

The IPCR Initiative believes that any initiative hoping to build bridges and increase collaboration along the lines of individual spiritual formation and interfaith peacebuilding must offer well-organized, peaceful, constructive, and ongoing community building processes, which result in the accumulation of more and more opportunities for people to practice spiritual wisdom in the everyday circumstances of community life.

The IPCR Initiative is an effort to apply the accumulated wisdom now accessible to us towards the general goal of integrating spiritual wisdom into the everyday circumstances of community life—and towards the specific goal of generating practical responses to the challenges of our times.

13. Helping people to access the storehouses of wisdom which have accumulated over many centuries

The challenges of our times are such that it is now critical for us to access the storehouses of wisdom which have accumulated over the many centuries of human experience, and which have been confirmed again and again as essential to individual well-being and social harmony by the saints, sages, spiritual leaders, and sincere practitioners of all faiths and moral “world views”.

Such treasured wisdom contains teachings which inspire and encourage people to

- a) appreciate truth, virtue, love, and peace—and live disciplined lives for the purpose of adhering to truth, cultivating virtue and love, and maintaining the pathways to enduring peace
- b) sacrifice personal desires for the greater good of the whole
- c) find contentment and quality of life while consuming less material goods and ecological services
- d) prefer peacebuilding which supports and actualizes mutually beneficial understandings, forgiveness, and reconciliation—and *which abstains from violent conflict resolution*—as a way of bringing cycles of violence to an end
- e) use resources carefully, so that there is surplus available for emergency assistance
- f) support community life and cultural traditions which “... bring to the fore what is often hidden: how many good people there are, how many ways there are to do good, and how much happiness comes to those who extend help, as well as to those who receive it.”

The IPCR Initiative believes that it is becoming more and more likely that an exponential increase in compassion for our fellow human beings will need to become an essential and critical element of a truly comprehensive response to the challenges of our times. In such circumstances, we cannot afford to exclude from our “tool box” the time-tested sources which have helped people learn compassion over many centuries.

What we need to do instead is to learn how to cultivate the time-tested sources so that the sources yield the treasured wisdom.

The IPCR Initiative hopes to encourage people—whether they become associated with The IPCR Initiative or not—to contribute to the realization of the potential for peacebuilding in all religious, spiritual, and moral traditions.

14. Increasing our collective capacity to encourage and support individual spiritual formation

Applied at the local community and regional level, “Community Good News Networks” and “Community Faith Mentoring Networks” can create ongoing opportunities for people of one particular faith community or cultural tradition to experience the highest ideals of all local community specific and regional specific faith communities and cultural traditions, as representatives of such ideals are better appreciated, more easily recognized—and more numerous— in the everyday circumstances of

community life. In this way, The IPCR Initiative hopes to increase our collective capacity to encourage and support individual spiritual formation—with all the beneficial consequences that follow for individuals, communities, regions, etc.

15. We will also need the resources which people of faith believe exist as a result of inner experience.

The IPCR Initiative encourages and supports the belief that that if we are to overcome the challenges of our times we will need not only the resources which innovators can prove the existence of by scientific method; we will also need the resources which people of faith believe exist as a result of inner experience.

16. Encouraging and supporting the belief that such an “entity” *does actually count for something* in overcoming the difficult challenges ahead

The IPCR Initiative encourages and supports the belief that the likelihood for a positive outcome to the challenges of our times will be increased

--if there many people in same community who were “pulling for each other” to find spiritual strength by way of deepening their faith and belief that there *is* a more advanced and more benevolent spiritual entity than ourselves—and that such an entity *does actually count for something* in overcoming the difficult challenges ahead.

17. Two examples of IPCR core beliefs

There are a number of core beliefs which have contributed to the development of The IPCR Initiative in general, and The Eight IPCR Concepts, in particular. Two examples of such core beliefs are as follows:

Even now, as you are reading this, truly inspiring contributions of genuine goodwill are being generated in a variety of ways—and in a variety of circumstances— by countless numbers of people in communities around the world.

There are countless numbers of ‘things people can do in the everyday circumstances of their lives’ which will contribute to peacebuilding, community revitalization, and ecological sustainability efforts, in their own communities and regions—and in other parts of the world.

18. The need to focus much time, energy, and money on the development of “teacher-leaders”

“How to find suitable teachers is, therefore, the really important question with which we are confronted. And I doubt whether they can *be found*—at least in sufficient numbers. They will have to be *made*; and how this is to be done is the real problem that faces those interested in moral education at the present time.”²

In the “1000Communities²” proposal (see Section ___), the concept of “Community Teaching and Learning Centers” created by the “Teachers Without Borders” organization is expanded so that such local community points of entry function as

- a) information centers, resource centers, and clearinghouses (on how residents can deliberately channel their time, energy, and money into the creation of “ways of earning a living” which are directly related to resolving high priority challenges)
- b) locations for workshops on topics suggested by the “Preliminary Survey” (for more about “Preliminary Surveys” see Section ___), and as determined by the “Community Teaching and Learning Center” Coordinator
- c) practice sites for the development of “teacher-leaders”
- d) community centers for meetings, both planned and informal
- e) locations for “Community Journals” (which are collections of formal and informal input which may be contributed to or accessed at all times)
- f) locations for “Final Version” Document submission (“voting”) as part of Steps 5, 6, 7, 9, and 10 of the 15 Step Outline for a comprehensive Community Visioning Initiative, as described in the “1000Communities²” proposal (for details on the 15 Steps, see Section 8)
- g) locations for “Summary of Community Visioning Initiative Process to Date” Notebooks (for latecomers, and as an information resource for media)
- h) central locations for listings of employment opportunities
- i) as a special form of community education, which can respond quickly (by changing the emphasis of workshop content) to new urgencies as they arise

Also relevant here are excerpts from a section titled “Community Visioning Initiatives, Job Fairs, and a “Just Transition” to More Solution-Oriented Employment” in the paper “The Twilight of One Era, and the Dawning of Another” (included in this “Workshop Primer”; see Appendix 2—Part A) (see “Notes and Source References” section of “The Twilight...” paper, for source references)

“...These individuals and many other wealthy men and women funded his causes, such as supporting Hampton and Tuskegee institutes. Each school was originally founded to produce teachers. However, graduates had often gone back to their local communities only to find precious few schools and educational resources to work with in the largely impoverished South.

