

THE WINSTON CHURCHILL MEMORIAL TRUST OF AUSTRALIA.

Report of CEDAR PREST 2002 FELLOW
To study contemporary techniques for working in
community arts with a focus on Art Therapy and
Pain management.

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Signed Cedar Prest

Dated 15.02.03

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- The makers of all the labyrinth I walked.

A VERY BIG THANK YOU.

INTRODUCTION

Background to Art Therapy.

My interest in Art Therapy has grown out of my long involvement with Community Glass Projects in all sorts of communities. My first project at Parks Community Centre, 1979 Mansfield Park showed me the healing and community building process which grows with a community art project of longer duration. In 1993 there was a period of exploration of Art and Health with the midwives and mothers of Queen Victoria Hospital and the Port Adelaide Women's Centre. In 1994 I was accepted as a volunteer Art Therapist in the Pain Management team at Memorial Hospital. This demonstrated to me that involvement in the art process could block chronic pain messages, a small miracle. It led to a serious interest in the role of right brain art therapy in the treatment of chronic pain and terminal illness. After some reading research and reflection this became the jumping -off point for my decision to apply for this Churchill Fellowship and to University of Creation Spirituality, which teaches Art as Meditation Courses, holistically.

Background to the Labyrinth.

The labyrinth is an ancient waking meditational tool.

My first introduction and experience came, when I decided to invite friends to celebrate the New Millennium 2001 in a meaningful fashion by making and walking the traditional Chartres form of labyrinth in the Memorial Cemetery Park adjacent to my Church Studio in Kensington S.A. on New Years Eve.

Following the instructions by Melissa Gayle West in her book **Exploring the Labyrinth**, the pattern was temporarily laid down with pegged white nylon cord, on the lawn and the children placed lighted candles in decorated glass jars, around the circuitous pathway. After dark, we formed a circle around the edge and had a ritual leader open the wheel. The walk we took individually to the centre and back was beautifully fitting to the occasion, people had memorable experiences & I had a lot of feedback, asking for more!

I looked for more reading and purchased Dr. Lauren Artress' book **Walking a Sacred Path**. She is the Canon for Special Ministries at Grace Cathedral, San Francisco and founder of Veriditas – The Worldwide Labyrinth Project, and the instructor of Labyrinth Facilitating Courses. I decided I needed to become a facilitator so that I could help offer this healing tool in particular, to those living in hospices, hospitals and old peoples homes.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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Glass and Community Artist.

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Fellowship objective

To study contemporary techniques for working in community arts with a focus on practices which promote art as healing and which concentrate on the development of personal creative expression as a means of blocking chronic pain and increasing quality of life.

Fellowship highlights

1. The study of Art Therapy at the University of Creation Spirituality, Naropa, Oakland California campus. The different style and method of teaching Art as Meditation -a way of healing, wholeness and self empowerment, - so as to be able to help people confined to hospices, hospitals and old peoples homes to enjoy creativity and improve their quality of life. My ambition is to work collaboratively with these institutions to create beautiful meditational spaces. I believe that we need to provide support places for the preparation of death as a positive journey, and not let it be a fearful exit from life.

2. I also went to Grace Cathedral, San Francisco to take the Labyrinth Facilitators Course to become trained to spread this walking meditational tool into the gardens and courtyards of hospices, hospitals and old peoples homes. I believe it provides important private reflection time, encourages gentle exercise and restores enjoyment of the garden and a sense of connectivity with the earth, which is cut off when the person leaves their own home and beloved plants.

Findings

I believe that there is real need for the type of services, which I wish to offer to hospices, hospitals and old people's homes. It feels as if the time is right, for Australia to embrace the positive and cost effective use of Art Therapy and the labyrinth, in lifting the spirits and enjoyment of daily life, of those facing pain and death. At present it is not accepted that we need to support people to make a good journey from this life, and that we need to provide the "shut -ins" with facilities like meditation rooms and labyrinth to help support their spiritual progress, this is the work I will do.

