

APRIL 2024: GIANT GENTLENESS

GUIDE FOR SPIRITUAL LIVING  
SCIENCE OF MIND<sup>®</sup>

*Giant  
Gentleness*

Being a Safe Place

A Gentle, Loving Presence

The Struggle Is Real

**A New Thought  
Perspective on Climate**

BROUGHT TO YOU BY



*Centers for*

*Spiritual Living™*

## OUR GIFTED CONTRIBUTORS

**REV. DR. DAVID ALEXANDER** is the spiritual director of Spiritual Living Center Atlanta and a longtime leader in the New Thought movement. He's the author of "Attained by All: A Case for New Thought Liberation Theology." Find his books and more at [RevDavidAlexander.com](http://RevDavidAlexander.com).



**DIANA J. ENSIGN, J.D.**, is an award-winning author. Her recent book, "Heart Guide: True Stories of Grief and Healing," shares guidance for people who are grieving. "Traveling Spirit: Daily Tools for Your Life's Journey" focuses on life's challenges. Visit her at [DianaEnsign.com](http://DianaEnsign.com).



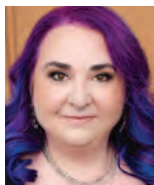
**ERNEST HOLMES** was a gifted scholar with an extensive knowledge of the world's spiritual philosophies, an expert in spiritual psychology and the founder of the Religious Science movement and Science of Mind magazine. Visit [ScienceOfMindArchives.com](http://ScienceOfMindArchives.com) for more on Holmes.



**REV. DR. MICHELLE MEDRANO** has been a bedrock in the New Thought movement for more than four decades, establishing herself as a force for good with an intense passion for teaching and sharing her wisdom. Medrano today is a lead minister at Mile Hi Church in Lakewood, Colorado.



**REV. LAUREN MARTIN** works with CSL Education to create study guides for Spiritual Living Circles and serves as the chair of CSL's Global Heart of Peace Initiative. Her passion is helping people move through trauma by so they can live a truly authentic, joy-filled life. Visit [RevLauren.com](http://RevLauren.com).

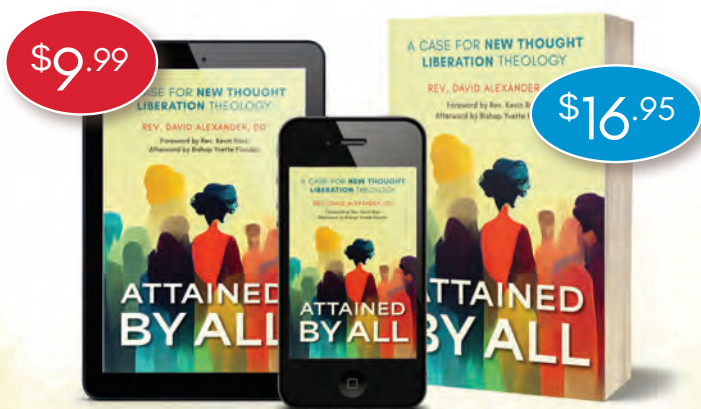


# A CASE FOR NEW THOUGHT LIBERATION THEOLOGY

REV. DAVID ALEXANDER, DD

Foreword by Rev. Kevin Ross

Afterword by Bishop Yvette Flunder



E-BOOK

PAPERBACK

With keen insight, Rev. Dr. David Alexander gives us a comprehensive analysis on how to participate in spiritually grounded social justice activism from a place of faith, not fear. This book serves as a tapestry of the past, an anchor for the present and beacon for the future.

It calls us up from complacency and calls us out of complicity to actively engage in ushering in the Beloved Community. It is well worth the read.

— REV. DEBORAH L. JOHNSON,  
*author of "The Sacred YES" and "Your Deepest Intent"*

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OUR RELATIONSHIP  
TO THE WHOLE:

*A New Thought  
Perspective on Climate*

*Photo by Paul Shuang*

Climate change and all that is attached to it is a defining crisis of our era. This crisis transcends the boundaries of science and politics, permeating the very fabric of human existence in both debate and consequence. Beyond the measurable impacts on ecosystems and economies, and affecting nearly every other aspect of our global community, climate change poses profound questions about our relationship with the Earth, with each other and with our responsibilities to future generations.

Some wage the debate with passion and vigor. For others, the debate is long over and further entertaining a debate quickly erodes the critical period for action. For them, the science is clear, the time to act well past due. In both cases, our relationship to the issue clearly reveals the consciousness behind it. Understanding that relationship to consciousness is critical for finding real and lasting solutions and may well be the key to moving beyond a polarized divide. It's time to have a new thought about our Mother Earth.