“In 1912, Rosenwald provided funds for a pilot program involving six new small schools in rural Alabama, which were designed, constructed and opened in 1913 and 1914 and overseen by Tuskegee; the model proved successful. Rosenwald (then) established The Rosenwald Fund. The school building program was one of its largest programs. Using state-of-the-art architectural plans initially drawn by professors at Tuskegee Institute, the Rosenwald Fund spent over four million dollars to help build 4,977 schools, 217 teachers' homes, and 163 shop buildings in 883 counties in 15 states, from Maryland to Texas. The Rosenwald Fund used a system of matching grants, and black communities raised more than \$4.7 million to aid the construction. These schools became known as Rosenwald Schools. The local schools were a

source of much community pride and were of priceless value to African-American families when poverty and segregation limited their children's chances. By 1932, the facilities could accommodate one third of all African American children in Southern U.S. schools.”

And an excerpt from a Government of India Working Group Report (1981):

“We want our teachers to be value-oriented because we want them to be rightly equipped as vehicles of values for the benefit of our children and youth. By his/her very nature, the teacher is a transmitter, a messenger, a carrier. Our determination of what he has to transmit will depend on what we determine to be valuable for our children and youth. Every society has a value system of some kind. Indian society is rich in it. But what is the use of such a bank balance of values if it is not useful in solving our current social problems?”⁴

The IPCR Initiative emphasizes the need for, and the importance of, “Community Teaching and Learning Centers”—and the need to focus much time, energy, and money on the development of “teacher-leaders”.

19. Helping people to learn more about practical wisdom and less about flaws in human nature

This writer feels that *somehow* many people have—unfortunately—learned to mistakenly equate flaws in human nature with the practical wisdom and compassion associated with religious, spiritual, and moral traditions. This writer also feels that, with enough experiences of a positive and mutually beneficial nature, many people can come to learn more about the practical wisdom and compassion associated with religious, spiritual, and moral traditions and less about the flaws in human nature.

The IPCR Initiative believes that any initiative hoping to build bridges and increase collaboration along the lines of individual spiritual formation and interfaith peacebuilding must offer well-organized, peaceful, constructive, and ongoing community building processes, which result in the accumulation of more and more opportunities for people to practice spiritual wisdom in the everyday circumstances of community life.

20. Common ground associated with increasing compassion for our fellow human beings is a very special kind of common ground

Developing a “sister community” relationship could be a way for diverse people in any particular community to find common ground. *And common ground associated with increasing compassion for our fellow human beings would be a very special kind of common ground.* Exploring these possibilities could make it possible for many people to have first hand experience with “... bringing to the fore what is often hidden: how many good people there are, how many ways there are to do good, and how much happiness comes to those who extend help, as well as to those who receive it.”

The IPCR Initiative recognizes that common ground associated with increasing compassion for our fellow human beings is a very special kind of common ground. The IPCR Initiative hopes to identify, create, and sustain a significant variety of ways to create common ground associated with increasing compassion for our fellow human beings.

21. Are we up to the challenge?

The IPCR Initiative is aware of an urgent need to build bridges and increase collaboration between diverse communities of people; both as a response to the implications of global warming, ecological footprint analysis, and the “peaking” of our finite supplies of oil—and to be proactive about individual spiritual formation, interfaith peacebuilding, and the creation of ecologically sustainable communities.

The IPCR Initiative understands that the complexity associated with building bridges and increasing collaboration between diverse communities of people, the urgent need for resolutions to a significant number of critical issues in the near future—and *the seemingly chronic nature of many of the challenges of our times*—suggests a need for problem solving on a scale most of us have never known before.

The IPCR Initiative believes that the nature of the “Culture Change” necessary to overcome the challenges of our times will require fully utilizing all the knowledge, tools, and resources accessible to us for the highest good possible in every area of capacity building (physical, ecological, medical, spiritual, educational, social, economic, technical, political, etc.)

There has never been a time in the course of history when both the capacity to cultivate practical wisdom and the capacity to build a positive and constructive consensus were as important as they are now. Are we up to the challenge?

22. An effort to nurture, support, and sustain peacebuilding in its most compassionate form

Peacebuilding in its most compassionate form is not a competitive field of activity. Viewed in this light, the most valuable forms of peacebuilding will nurture, support, and sustain the development of an infinite variety of other forms of peacebuilding, community revitalization, and ecologically sustainability initiatives. The IPCR Initiative is an effort to nurture, support, and sustain peacebuilding in its most compassionate form.

23. Identifying the appropriate questions to ask can be critical to encouraging a high percentage of constructive thinking and constructive action

The “1000Communities²” proposal (described in Section 6) includes a “15 Step Outline for a ‘1000Communities²’ Version of a Community Visioning Initiative” (see Section 8). Step 3 of that 15 step outline suggests creating a “Preliminary Survey”, and sending such a survey to 150 key leaders who represent a variety of fields of activity in the community. Responses and summarized results from “Preliminary Surveys” can provide:

- a) evidence from local leaders of the need for a re-assessment of current priorities
- b) examples of local leaders stepping up in support of Community Visioning Initiatives
- c) starting points for public discourse about the importance of the Community Visioning Initiatives
- d) starting points for “Community Teaching and Learning Center” workshop content
- e) starting points for some participants as they develop “Final Version” decisions (“votes”) on challenges, solutions, and action plans
- f) an aid to mobilizing a high level of interest in the Community Visioning Initiative, and a high level of citizen participation
- g) an initial sense of support or non-support for the “sister community” element

One of The Eight IPCR Concepts is “Questionnaires That Help Build Caring Communities”. The description of that concept (see Section 5 “Brief Descriptions of The Eight IPCR Concepts”) begins as follows: “Organizations and communities of people often use questionnaires and surveys to identify problems and solutions, and to build consensus for collective action. Here are some example questions which are designed to be helpful in building caring communities. Hopefully, providing a few examples here will bring forth many more examples, and thus assist in building a resource base for future questionnaires that help build caring communities....”.

The IPCR Initiative recognizes that our collective capacity to identifying problems and solutions, and our collective ability to build consensus for collective action, are going to be critical to overcoming the challenges ahead. Here is one example question from Section 10 “39 Suggestions for Preliminary Survey Questions”, which should be sufficient to suggest that identifying the appropriate questions to ask can be critical to encouraging a high percentage of constructive thinking and constructive action in the years ahead.

Question: Global Drugs Trade, Global Arms Trade—and Solutions?

