



The Circle

Volume XVIII Issue 2 Spring 2009

Leadership...from what is, to what is possible

Being a blessing on the earth is not easy. It takes an ongoing commitment to and faith in a reality that is mostly invisible. Much of this commitment is to the self—to the inner reconstruction of perceptions, beliefs, images—ultimately, evolving one's state of reality. To live more peace, more joy, more justice (and many other dynamic experiences of the awakened spirit) requires patience and good habit. Often, we are called to dance with the dark and sometimes conflicting emotions. We find ourselves at the edge about to leap, staring into the gaping gap between what is possible and what is. Struggling to return sanctity, beauty and reverence to our daily interactions, we meet resistance.

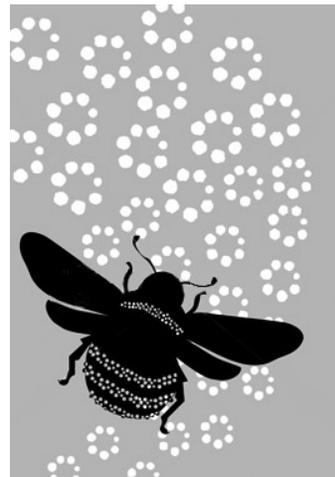
This is hardly surprising, as the reality being constructed for us (and not necessarily on our behalf) tells a different story. No longer around the campfire, today's tellers (media conglomerates- tv, movies, newspapers, etc.) tell the same tales over and over from narrowed perspectives. Selling products and monolithic identities, they indulge in stories that shock and dull the senses, creating "entertainment" out of tragedy and apathy. The emotional tones of CNN et al. are typically of judgement, fear, isolation, and anxiety--to name a few. Where can we turn...? Where can we find solace...?

We seek a better future. Many of us seek an end to various forms of systemic insanity issued from the people who make decisions on our behalf: our leaders. And what is the state of our political leaders in Canada? Hmmmm...Excuse us, while we yawn over the memory of last fall's federal election...the one that evoked one of the lowest voter turn-outs in Canadian history. Inspiring? Hardly. Showing innovation? Not a bit. Hopeful? Nope. To make matters worse, our lack-lustre election was juxtaposed against the wildly exciting, hope-filled, charismatic election in the United States, causing many Canadians to cry out "where is our Barack?" And for that matter, we'd like to add, "where is our Michelle?" This is not to say that the Obamas have all the answers to the world's crises, what they have is the leadership to inspire others to get involved, to participate in the process, to share their gifts, to contribute to the common good. The Obamas got people moving and shaking!

We are hungry for leadership in our culture and at the same time, inside our selves. Society is reassessing the old way of structuring our systems and is collecting knowledge about what it could mean to be a leader in our time—about what is possible, right here, right now. Each of us is leading by engaging and being our most authentic self and sharing in the development of our shiniest qualities. From a spiritual feminist perspective, good

leadership can radiate as: holistic vision, planetary reverence, tenacious honesty, courageous every-day action, creative will, and daring to tell our stories. We can practise embodying these qualities while these ideas are ever-evolving. We can wield our creative power and shatter the barriers that hold women back. We don't need to rely on what is, but what is possible and we don't need to feel alone in the struggle. We believe the potency of leadership lies in the collective not the singular. We all must do our part.

As spiritual creatures, we must contend with an osmotic relationship with a polluted world; rubbish is coming at us from many directions. But with the fire-force of the imagination and the support of a long history of ancestors who have already done excellent work for us, our power is more potent than we believe. What's more, we have the inspiration of (and an obligation to) the future unborn, who are just a twinkle in the cosmos eye. As ancestors of future generations, we have a job to do.



We can lead ourselves from the edge of our experiences to effect changes. These changes carry subtle influences that, over time, reshape systems. Systems are hives of activity and we are the worker bees. We can also challenge leaders in the system, political and otherwise, to authentically lead. We can put it to our politicians that honesty and respect need to be the baseline level of interaction in political forums. They can be required to treat the proceedings as what they are: the sacred

space in which the future of the future is being shaped. North American indigenous wisdom teaches that we are the caretakers for seven generations forward. Our laws would be well-obliged to take from their plentied wisdom.

We want a better world for our children-great and greater, grand and grander. We desire a bountiful future, full of wisdom, grace, health and peace. Peace is not a dream of the naive. It is the birthright of every person. It is a part of the Commons. If we want the world truly led to better places, we are going to have to rise up and lead. The future is calling us forward.