Whether we know it or not, the world revolves on the stories we tell ourselves. Most of us in this philosophy likely know this about ourselves — that the key to transforming, healing and revealing greater good in our lives begins with telling a bigger and better story about ourselves, a story that reframes what is possible.

These stories make up the consciousness we hold about ourselves. We support our new stories, not just with affirmations and a positive mindset, but with practical action steps that demonstrate our affirmation, all the while critically examining embedded beliefs that stand in the way of or contradict our desired results.

When life presents us with feedback by means of challenges, stressors and contradictions, we know it's time to examine more closely the stories we tell, as these are often a subconscious clue to the results we are getting.

Well, the feedback from Mother Earth begs for a critical examination of the stories we tell ourselves about our relationship to and with her.

### *Challenging the Paradigm*

For far too long, the modern world viewed nature as an unlimited resource to use for its progress, profit and gain, with limited regulation or moderation. If infinite and unlimited good is at our command, then what need do we have for a balanced approach?

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Rapid industrialization and technological advancements enabled unprecedented conveniences, but at the cost of severing our spiritual connection with the environment. In short, humans tend to treat Mother Nature as an object of creation rather than a subject of it.

Numerous spiritual traditions regard the Earth as sacred, viewing nature as a manifestation of the Divine. Indigenous cultures understand themselves to be stewards rather than owners of the land, emphasizing a responsibility to preserve the delicate balance of ecosystems. This perspective challenges the prevailing paradigm that sees the natural world as a mere resource to exploit.

Incorporating these spiritual principles into our approach to climate change could inspire a profound shift in behavior. Instead of viewing the Earth solely through economic lenses, adopting a stewardship mentality compels us to consider the well-being of the planet as a fundamental ethical duty and keeps us in right relationship to the feedback we receive every day.

## *How the Crisis Manifests*

As we witnessed for ourselves, 2023 saw some of the hottest temperatures on record, along with the attendant escalating spikes in natural disasters. One of the most glaring indicators of the climate crisis is the rise in global temperatures. According to data from NASA and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the Earth's average surface temperature has increased by approximately 1.18 degrees Celsius (2.12 degrees Fahrenheit) since the late 19th century. This warming trend is primarily attributed to human activities, such as burning fossil fuels and deforestation.

The climate crisis manifests in more frequent and severe extreme weather events. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change reports a worldwide increase in the frequency and intensity of heatwaves, storms, floods and wildfires. These events not only pose immediate threats to human lives and property, but they also create long-term consequences for ecosystems, agriculture and water resources.

The polar regions experience dramatic changes due to global warming. Satellite observations reveal a rapid decline in the extent and thickness of Arctic sea ice. As Greenland and Antarctica lose ice at an alarming rate, sea levels rise. Since the early 20th century, global sea levels have risen by about 8 to 9 inches (20 to 23 centimeters),

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with projections indicating accelerated increases in the coming decades.

The oceans act as a buffer against climate change, absorbing excess carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. However, this process leads to ocean acidification. The acidity of surface ocean waters has increased by about 30% since the Industrial Revolution, threatening marine life, particularly organisms with calcium carbonate shells, such as corals and shellfish.

The climate crisis is inextricably linked to a staggering loss of biodiversity. The World Wildlife Fund reports that climate change is a key driver of habitat loss, putting countless species at risk of extinction. Earth.org reports that 21 species became extinct in 2023 alone, including birds, mussels, fish and a mammal. The warming climate alters ecosystems and disrupts the delicate balance of biodiversity, with cascading effects on food chains and ecosystems.

Human activities, primarily burning fossil fuels and deforestation, are major contributors to the increase in greenhouse gas emissions. According to the Global Carbon Project, carbon dioxide emissions reached a record high in 2019, with an estimated 36.7 billion metric



*Hope for the future: A charging station for electric vehicles in a church parking lot*

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tons released into the atmosphere. While there have been some efforts to reduce emissions, the current trajectory indicates a pressing need for more ambitious and comprehensive strategies.

In late November 2023, nearly 200 countries sent representatives to a global climate summit, called COP28, in Dubai. Of the many headlines from that gathering was a strong commitment to phasing out dependence on fossil fuels, which account for 75% of global warming.