Consider the following excerpt from the “World Report of Violence and Health: Summary (Recommendations for Action)” (by the World Health Organization, 2002):

“The global drugs trade and the global arms trade are integral to violence in both developing and industrialized countries. Even modest progress on either front will contribute to reducing the amount and degree of violence suffered by millions of people. To date, however—and despite their high profile in the world arena—no solutions seem to be in sight for these problems.”⁵

a) Do you believe there are “solutions in sight” for the above mentioned problems, or do you agree with the authors at the World Health Organization? If you believe there are “solutions in sight”, please be specific and describe such solutions. Or, if you agree that “no solutions seem to be in sight”, offer your view on as to why we seem to be at a point where “no solutions seem to be in sight” for those problems.

b) Please check the box (or boxes) which best corresponds to the way you view of the following statement.

How much daily contact with the treasured wisdom of religious, spiritual, and moral traditions do you feel people in general would need before we would see noticeable progress on the above mentioned problems (the global drugs trade and the global arms trade)?

				X	Y
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
more than is likely to happen	a profound increase from current levels	a lot more	a little more	additional solutions will be essential to make noticeable progress	have different view—or different understanding of our present circumstances

c) If you checked boxes X and/or Y, please describe below any solutions to the above two problems (drugs trade and arms trade) which you feel would be helpful contributions to making noticeable progress on resolving these problems.

24. Assisting fellow human beings on the subject of difficult questions which urgently need answers

What can we do—at this particular point in time—in the everyday circumstances of our lives, to bring the best ideas *from* the accumulated storehouse of wisdom now accessible to us and “*through the mist*”, so that our community building processes will be most effective in helping us overcome the challenges of our times?

“In the best of times, even the most profound challenges can be overcome; for in the best of times, _____ is/are nurtured, supported, and sustained by family, friends, teachers, mentors, elders, and the everyday influences of community life and cultural traditions.”

The IPCR Initiative is an effort to assist fellow human beings in identifying what—from the accumulated storehouse of wisdom now accessible to us—would best answer the above question “What can we do...”—and what—from the accumulated storehouses of wisdom now accessible to us—would best fill in the blank in the above statement.

25. An ongoing process for re-evaluating and re-stating the “moral compass” of a community

How can local communities arrive at practical definitions of “right livelihood”? What local institutions would be most appropriate as commissioners and overseers of a resource guide to “right livelihood”? How can leaders at the regional and local community level assure residents that they understand the challenges of our times, if they themselves do not participate in the very activities they advocate for overcoming the challenges of our times? How can our communities change “the way things get done” so that more people can live in accordance with their moral convictions? Workshops associated with The IPCR Initiative can identify, discover, create, support, and sustain comprehensive and practical answers to these questions— and provide a system by which the answers could be re-evaluated and re-stated on an ongoing basis. Therefore, it may be said that by its very nature The IPCR Initiative represents a built-in and ongoing process for re-evaluating and re-stating the “moral compass” of a community or region.

26. Three propositions and one definition relating to the subject of Spiritually Responsible Investing

“The first proposition is:

There are countless numbers of “things people can do in the everyday circumstances of their lives” which will contribute to peacebuilding, community revitalization, and ecological sustainability efforts, in their own communities and regions—and in other parts of the world.

“The second proposition is:

The ways we “invest” our time, energy, and money have a direct impact on the “ways of earning a living” that are available.

“The third proposition is:

The most advanced societies are the ones which are successful at integrating spiritual wisdom into the everyday circumstances of community life.

“And the one definition:

Spiritually Responsible Investing can be defined as investments of time, energy, and money which increase our capacity to integrate spiritual wisdom into the everyday circumstances of community life.”

The IPCR Initiative believes that any initiative hoping to build bridges and increase collaboration along the lines of individual spiritual formation and interfaith peacebuilding must offer well-organized, peaceful, constructive, and ongoing community building processes, which result in the accumulation of more and more opportunities for people to practice spiritual wisdom in the everyday circumstances of community life.

The IPCR Initiative encourages and supports a just transition from patterns of investment which in only limited ways represent solutions to prioritized challenges to patterns of investment which in many ways represent solutions to prioritized challenges.

27. Many people can realize the wisdom of deliberately focusing the way they spend their time, energy, and money

There are many important initiatives which are critical to overcoming the challenges of our times, but which are not quite “coming through the mist as much as they should be.” The IPCR Initiative can be very helpful in exactly these kinds of circumstances, as it encourages and facilitates a “constellation” of initiatives by which the best (*in the view of the participants using these processes*) associated with individual spiritual formation, interfaith peacebuilding, community revitalization, ecological sustainability, etc. can bubble up to the surface, be recognized as priorities, and therefore be brought forward as appropriate recipients of peoples time, energy, and money. Many people can realize the wisdom of deliberately focusing the way they spend their time, energy, and money so that their actions have positive repercussions on the fields of activity described by the IPCR Mission Statement goals, and on other related fields of activity (see “117 related fields of activity” in Appendix 1—Parts B and C). As the ancient Chinese proverb says: “Many hands make much work light.”

28. “Constellations” of initiatives which can help us sort through all this

Everyone is involved when it comes to determining the markets which supply the “ways of earning a living”. All of us have important responsibilities associated with resolving a significant number of very serious challenges in the months and years ahead. We need our public discourse to be as honest, responsible, and transparent as possible, so we can identify, nurture, support, and sustain ways to build a collective force greater than the challenges we are now facing. True confidence is never really built up by merely convincing a majority of the people involved that they *believe* the markets are based on sound and practical principles; true confidence is built up because people believe that the efforts of everyone working together is a greater force than the challenges they are facing.

Unfortunately, sorting out what our responsibilities are—or sorting out what the real challenges are, and what are sound and practical solutions—is becoming more and more difficult, as there is now, in many parts of the world, a multitude of ideas of all kinds coming to the fore in personal, family, community, and cultural life—all at the same time.

The IPCR Initiative provides a “constellation” of initiatives which can help us sort out what the real challenges are, and what are sound and practical solutions—and does so in a way that helps us to realize how much we need to be learning so that we can be part of the solutions... and how much we really need to be on the same side, helping each other.

29. A positive, constructive, systematic, practical, and doable way to remedy one of the most persistent ironies in life

One of the most persistent ironies in life is that with so many opportunities to provide real assistance to fellow human beings—and with the potential for such assistance to result in happiness “to those who extend help as well as to those who receive it”—there are still many, many people in this world who cannot find a “way to earn a living” providing such assistance. This writer believes that there are countless number of “things” people—in all parts of the world—can do to remedy that deficiency.