Being a Blessing on the Earth

Stories and tips for inspiring action:

🌍 **Go With the Flow!** Each year, approximately 12 billion pads and 7 billion tampons are dumped into the North American environment. More than 170,000 tampon applicators were collected along U.S.

coastal areas between 1998 and 1999 (contributing to the annual death toll of 2 million seabirds and 100 000 marine mammals who die from swallowing plastic). Once pads hit the landfill, it takes approximately 500 years to partially biodegrade. Tampons and pads are not only bad for our external environment but our internal one as well. Most tampons and pads contain bleaches, surfactants, adhesives and additives with the most studied toxin being Dioxin (created through the bleaching process) which is a known carcinogen and has been linked to the impairment of liver function and depresses human immune systems. In landfills, many of these substances can leach into the environment (groundwater, streams and lakes) causing serious pollution and health concerns. Add Toxic Shock Syndrome (TSS) into these health risks and managing our natural flow becomes an exercise in contamination (ourselves and the environment). This “white-washing” of our menstrual cycles also creates a profound spiritual or psychological effect: that women and our natural processes are dirty, leading to women often harbouring feelings of shame, disgust and secrecy around their periods. The solution: 1. Reclaim your connection with your body. Our menstrual cycle is one of the core human functions that allows for the creation of life and at one time was considered sacred, magical and powerful. Do a ritual that reclaims this sacred time of the month. Call The Circle 519-432-8353 ext. 28288 if you'd like ideas or join us for our Red Tent Ritual in June (see back page for details). 2. Go with reusable pads. For some funky fabrics, laundering tips, etc., visit www.newmoonpads.com 3. Use a Menstrual Cup. A Menstrual cup is worn internally (like a tampon) and collects menstrual flow. They are made of silicon, therefore eliminating the risk of: fibres that can weave into your uterine wall (as happens with tampons), TSS and chemicals being absorbed into your body. Visit www.divacup.com for more information.

🌍 **Terminate This!** We are all familiar with the generative cycle of nature: birth, growth, death and rebirth. During this spring season, what better time is there to admire the Earth's diverse flora and acknowledge the power and beauty of the seed? Since the dawn of agriculture thousands of years ago, humanity has been able to rely on the capacity for seeds to be saved, replanted and grown to nourish themselves, their families, their communities and their livestock year after year. Today, in this era of corporate greed, this fundamental trait of seeds— to grow into their total potential, a plant— is at risk

from terminator technology. What is Terminator? Before any visions of Arnold Schwarzenegger begin playing in your mind, Terminator Technology (owned by Monsanto and also known as Genetic Use Restriction Technology (GURTs) or “suicide seeds”) genetically engineers plants to produce sterile seeds at harvest. It was developed by the multinational seed/ agrochemical industry and the United States government to prevent farmers from re-planting harvested seed and force farmers to buy seed each season instead. According to BanTerminator.org “Canadian farms of all sizes save seeds and this practice is growing as the farm income crisis gets worse each year. Across the world, over 1.4 billion people, primarily small-scale farming families in the developing world, depend on farm-saved seed as their primary seed source...If Canadian farmers were forced to buy Terminator seeds every year, the cost would be crippling. For example, an estimated 90% of Canadian wheat is planted with saved seed – in total, the annual cost to buy this seed would be \$95 million dollars.” At the same time, the risk due to cross-pollination, of contaminating our existing reproductive crops is a scary prospect. Terminator seeds have not yet been field-tested or commercialized.

Now is the time to act! NDP's Agriculture Critic Alex Atamanenko (BC) re-introduced his Private Member's Bill C-353, to ban terminator seed technology in Canada. Here is how you can help (thanks to the Canadian Biotechnology Action Network for these tips):

1. Send an instant email at <http://www.cban.ca/terminatoraction>
2. Organizations can endorse the call for a ban: go to <http://www.banterminator.org/endorse>
3. Write a personalized letter. Remember: postage is free to your elected officials! You can use your postal code to search for your MP at <http://www.parl.gc.ca> (Note: The New Democratic Party and the Bloc Québécois already support a Ban on Terminator in Canada.) For more information see <http://www.cban.ca/terminator>
4. For more information: <http://www.cban.ca/terminator> or <http://www.banterminator.org>

🌍 **It's in the Heir!** Stand against GE foods and protect our bio-diversity and food security by collecting seeds and growing food and foliage from heirloom varieties. According to VictorySeeds.com “Since our society has moved so far away from its agrarian roots, educating people is critically important. If we do not fundamentally understand agricultural processes, we can only superficially grasp the gravity of the threats to our food supply. It must be understood that diversity of available plant varieties is important to all of us. We must ensure that a repeat of the Irish Potato Famine never again happens.” For Heirloom Seeds in Canada, visit your local gardening centre or www.saltspringseeds.com.