PROGRAMME

SAN FRANCISCO & OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA

Enrol at University of Creation Spirituality,
2141 Broadway, Oakland CA 94612
For semester in Master of Liberal Arts programme
2nd Sept. – 13th December 2002

Subjects

Overview of Creation Spirituality
Creation Spirituality Intensive
Psyche, Soul and Spirit
Eco- Spirituality
The New Science and Cosmology
The Re invention of Work
Compassion Practicum
Hildegard of Bingen

Art Therapy Courses

Mask Making, Faces of the Soul
Painting as Creative Meditation
The Yoga of Sound
Drum time, Dream time Drama time
Creating Techno Cosmic Masses and Rituals
Photography and Social Justice
Universal Themes in Myths and Dreams
The Art of Ancestral Drama

Enrol in the Labyrinth Facilitators Course and Retreat at Grace Cathedral, 1100 California St., San Francisco CA 94108 on Friday 8th November – Tuesday 12th, inclusive.

Source, walk and document as many labyrinths as I can find in the area. (See attached list).

Make appointment to visit the Healing Courtyard at Marin County Hospital's Cancer Care Unit, Dec. 8th.

ART THERAPY FINDINGS

During my semester at the University of Creation Spirituality, I took as many Art as Meditation units as I could. I joined the team producing the Techno Cosmic mass monthly, so as to be involved in the multimedia facets of producing contemporary ritual.

Actually, because the Art as Meditation units covered a wide range of the arts, I am sure I benefited more than if I had just been able to concentrate on the Visual Arts. I was able to see different techniques of body, mind and soul teaching in action from the Yoga of Sound (music and voice chanting) to Drum time, Dreamtime Drama time (music and storytelling, enactment therapy) to Mask making, Faces of the Soul, (face casting, meditation & visualisation then decoration) The Art of Ancestral Drama (African storytelling and ancestral ritual), Photography and Social justice (the lives of street people), and Universal themes in Myths and Dreams (Group dream work).

It was M.C. Richards writings in **Centering**, which inspired me in the late seventies, and which caused her to be invited to develop the Art as Meditation Courses at the University by its founder Matthew Fox. She was the one I would have liked to observe, but she died in 2000. I was lucky enough to spend a day with her in October 1993, when she asked me to show her the Parks Community project, she was an inspiring woman.

Fortunately the school took videotapes of her last classes and so I did see her in action, albeit posthumously.

The way she taught has never been written into any Art School syllabus and her methods were without precedent. She had an intense honesty and frankness, and taught life lessons through the centering of creativity on self-acceptance and the exploration of changes.

M.C. 's classes as videoed, began with two lumps of clay per student. One was to be rolled around and pushed into an outside thing, a rock. Strong, and textured by the weather. The other was a fragile, shell like interior to be hollowed out and explored. People got lost pushing their thumbs around their clay and there was fun sharing what they had felt as they explored, and even some poetry! All classes sent students on a personal voyage of discovery. Play which used intuition and the senses rather than the brain. The whole body was often involved, as in the yoga of sound, where we moved and chanted to the Indian rhythms.

In the first week's intensive, we had a very multimedia afternoon class with Betty McAfee on Photography and Social justice. Now in her eighties, she has been associated with the University for twenty years, and was a close friend and associate of M.C. Richards. More than anyone else on Faculty, she had perfected the type of community empowering techniques I admire and I took every opportunity to visit her, listening and asking questions.

As a result of our interaction, she invited me to teach a segment on my Community Arts Projects, in her weeklong Art and Social Justice program for the Dr. of Ministry Students. She invited me to join the class and so I was enabled to experience her methods for a whole glorious week! Because I also volunteered as TA, I was able to help with the practical aspects of Multimedia presentation and further enhance my own presentation skills.

Her Photography Course sent us out onto the streets of downtown Oakland for two hours with a camera and roll of film to find the four paths of Creation Spirituality. Namely, via positiva eg something joyful, via negativa despair, black, broken. Via Creativa, a self-portrait in shop window or mirror, something beautiful, something moving. Via transformativa subjects suggesting hope and renewal The next day we talked about our experiences in finding the subjects and compared our results, celebrating the individual visions behind the lens.

During the first week, we also had an afternoon with Robert Rice, painter, printmaker, dancer & choreographer. He was senior faculty and had also taught with M.C. Richards. I spent several afternoons with him subsequently, and went to visit the Artworks project at Mt. Zion Hospital for the Ageing. on 6th Dec. This extraordinary individual initiated this program twenty years ago, and it is still thriving! And on funding which has to be sourced and applied for annually!