The IPCR Initiative represents a positive, constructive, systematic, practical, and doable way to remedy that deficiency.

30. On the subject of finding contentment and quality of life while consuming less material goods and ecological services

[Note: The following 9 quotes are from Section F. of the IPCR document “Spiritual Peacebuilding: 47 Quotes and Proverbs”, at <http://ipcri.net/images/Spiritual-Peacebuilding--47-Quotations-and-Proverb.pdf> . The source references for these quotes are included in the “Notes and Source References” for this section.]⁶

- a) “A wise person notices that inner harmony is disturbed when the mind lets itself be lured into indiscriminately sampling the world of phenomena.”
- b) “The energy invested in a particular thing, during its life from cradle to grave, is called the ‘embodied energy’ of that object. The amount of embodied energy

that an item contains depends on the technology used to create it (the origin of materials inputs, how they were created and transported, etc.), the nature of the production system, and the distance the item travels from inception to purchase.”

- c) “... every article in the bazaar has moral and spiritual values attached to it... hence it behooves us to enquire into the antecedents of every article we buy.... (Yet this is an arduous task, and it becomes almost impossible for ordinary persons to undertake it when the article comes from far off countries.”
- d) “If we feel it is beyond us to guarantee the concomitant results of all our transactions, it necessarily follows that we must limit our transactions to a circle well within our control. This is the bed rock of swadeshi. The smaller the circumference, the more accurately can we gauge the results of our actions, and (the) more conscientiously shall we be able to fulfill our obligations as trustees.”
- e) “By supporting items and processes that have lower embodied energy, as well as the companies that produce them, consumers can significantly reduce society’s energy use.”
- f) The second law of thermodynamics efficiency is often defined as follows: ‘the efficiency is equal to the ratio of the least available work that could have done the job to the actual available work used to do the job.’”
- g) “Therefore the sage says:
I take no action and people are reformed.
I enjoy peace and people become honest.
I do nothing and people become rich.
I have no desires and people return to the good and simple life.”
- h) “Were I to have the least bit of knowledge, in walking on a Great Road, it’s only going astray that I would fear.
The Great Way is very level;
but people greatly delight in tortuous paths.”
- i) “If many people can learn to find contentment and quality of life while consuming much less, this limiting of desires at the ‘root’ will save much trouble trying to respond to the symptoms as they materialize worldwide. This is part of the ‘spiritual teachings’ element which often gets overlooked....”

The IPCR Initiative believes that the beneficial consequences of individual spiritual formation can include an increased capacity, and a greater willingness, to

- a) sacrifice personal desires for the greater good of the whole
- b) find contentment and quality of life while consuming less material goods and ecological services
- c) use resources carefully, so that there is surplus available for emergency assistance

The IPCR Initiative believes that a person is capable of cultivating a certain type of personality by choice and design.

The IPCR Initiative believes that any initiative hoping to build bridges and increase collaboration along the lines of individual spiritual formation and interfaith peacebuilding must offer well-organized, peaceful, constructive, and ongoing community building processes, which result in the accumulation of more and more opportunities for people to practice spiritual wisdom in the everyday circumstances of community life.

The IPCR Initiative is an effort to apply the accumulated wisdom now accessible to us towards the general goal of integrating spiritual wisdom into the everyday circumstances of community life—and towards the specific goal of generating practical responses to the challenges of our times.

31. Learning how to sacrifice personal desires for the greater good of the whole

One of the challenges in the IPCR Initiative list of the “ten most difficult challenges of our times” (see Appendix 1—Part A) is stated as follows: The increasing world population and its implications relating to widespread resource depletion (with special focus on the increasing number of people who are consuming material goods and ecological resources indiscriminately).

The challenges of our times are such that it is now critical for us to access the storehouses of wisdom which have accumulated over the many centuries of human experience, and which have been confirmed again and again as essential to individual well-being and social harmony by the saints, sages, spiritual leaders, and sincere practitioners of all faiths and moral “world views”.

Such treasured wisdom contains teachings which inspire and encourage people to

- a) sacrifice personal desires for the greater good of the whole
- b) find contentment and quality of life while consuming less material goods and ecological services
- c) use resources carefully, so that there is surplus available for emergency assistance

The IPCR Initiative believes that what we need to do is to learn how to cultivate the time-tested sources so that the sources yield the treasured wisdom.

32. Spiritual attributes that will increase in importance

The IPCR Initiative hopes to increase our collective capacity to encourage and inspire individual spiritual formation—with all the beneficial consequences that follow for individuals, communities, regions, etc. The IPCR Initiative believes that the beneficial consequences of individual spiritual formation can include an increased capacity, and a greater willingness, to

- a) sacrifice personal desires for the greater good of the whole
- b) find contentment and quality of life while consuming less material goods and ecological services
- c) use resources carefully, so that there is surplus available for emergency assistance

The IPCR Initiative believes that these spiritual attributes will increase in importance as it becomes more necessary to us to access what is necessary for basic human needs and quality of life through principles and practices of ecological sustainability and permaculture (due to the implications of global warming, ecological footprint analysis, and the “peaking” of our finite supplies of oil).

33. Creating, supporting, and sustaining communities which can minimize resource requirements

The IPCR Initiative believes that it is possible to create, support, and sustain communities which can minimize resource requirements, maintain ecological sustainability, maintain a high level of compassion for fellow human beings— and which represent what a significant majority of community residents surveyed would describe as a high quality of life.

34. A “constellation” of initiatives which provide a “trellis”

The IPCR Initiative believes that we are at a critical point in the evolution of spiritual understanding.

[This writer feels that *somehow* many people have—unfortunately—learned to mistakenly equate flaws in human nature with the practical wisdom and compassion associated with religious, spiritual, and moral traditions. This writer also feels that, with enough experiences of a positive and mutually beneficial nature, many people can come to learn more about the practical wisdom and compassion associated with religious, spiritual, and moral traditions and less about the flaws in human nature.]

The challenges of our times are such that it is now critical for us to access the storehouses of wisdom which have accumulated over the many centuries of human experience, and which have been confirmed again and again as essential to individual well-being and social harmony by the saints, sages, spiritual leaders, and sincere practitioners of all faiths and moral “world views”.

The IPCR Initiative understands that the complexity associated with building bridges and increasing collaboration between diverse communities of people, the urgent need for resolutions to a significant number of critical issues in the near future—and *the seemingly chronic nature of many of the challenges of our times*—suggests a need for problem solving on a scale most of us have never known before.