Just a Click Away

Visit The Circle's website for links to the below webpages: www.brescia.uwo.ca/thecircle/links.htm

www.cbc.ca/tapestry/archives.html - Listen to **Mary Condren** interviewed on the 15 March episode of **CBC's Tapestry** with Mary Hynes entitled "Brigit: Harbinger of Spring." Tapestry is a weekly radio program exploring spirituality, religion and the search for meaning. In this interview, Mary Condren discusses Brigit traditions in Ireland, the nature of the Irish mind and gives a shout out to The Circle and "the very fine group of women who invited her to come" to Canada. Click on the show title to access the sound file; this podcast is also accessible through iTunes.

www.enlightennext.org/magazine/women/ - invites you to become part of the emergence of this new women's liberation—one deeply grounded in an evolutionary spirituality. Here, you can experience the spiritual wisdom of contemporary women mystics and explore with scholars, scientists, activists, and anthropologists the bold vistas this new feminism holds for women—and men—everywhere. Featuring articles written by Marion Woodman, Jean Houston, Mary Daly, Z. Budapest and other favourites!

www.mybrescia.com - check out Brescia's new microsite designed specifically for young women students and that highlights Brescia's unique campus, programs and features. Funky, fresh and hip, this site also contains the answers to those questions a high school student (or a mature student) might have about attending Brescia for the first time. Are you interested in being a part of Canada's only women's university? Surf on over!

www.shamelessmag.com— this website and magazine is for "girls who get it." Featuring articles on the arts, culture and current events, Shameless is Canada's independent voice for smart, strong, sassy young women. It was also given an award for the "Best Canadian Feminist Blog" at the Canadian F-Word Awards. For "older" websurfers out there, this site has plenty to offer with many enjoyable profiles on women who are making a difference, media commentary and more.

Blessed Be the Earth

Blessed be the earth
that we may remember her
sacredness
Praise her every gift.
Snow fall
Water drop
Let sun shine!
Blessed be the earth
that we may act in respect
out of our re-membrance
In reverence of her beauty
Make sacred every step.

Blessed be the earth
that her warriors may step
forward
show the way
to a better walk
A lighter step
That her protectors may kindle
their creative energies
and set forth into motion
re-new-awe-able plans
of energy, water, air, soil
energy water, air soil

These her gifts
We receive in abundance
And are so blessed!
Let the protectors protect
The earth warriors rise
In all of us this evening.

- Jennifer Hanke
**written for an event at The Circle*



The Circle would like to express their deep gratitude to
Jill Payne and Lynette Richards

for their many years at The Circle. Both women have volunteered for our Editorial and Planning Circles over the years. Their dedication and commitment to our centre has been a tremendous gift.



The Circle



The Circle affirms
the experiences and hopes
of women, and
the creative process we
choose
to explore and mirror the
sacred in our lives.

The Circle is a space
that can be entered actively
and imaginatively
with limitless possibilities for
involvement, where
the seed of the sacred
is released, shared and
celebrated
as power for transformation
and change.

Planning Circle

Frances Abley
Carolyn Corcoran
Sheila Horrell
Brenda Hutton
Julie Lee
Paula Marcotte
Kim Young Milani

Editorial Circle

Jennifer Hanke
Karen Huiberts
Jennifer White
Kim Young Milani

Dynamikos

Frances Abley
Mary Hagan
Karen Huiberts
Joanne Krandall
Julie Lee
Kim Young Milani
Elizabeth Zarnoweicki

Brigit Circle

Frances Abley
Cheryl Ebel
Andrea Eichholzer
Ruth Douthwright
Ardath Finnbogason-Hill
Mary Hagan
Pat Mooney
Jennifer White
Kim Young Milani

The Circle Staff

Cait Bionda
Mandy Leung
Vivian Lo
Miranda Payne
Kim Young Milani

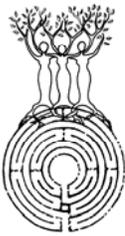
Upcoming Events at The Circle...



Open Circle...ritual, spirituality, activism and the mystical experience of women gathered to reflect on the *sacred in our lives*.
Last Wednesday of the month, Merici Lounge, Brescia, 7:30 p.m. Members: free, Non-members: \$2. **All Women Welcome!**

29 April
27 May
24 June

Opening to Spring: Connecting with the Sacred in Nature
Travelling on Faith
Earth Wisdom: Power of the Elements



Celebrating Maiden, Mother & Crone: A Red Tent Ritual

Sunday 7 June, 7:30 pm

Over a decade has passed since Anne Diamant wrote *The Red Tent* and gave us a gift. Beyond religion, race or creed, the story of the Red Tent stands as a powerful symbol of women gathering in community to hold and celebrate the sacred feminine. The Circle will symbolically erect a Red Tent as an invitation for women and girls to gather and share how maiden, mother, and crone lives in each of us and celebrate the life cycles with ritual and a labyrinth walk. Come into the tent with us and re-member.