The climate crisis exacerbates existing social and economic inequalities, as well as impacting the natural world. Vulnerable communities — often marginalized populations of Black and Brown people, the least responsible for greenhouse gas emissions — bear the brunt of climate-related disasters.

The World Bank estimates that by 2050, the impacts of climate change could force more than 140 million people to migrate within their own countries, leading to increased competition for resources and potential conflicts.

## *Our Destiny, Informed by Our Faith*

In the face of this stark reality, what does our faith tell us about who we are? Are we free and independent beings with unlimited access to a Creative Intelligence that always meets our individual needs, therefore removing our need to consider the consequences suffered by others? Or are we interconnected beings, each a manifestation of the One and thereby inextricably woven together into a single garment of destiny?

I believe we are all connected — and that includes the Earth and her resources. While the creativity of Infinite Intelligence has no limit, our finite resources, by definition, have limits. We can use the infinite creativity to maximize renewable, resourceful and responsible means of meeting our needs, not just as a responsible act but as one that demonstrates our relationship to all creation.

But the shift required to actualize this balanced and holistic relationship necessitates a mindfulness we have yet to see in humanity on a large scale. Integrated into our spiritual practice must be a presencing of our relationship to the whole that directly impacts our behavior and choices. If we are indeed one with all that is, then assessing our carbon footprint on a regular basis can and should be



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part of our spiritual walk. Mindful connection in thought leads to mindful actions and choices.

Meanwhile, we should take time to affirm that we are not alone, that day by day, more and more are joining in a consciousness of oneness, care and stewardship of the Earth, beginning with their own actions.

## *Centers for Spiritual Living Joins the Efforts to Battle Climate Change*

The U.S. Climate Action Summit, taking place April 22-28, 2024, is set to be one of the most influential convening of climate leaders from the business, government and nonprofit sectors, coming together in Washington, D.C., to tackle the roadblocks to effective climate action.

Centers for Spiritual Living developed a strategic alliance partnership with World Systems Solutions and the Global Action Coalition. We are a participating member of the United Nations' Climate Emergency Response Forum (CERF).

CERF held its first gathering in 2023, during which CSL was invited to the table as a strategic partner, joining a diverse group of people who employed a whole-systems approach to address the meta-crisis threatening our planet.

Instead of merely enumerating problems, CERF participants put aside debate and competition, focusing instead on finding the capacities (spiritual, mental and physical) to generate sustainable solutions. Among the groups represented were technology, military, AI, business, Indigenous cultures, spiritual leaders, climate experts, women's empowerment advocates, diplomats, luminaries, artists and politicians. This diversity epitomized the forum's commitment to fostering a rich and inclusive dialogue to seek global climate solutions.

The new story we must tell says that solutions and the capacity to bring them forward do exist, because the Infinite Intelligence of the universe facilitates Itself in, through and as you and me. We each play a significant part in a global shift in consciousness and re-harmonizing humanity with nature in a way that reveals the beauty and balance of our oneness.

What part will you play in your community, neighborhood and places of influence? ☸



Established by the United Nations General Assembly in 2005, the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) enables humanitarian responders to deliver life-saving assistance whenever and wherever crises, including environmental crises, strike.

From wildfires to floods, earthquakes to hurricanes, CERF's country teams immediately organize coordinated and prioritized responses. The organization and its partners help scale up and sustain relief operations to avoid critical gaps when no other funding is available.

According to CERF's website, since its inception in 2006, 126 U.N. member states and observers, as well as regional governments, corporate donors, foundations and individuals, made it possible to deliver more than \$5.5 billion in life-saving assistance to people in more than 100 countries and territories.

As Rev. Dr. David Alexander explains in his article beginning on page 10 in this issue, Centers for Spiritual Living is a participating member of CERF. When CERF held its first gathering in 2023, they invited CSL to the table as a strategic partner, joining a diverse group of people who employed a whole-systems approach to address the meta-crisis threatening our planet.

CERF invites to the table an array of groups, institutions and individuals from every corner of society. From the military to businesses, climate experts to diplomats, spiritual leaders to luminaries, CERF's commitment to diversity fosters an inclusive dialogue to solve the crisis facing our planet.

At the request of UN Member States and private donors, CERF established the Performance and Accountability Framework (PAF) delineating clear accountability mechanisms and reporting process for the general trust fund. The framework is used to clarify accountability, performance and management expectations among different actors and around a set of agreed outputs, outcomes and impacts.

Find all of this information and more at [CERF.UN.org](https://cerf.un.org). ☘