The IPCR Initiative believes that any initiative hoping to build bridges and increase collaboration along the lines of individual spiritual formation and interfaith peacebuilding must offer well-organized, peaceful, constructive, and ongoing community building processes, which result in the accumulation of more and more opportunities for people to practice spiritual wisdom in the everyday circumstances of community life.

The IPCR Initiative is a “constellation” of initiatives which provide a “trellis” for communities of people to “organically grow” towards their own collective definitions of “spiritual formation” and “right livelihood”.

35. Encouraging and supporting the belief that “such an entity does actually count for something in overcoming the difficult challenges ahead”

The IPCR Initiative encourages and supports the belief that the likelihood for a positive outcome to the challenges of our times will be increased if

there many people in communities around the world who are “pulling for each other” to find spiritual strength by way of deepening their faith and belief that

- a) there *is* a more advanced and more benevolent spiritual entity than ourselves
- and b) such an entity does actually count for something in overcoming the difficult challenges ahead.

36. Three Important Points

[Note: The following 5 paragraphs are also included in the “Tone of IPCR Initiative” section, “The Primary Inspiration for The IPCR Initiative” subsection in the “About the IPCR Initiative” section—and in the IPCR document “Peacebuilding in its Most Compassionate Form” (see <http://ipcri.net/images/2-Peacebuilding-in-its-Most-Compassionate-Form.pdf>)

This writer (the founder and outreach coordinator of The IPCR Initiative) affirms that the most important influence in his life has been, and continues to be, Sri Sathya Sai Baba (age 81, with a main residence in Puttaparthi, India). In 1997, this writer completed a 301 page arrangement of selected quotations from “Sathya Sai Speaks” (Vol. 1-11, first U.S. editions) (discourses by Sri Sathya Sai Baba from the years 1953-1982). That document is an unpublished manuscript which has only recently been made accessible to many people by its inclusion in the website of The IPCR Initiative (www.ipcri.net). This writer hereby attributes the inspiration for the approach and substance of The IPCR Initiative, his personal capacity to see good in the efforts of people from many different faith communities and cultural traditions, and his personal faith in a positive outcome regarding the challenges of our times to close contact, over many years, with the wisdom and compassion in the teachings of Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

And yet—and this is a most important point—in contrast to the outlook which claims a “right” to develop an initiative even though such efforts are felt by many as “a threat (perceived or real) to their identity, or cherished meanings, or both”; this writer would slow or discontinue the development of this initiative in such circumstances—until such time as communication leads to better understanding, and circumstances are more mutually beneficial.⁷

In addition—and this is also a most important point—it is not necessary for any of the readers of this document, or any of the participants in an IPCR Initiative, to know anything about Sri Sathya Sai Baba (the most important influence in this writer’s life), or the teachings of Sri Sathya Sai Baba, to contribute to or benefit from the work of The IPCR Initiative.

And here, as the third important point of this paragraph, this writer would like to affirm with as clear a statement as he can possibly make, that The IPCR Initiative encourages people, whether they are going to participate in an IPCR Initiative sponsored activity or not, to use the resources provided by The IPCR Initiative to nurture, support, and sustain community life and cultural traditions associated with the particular “frameworks” *which give their lives meaning*.

This writer—the founder of The IPCR Initiative—believes in affirming the above three points for the following reasons:

- a) these points define an approach to interfaith peacebuilding and community revitalization which he can support with all his heart
- b) the challenges of our times are such that it is essential to “bring to the fore” the real treasured wisdom of religious, spiritual, and moral traditions (i.e. there is a profound and critical need for as many people as possible to exercise as much love, understanding, and forgiveness as possible—in as many ways as possible)
- c) this writer understands, by way of the teachings of Sri Sathya Sai Baba, the existence of a “current”—which can be recognized according to the degree to which one has incorporated spiritual understanding into his or her everyday thoughts, words, and deeds... or by the grace of association with profound spiritual teachings.

Viewed in this light, The IPCR Initiative—and all related fields of activity—can be seen as efforts to contribute to religious, spiritual, and moral “tool boxes” ... “tool boxes” which have been created from centuries of cultural experience, and which have been confirmed by the saints, sages, spiritual leaders, and sincere practitioners of all faiths and moral “world views” as *necessary to the process of utilizing that “current” to do good.*

37. “... bringing to the fore what is often hidden....”

Even now, as you are reading this, truly inspiring contributions of genuine goodwill are being generated in a variety of ways—and in a variety of circumstances— by countless numbers of people in communities around the world.

There are opportunities in every minute of every day for people to “catch a glimpse” of this “current” in the process of actively affirming the treasured wisdom from the teachings of religious, spiritual, and moral traditions. Consider the following “awareness exercise”:

During the course of any given day—and in ways we may not even be aware of—acts of kindness and courtesy by practitioners of the Hindu faith inspire Muslims to become better Muslims; acts of kindness and courtesy by practitioners of the Islamic faith inspire Christians to become better Christians; acts of kindness and courtesy by practitioners of the Christian faith inspire Buddhists to become better Buddhists; and so on.

And consider further: that during the course of our lives, we all require the benefit of experiences, goods, and services from countless numbers of other people. To be more specific, this writer now asks you (kind reader) to consider tracing the materials and “human energy input” associated with the water you use (and drink); the food you eat; the building structure which you call home; the clothes you wear; the mode of transportation you use; the fuel for that mode of transportation—and the centuries of cultural experiences which make up the knowledge and wisdom now accessible via the Internet....

Even if we use only the implications of this very limited exercise, by the end of any given day countless numbers of people in this world will have had the opportunity—whether they were aware of it or not—to be a positive influence in the lives of countless numbers of other people who are practitioners of a faith tradition different than themselves.

The IPCR Initiative hopes to provide many ways for fellow human beings—in a variety of circumstances, in communities around the world—to “bring to the fore what is often hidden: how many good people there are, how many ways there are to do good, and how much happiness comes to those who extend help, as well as to those who receive it”.

38. Increasing the likelihood of spiritual cohesion between many diverse communities of people

The IPCR Initiative encourages and supports the belief that using a system as comprehensive as the Community Visioning Initiative process described in detail in the 161 page proposal titled “1000Communities²” (see <http://ipcri.net/images/1000Communities2.pdf>)-- to maximize citizen participation in identify challenges, resources, solutions, and action plans—will eventually, over the

years, result in communities of people approximating “a highest synthesis of truth and community” *from their point of view... and that what they discover as “a highest synthesis” will be of such a similar spiritual essence to other communities (which have also carried out Community Visioning Initiatives of a similar nature) as to significantly increase the likelihood of spiritual cohesion between many diverse communities of people.*

The IPCR Initiative encourages and supports efforts to increase the likelihood of spiritual cohesion between many diverse communities of people.