Gather in the Brescia Auditorium; Free Will Donation; Free Parking.
RSVP to 519-432-8353 x28288 or circle@uwo.ca



Brigid Festival 2010

with Dr. Mary Condren

Friday 19 February - Sunday 21 February 2010

Stay tuned for our theme and programming.

Registration will open on 31 October 2009
Space is limited.

Breakfast for Bursaries

Friday 23 October 2009, 7:00 am - 9:00 am

London Convention Centre, \$75.00

The 8th annual Breakfast for Bursaries is an event not to miss!
Our featured guest speaker is **Executive Director and Founder of War Child Canada, Dr. Samantha Nutt**.

Committed to peace, human rights and social justice, her ambition has always been to help war-affected women and children. Dr. Nutt has been recognized by Maclean's magazine as one of "12 Canadians Making a Difference" as well as Hello! Canada's "Ten Outstanding Canadian Women". Time magazine declared her as "One of Canada's Five Leading Activists" and she was honoured with the Globe and Mail's "Top 40 Under 40" award. Proceeds from this event go to the Eleanore Donnelly Bursary Fund for women in financial need to attain a university education at Brescia. Charitable tax receipts will be issued for the maximum allowable amount. Info & Tickets: 519.432.8353 ext. 28446 or brescia.foundation@uwo.ca

***If you would like to enjoy the breakfast with other Circle members, please request to be seated at "The Circle table(s)".*



Please note that all Circle & Brescia events are **fragrance free**.

...and beyond

New Newsletter Schedule: April, August & December

Stained Glass Classes & Workshops - Lynette Richards at Rose Window Stained Glass, www.rose-window.com or 519-673-4976.

29 April - Jennifer White In Concert-Celtic Composer, Harpist & Storyteller; 7pm, Landon Library, tkts: \$10 (adv.), \$12 (@ door). Info: www.knockgraston.com or 519-438-3924.

1-3 May - Beltane hosted by Wise Woman Events; Lambton Centre, Forest, ON, \$170.00 (incl. 2 nights cabin accommodation, 6 meals, 5 snacks, 4 seminars/workshops, ritual & welcome gift. Info & registration: erunciman@hay.net, 519-228-7632

2-3 May - Befriending Our Defences: Emotional Intelligence in Action, with Liz White, psychodrama trainer and therapist, Sat.: 9:30am-5:00pm & Sun.: 9:30am-1:00pm, Stambourne Farm, St. Mary's, Sliding Scale: \$140-\$170, Info: www.lizwhiteinaction.com, registration: Helena @ 519-266-9400.

3 May - Falling Into Spring Dance Workshops, with Ruth Douthwright & Sally Morgan, Lotus Centre, 5-9pm, \$45. Info: 519-204-1958 or alldanceproject@gmail.com. *Pre-registration required 10 days in advance. Workshops also available on 19 April & 31 May.

7 May - Celebrate Every Body -Dinner & Fashion Show presented by Hope's Garden Eating Disorder Support & Resource Centre, 6:30-9:00pm, Hellenic Community Centre, 133 Southdale Rd. West; \$69/tkt or \$483/table of 8; price incl. 3

course meal & gift bag valued @ \$100.

7-9 May- The Sunlight Zone Aerial Acrobatics and Dance Submersion, 8pm, London City Music Theatre, 900 King St. \$29, tkts: londocitymusictheatre.com or 519-432-0888

16 May - Synergy-In-Motion's "Money Class," 1-5pm, Synergy In Motion Studio, 305 Commissioners Rd.W., \$100, This class is for those of you who are ready for more ease with money, whether you have it or lack it. Info & Reg: 519-690-1479.

28-29 May- Safe, Respectful and Inclusive Workplaces: Stakeholders and Strategies with keynote speaker **Anita Hill**, London Convention Centre, \$350 (until 30 April), \$425 (after 30 April), \$125 (dinner & keynote only), sponsored by the Centre for Research on Violence Against Women and Children.

19 June - Grand House Party VII, Women's Community House Fundraiser, Sounds of the 60s, 8pm, Grand Theatre. Info: 519-672-8800

30 May - Sexual Assault Awareness Month Closing Festival: BBQ, T-Shirt Making, Poetry, Music. Victoria Park, 12-4pm, Nia @ 3:30pm. Info: 519-439-0844 x26 or www.sacl.ca

4-5 July - Earth Wisdom: Power of the Elements, instruction, ritual, integration time, writing exercises, time alone in Nature and creative dialoguing; The Living Centre, \$275, Info & Registration: www.thelivingcentre.com or 519-652-9109.