39. The IPCR Initiative is not formally affiliated with—or officially sanctioned by—the International Sai Organization.

The IPCR Initiative is not formally affiliated with—or officially sanctioned by—the International Sai Organization. Although this writer affirms that the teachings of Sri Sathya Sai Baba are the most important influence in his life, the nature and growth of The IPCR Initiative has not yet inspired collaboration with any Sai Centers associated with the International Sai Organization—or with the International Sai Organization itself.

40. The capacity to absorb and assimilate the treasured wisdom of any and all religious, spiritual, and moral traditions

“Inasmuch as Buddhism is a living religion and not a historical mummy stuffed with dead and functionless materials, it must be able to absorb and assimilate all that is helpful to its growth. This is the most natural thing for any organism endowed with life.”⁸ (D.T. Suzuki, in “Essays in Zen Buddhism”)

The IPCR Initiative has the capacity to absorb and assimilate the treasured wisdom of any and all religious, spiritual, and moral traditions, as a way of integrating spiritual wisdom into the everyday circumstances of community life—and as a way of generating practical responses to the challenges of our times.

41. Participants as bridge builders

It is possible to see participants in initiatives like the IPCR Initiative as bridge builders between people focusing on living lightly and building eco-villages and agriculture-based communities and people focusing on spiritual discipline and inner development through religious, spiritual, and moral traditions; as bridge builders between religious, spiritual, moral and cultural traditions; as bridge builders between “developed” countries and “developing” countries; as bridge builders between rich people and poor people; as bridge builders between good ideas and financial support; as bridge builders between right livelihood and marginalized people everywhere; and as bridge builders between ideals and their practical realization.

42. Identifying Experienced Practitioners, Stakeholders, and People Needing Assistance

[Note: The following question is Question #9, in Section 10 “39 Suggestions for Preliminary Survey Questions”]

Consider the assessment of the most difficult challenges of our times which you created as a response to question #6 part a).

a) Who are the Experienced Practitioners, who are most qualified to be educating people on how to successfully overcome each of the ten challenges you identified?

(Special Notes: Please be specific, as in times of emergency, it will be most important for leaders to understand which people are perceived as most qualified by the majority of the residents in a particular community. Also, please be straightforward and honest: if you do not know who would be most qualified to respond, please respond accordingly.)

b) Who are the Stakeholders (the people who will be affected by the education provided and guidance given by the Experienced Practitioners)?

c) Who are the People Needing Assistance (the people who do not know how to respond to the challenges you identified)?

The IPCR Initiative provides tools, resources, and initiatives which are sufficient to establish a majority consensus on the challenges facing a particular community, and which are sufficient to arriving at 100% citizen awareness of who in their community represent Experienced Practitioners, who represent Stakeholders, and who represent People Needing Assistance—with regards such challenges.

43. Many opportunities for local newspapers to contribute very valuable community services

[Note: The following is an excerpt from the paper “The Twilight of One Era, and the Dawning of Another”]

The IPCR Initiative is an advocate for comprehensive Community Visioning Initiatives (which may require as much as 18 months to complete (see Section __ for a description of the “1000Communities2” proposal). The IPCR Initiative believes it is providing sufficient information and inspiration to suggest that there are many opportunities for local newspapers to contribute very valuable community services in the planning, implementation, evaluation, and follow up stages associated with Community Visioning Initiatives. Here is a list of some of the community services local newspapers could contribute:

- a) provide information about the potential of Community Visioning Initiatives
- b) advocate for the implementation of Community Visioning Initiatives
- c) be directly involved in making Preliminary Surveys accessible, provide in-depth coverage of the response compilation process to assure credibility, and provide a variety of summary and analysis of the responses.
- d) provide ongoing public access to details of each stage of the Community Visioning process
- e) provide ongoing public access to details of workshops and other educational experiences at “Community Teaching and Learning Centers”

- f) provide in-depth coverage of the response compilation process to assure credibility
- g) provide a variety of summary and analysis of the responses at each stage of the process
- h) provide follow-up coverage of the projects and initiatives which spin-off from the action plans receiving significant community support
- i) encourage citizen input as a way of further evaluating the successes and failures of the process

44. Three key propositions of the IPCR Initiative

The IPCR Initiative is an accumulation of documents, resources, and observations brought together to support the propositions that we—collectively—have both the need, and the potential, to be

- a) much more organized and deliberate about “... bringing to the fore what is often hidden: how many good people there are, how many ways there are to do good, and how much happiness comes to those who extend help, as well as to those who receive it.”
- b) much more multifaceted and participation-friendly in our approaches to peacebuilding, community revitalization, and ecological sustainability
- c) much more resourceful in the use of the accumulated storehouse of wisdom and “embodied energy” which is now accessible to us.

45. The contributions the IPCR Initiative hopes to make

Specifically, the contributions The IPCR Initiative hopes to make, are as follows:

- a) inspire, encourage, and support the creation of many local community specific and regional specific variations of the “1000Communities²” proposal—so that Community Visioning Initiatives take place in as many ways and in as many communities as possible
- b) introduce The Eight IPCR Concepts (“Community Good News Networks”, “Community Faith Mentoring Networks,” “Spiritual Friendships,” “Questionnaires That Help Build Caring Communities,” “Community Visioning Initiatives for Peace,” “Spiritually Responsible Investing,” “Ecological Sustainability,” and “IPCR Journal/Newsletters) through workshops offered at the local community level

(For an overview of these concepts, see the Section 5 of this IPCR Workshop Primer, or the IPCR document “Brief Descriptions of The Eight IPCR Concepts”, at <http://ipcri.net/images/1-Brief-Descriptions-of-The-Eight-IPCR-Concepts.pdf>)

- c) actively develop the concept of “Questionnaires That Help Build Caring Communities”, administer such questionnaires at the community and/or regional level, and then share compilations of the responses (with summary and conclusions)
- d) help to establish, and contribute to, local community points of entry acting as “clearinghouses”, where residents can discover more about the countless number of “things people can do in the everyday circumstances of their lives” which will contribute to peacebuilding, community revitalization, and ecological sustainability in their own communities and regions—and in other parts of the world

e) identify, develop, and create enough descriptions and examples of the 117 fields of related activity (see Appendix 1—Parts B and C) and generate enough regular feature material in categories such as local community and regional model projects, workshop and conference listings, committee reports, resource reviews, letters to the editor, “community journal” postings, and links to other useful information and organizations

to justify monthly local community specific publications of an IPCR Journal/Newsletter (or a similar publication with a different name....)

f) and combine the resources created by “clearinghouses,” and “community newsletters” to link many associated efforts, such as those in Appendix 1—Part B (“Starting Point Links for Learning About 117 Related Fields of Activity”)

—and thus assist with outreach, partnership formation, consensus building, and development of service capacity associated with a significant number of peacebuilding, community revitalization, and ecological sustainability efforts, all at the same time.

The IPCR Initiative is providing this assistance as a result of believing that any community of people, however small in numbers, who follow through on most or all of the practical assistance described in the seven steps mentioned above, will contribute a “multiplier effect” of a positive nature on *whatever goals are decided on at the local community and regional levels.*

46. Are we up to the challenge?

The IPCR Initiative believes that the nature of the “Culture Change” necessary to overcome the challenges of our times will require fully utilizing all the knowledge, tools, and resources accessible to us for the highest good possible in every area of capacity building (physical, ecological, medical, spiritual, educational, social, economic, technical, political, etc.)

There has never been a time in the course of history when both the capacity to cultivate practical wisdom and the capacity to build a positive and constructive consensus were as important as they are now. Are we up to the challenge?

Workshops introducing The Eight IPCR Concepts (“Community Good News Networks,” “Community Faith Mentoring Networks,” “Spiritual Friendships,” “Questionnaires That Help Build Caring Communities,” “Community Visioning Initiatives for Peace,” “Spiritually Responsible Investing,” “Ecological Sustainability,” and “IPCR Journal/Newsletters”) can be a starting point for many practical collective efforts, based and sustained at the local community and regional level, and representing contributions towards the goals listed in The IPCR Mission Statement. This writer is confident that applying these concepts—at the local community and regional level—will provide for each of us more and more opportunities to contribute towards such goals, more and more understanding about why we would want to contribute—and more and more opportunities to encourage and support each other in the process.

Participating in IPCR Concept Introduction Workshops at intervals—over a long period of time—will make it possible for participants to come in contact with a valuable variety of input and experiences

relating not only to the IPCR concepts, but to many other peacebuilding, community revitalization, and ecological sustainability initiatives as well.

Peacebuilding in its most compassionate form is not a competitive field of activity. Viewed in this light, the most valuable forms of peacebuilding will nurture, support, and sustain the development of an infinite variety of other forms of peacebuilding, community revitalization, and ecological sustainability initiatives. The IPCR Initiative is an effort to nurture, support, and sustain peacebuilding in its most compassionate form.

47. The IPCR Mission Statement

The Interfaith Peacebuilding and Community Revitalization (IPCR) Initiative is an effort to facilitate the practical application of the Eight IPCR Concepts (“Community Good News Networks,” “Community Faith Mentoring Networks,” “Spiritual Friendships,” “Questionnaires That Help Build Caring Communities,” “Community Visioning Initiatives for Peace,” “Spiritually Responsible Investing,” “Ecological Sustainability,” and “IPCR Journal/Newsletters”)—at the community and regional level—as a way of contributing to the following goals:

- a) “... bringing to the fore what is often hidden: how many good people there are, how many ways there are to do good, and how much happiness comes to those who extend help as well as to those who receive it.”
- b) increasing our collective capacity to encourage and inspire individual spiritual formation—with all the beneficial consequences that follow for individuals, communities, regions, etc.
- c) building trust among people from different faith communities and cultural traditions
- d) increasing our capacity to be responsible stewards of our time, energy, and money
- e) increasing our capacity to access what is necessary for basic human needs and quality of life through principles and practices of ecological sustainability and permaculture, especially in light of the implications of global warming, ecological footprint analysis, and the “peaking” of our finite supplies of oil
- f) increasing our awareness of the countless number of ‘things people can do in the everyday circumstances of their lives’ which will contribute to peacebuilding, community revitalization, and ecological sustainability efforts, in our own communities and regions—and in other parts of the world
- g) reducing the incidence of violence—and all the costs associated with war
- h) increasing emergency assistance to people with basic human needs
- i) reflecting an understanding of the value of silence
- j) creating local community and regional publications that provide a format for sharing the good news which would be identified, encouraged, supported, and sustained by contributions to the first 9 goals

48. In light of the urgent need to build bridges and increase collatoration between diverse communities of people...

In light of the urgent need to build bridges and increase collaboration between diverse communities of people, all of the documents, information, resources, etc. created by The IPCR Initiative are viewed as resources which ought to be made as accessible as possible to people who can make good use of them. Therefore, all such documents and information (including this document) may be reproduced without permission, and distributed in any way the user believes will be consistent with the goals listed in The IPCR Mission Statement. [Please note: Quotes, statistics, and other copyrighted material used in IPCR documents have been appropriately attributed to their copyrighted sources. Readers may thus be assured that The IPCR Initiative encourages and supports the proper referencing of copyrighted material to their copyrighted sources.]

Notes and Source References

1. From the Catholic Encyclopedia entry on Education (section at the beginning subtitled “Education: In General”) (at <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/05295b.htm>) (see paragraph 1). (Note: Could not identify which edition of the Catholic Encyclopedia this source represented; thus cannot identify editors or publisher.) (confirmed February 10, 2010)
2. Prof. J. S. Mackenzie (at the First International Moral Education Congress, University of London, 1908) Excerpt from document titled “Papers on Moral Education—Communicated to the First International Moral Education Congress” (Held at the University of London, September 25-29, 1908) Edited by Gustave Spiller (Hon. General Secretary of the Congress) (accessible through Google Book Search) [Specific excerpts from the Sixth Session, in presentation titled “Systematic Moral Teaching” by Prof. J. S. Mackenzie [University College, Cardiff (UK)], see first and last paragraph (Note: Searching book for “MacKenzie” will locate presentation)] (Confirmed October 21, 2009)
3. From a 25 page brochure titled “Revision 2000: Take Charge Again”, received from Chattanooga Venture. This brochure also included a description of the 40 goals created by Chattanooga Vision 2000 (carried out in 1984), a detailed description of meetings and meeting schedules, and an overview “How You Can Make A Difference,” in a question and answer format. This writer also received from Chattanooga Venture a video, titled “A Community With a Vision,” which documents the 1984 visioning initiative “Vision 2000”—and a handbook titled “The Facilitator’s Manual,” subtitled “A Step-by-Step Guide for Groups to: Brainstorm Ideas, Create a Shared Vision, Develop Plans, Make Choices.”

The statistical information associated with the “Chattanooga Vision 2000” process was also cited in the following source: a detailed overview of Chattanooga community revitalization efforts in the Boundary Crossers Case Study titled “Chattanooga: The Sustainable City”; however, this overview is no longer accessible via the Internet (it was accessible for some time at the website of the James MacGregor Burns Academy of Leadership, at the University of Maryland, College Park). Here is a list of other, shorter overviews of the “Vision 2000” process: a) Sustainable Communities Network Case Study “Chattanooga: A City Worth Watching” at http://www.sustainable.org/casestudies/tennessee/TN_af_chattanooga.html) b) Best Manufacturing Practices Center of Excellence “Best Practice: Chattanooga Venture/Community Vision” at http://www.bmpcoe.org/bestpractices/internal/chatt/chatt_8.html) c) Project for Public Spaces “The Chattanooga Riverpark: Transforming a City and its Economy” at http://www.pps.org/topics/success/success_chattanooga) d) the University of Michigan’s Community Economic Adjustment Program “A Civic Vignette: The Chattanooga Story” at <http://www.irlee.umich.edu/ceap/chattanooga.html>) (All confirmed December 25, 2009)

There are additional publications which briefly cite the above mentioned statistics, and which are accessible via the Internet. One example is “The Next Form of Democracy: How Expert Rule is Giving Way to Shared Governance... and why politics will never be the same” by Matt Leighninger Vanderbilt University Press 2006 p. 16 (accessible through google books at http://books.google.com/books?id=m_ZF8JZydPQC&printsec=frontcover&dq=the+next+form+of+democracy&cd=1#v=onepage&q=&f=false) (confirmed December 25, 2009)

Special Note: In the above mentioned book “The Next Form of Democracy...”, author Matt Leighninger offers perspective on the astounding success of the Chattanooga “Vision 2000” process by including the following commentary: “Many other communities followed Chattanooga’s example, but many of them stumbled because they failed to keep citizen and community organizations involved in implementing the visions. If a vision did not include measurable benchmarks, and specific commitments by people and organizations, it stood little chance of becoming reality.” (p. 16) (And *this commentary was footnoted*, as a general reference to the book “Results That Matter: Improving Communities by Engaging Citizens, Measuring Performance, and Getting Things Done” by Paul D. Epstein, et al. Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, 2006)

4. From a Chapter titled “An Outline Programmed of Value-Oriented Education and Relevant Pedagogical Suggestions”, (at <http://www.education.nic.in/cd50years/r/2Q/92/2Q920501.htm>) which is part of an Internet document titled “Report of the Working Group to Review Teachers’ Training Programme (in the light of the need for value-orientation)”.

“The main body of the report (was) compiled from a paper on “The Teacher and His Task” by Prof V. S. Jha and other papers written by Prof. Kireet Joshi which were presented to the Group and adopted unanimously for inclusion in the main body of the report.” (from “Introduction” to above mentioned ‘... Working Group...’ document, at <http://www.education.nic.in/cd50years/r/2Q/92/2Q920101.htm> , see last paragraph)

The Government of India, in their Order No. F. 13-4/80-Schools 3, dated 23rd May, 1981 (Appendix-A of the above report) constituted (the) Working Group to review the teacher training programmes with a view to promoting value-education, (from “Introduction” to above mentioned ‘... Working Group...’ document, at <http://www.education.nic.in/cd50years/r/2Q/92/2Q920101.htm> , see paragraph 5) (all source references mentioned in this Note #4 confirmed February 10, 2010)

5. From the “World Report on Violence and Health” (World Health Organization Geneva 2002) in Chapter 9 “The Way Forward: Recommendations for Action” p. 254 (at <http://whqlibdoc.who.int/hq/2002/9241545615.pdf>) (Confirmed October 20, 2009)

6. Source References for the 9 Quotes in #30

a) B.K.S. Iyengar in “*Light on the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*” Thorsons San Francisco p. 124

b) Worldwatch Institute “*State of the World 2004: Special Focus—The Consumer Society*” W.W. Norton and Company January, 2004 p. 36-37

c) J.C. Kumarappa in “*Why the Village Movement?*” Akhil Bharat Sarva Seva Sangh Rajchat, Kashi 1960 p. 78

d) J.C. Kumarappa in “*Why the Village Movement?*” Akhil Bharat Sarva Seva Sangh Rajchat, Kashi 1960 p. 79

e) Worldwatch Institute “*State of the World 2004: Special Focus—The Consumer Society*” W.W. Norton and Company January, 2004 p. 36-37

f) This is one example of a definition of “Second Law” efficiency. One source which supports this definition is as follows: “Second Law efficiency: The ratio of First Law thermodynamic efficiency to its maximum theoretically possible value; equivalently, the ratio of the least available work that could have done the job to the actual available work used to do the job.” From Amory B. Lovins [A.B. Lovins, "Energy Efficiency, Taxonomic Overview," Encyclopedia of Energy 2:383-401 (2004), 6 vols., San Diego and Oxford (UK)] Accessible on the Internet at http://www.rmi.org/images/PDFs/Energy/E04-02_EnergyEffTax.pdf (see p. 3) (Accessed August 23, 2007)

g) Lao Tzu from “*Tao Te Ching*” Chapter 57 Gia-fu Feng and Jane English, translators Vintage Books New York 1989

h) Lao Tzu from “*Te-Tao Ching*” Chapter 53 Robert G. Hendricks, translator Ballantine Books New York 1989

i) This writer

7. There is an element of faith and philosophy in this willingness (if necessary) to “slow or discontinue” development of The IPCR Initiative (if necessary), which is a reflection of this writers interpretation of the teachings of Sri Sathya Sai Baba—and this writers’ interpretation of the following concept: “There is an estrangement present between elements that naturally belong together. Do not try to reunify the situation with force. Allow things to return to a state of accord naturally, as they will.”] [Quote from Hexagram #38 (“Contradiction”) in *The I Ching Workbook (An Interpretation with Commentary)* by R.L. Wing Main Street Books (Spi Edition) 1978

8. D. T. Suzuki in “Essays in Zen Buddhism (1st Series)” Grove Press