Artworks began with an outreach program to take artists into the homes of the elderly "shut-ins". Robert would go to visit and assess the individual personality and location. Eg Mrs S, 87, living in a 6th floor apartment in San Francisco. Has a piano, untuned, which she still likes to play a little. A part of the jazz era, she loved it. Robert has advertised for Artists who wish to earn money by taking their art to the elderly, on a regular basis. He goes to his source list and asks Brian to visit Mrs S and play jazz with her, and get the piano tuned. She really enjoys the afternoon and gets new enthusiasm for life through her favourite art. So storytellers, clowns, actors, painters and musicians go visiting regularly and both give and learn from the elders. Wonderfully positive friendships are formed, and some cultural history is not lost. What a creation!

The artists also go to the Hospital for the Ageing and arrange group events and performances with singing and acting.

Because the Art as Meditation, Painting unit got transferred to next semester, I sought out all the teachers of Visual Arts units and spent time

interviewing them about their methods, collecting and using their recommended books and I will teach a workshop on the weekend of March 15th to try out my knowledge with Australian students. I found other classes at the Sophia Centre and attended a Weekend (15-16th Nov.) with Michelle Cassou, who has been working to empower the creative soul in everybody for many years.

The Painting as Meditation teacher I sought out was Adriana Diaz. Herself a graduate of MC Richards, she has been teaching and developing her methods for twenty years. Her book **"Freeing the Creative Spirit: Drawing on the Power of Art to Tap the Magic and Wisdom Within"** is the best I have encountered and tried for myself. We talked about the use of these exercises with the more physically frail and challenged, and she generously shared newer exercises and ideas.

All the teaching methods I observed and experienced were concentrated on the individual development of personal creative expression. The beginning point is creating a secure, centered feeling for all those in the group, with a small ritual at the start of each class.

This connects each individual with the Creator, the beauty and wonder of creation and our role as Co-creators in the ongoing process. From that point, the exercise for the class will be started, sometimes stimulated by a visualisation meditation. This method puts each person directly in touch with their inmost visions and so there is no creative block about what to express. Compare our school experiences with eg. "Draw your holiday"- inspiration, blank! Or in the Maskmaking we paired off and were taken together through steps, cutting hospital bandage plaster into strips to fit our faces, creaming the skin with release agents and then applying the wet plaster to make a face mask. While it dried, we massaged our partners shoulders and hands. Decorating a cold white plaster face, which is your own could be literally very confronting. Kaleo had the most wonderful array of "Treasure boxes" of fabric, feathers, buttons, shells, leaves and trinkets. Everyone had FUN hunting through for things, which appealed to them to put on their mask. Then there was an assortment of easy to use creamy paints, some with lustre or glitter to cover that white. The room was a hive of activity! But to be fair, there were a couple of people afraid to start. Kaleo suggested that they use the inside as a secret cave instead and they were away. Both then flowed on to decorate the outside naturally.

LABYRINTH FACILITATOR FINDINGS



Rev.Dr. Lauren Artress extreme right

The labyrinth Facilitator's Course began with a two day Retreat on Friday 8th November 2002, using the Labyrinths at Grace Cathedral, San Francisco. Rev. Dr. Lauren Artress, Canon for Special Ministries at the Cathedral and originator of Veriditas, the worldwide labyrinth project officiated.

This woman, who dared to move the chairs off the twelfth century pattern in the marble floor of Chartres Cathedral, to walk it with friends, is now dedicated to "peppering the planet with labyrinths". The movement is going from strength to strength, as this ancient walking meditational tool is speaking to the spiritual needs of many, in our rather frenetic society. A way of calming and centering, it has proven especially beneficial to cancer sufferers and many busy people who just need to slow down any day, or on retreat.

A visit to the website www.gracecathedral.org will show the hive of activity that is Veriditas. There are maps and lists of labyrinths and all the support systems of events, teaching and marketing.

I have described in the Introduction how I came to get involved, and like Lauren it has become a passion to share the benefits with others. My vision of my future work is taking the labyrinth to hospices, hospitals and

old peoples homes so that these people can have access to this wonderful healing and centering tool.

Our course began with a two-day retreat around the Cathedral's two labyrinths. We all introduced ourselves and gave our reasons for joining, we were taught about the history of the labyrinth and its uses in different cultures. The meditational tool was introduced and ways to walk the path explained. Things like removing your shoes and quietening the mind, centering yourself before you step onto the one winding path. Take a problem, question, or prayer with you into the centre. Stay there quietly praying and when ready return out back to the world, holding the wisdom gained through the experience.

We used the outdoor terrazzo model on the second morning. That evening, after a wonderful shared meal, we went over to the candlelit cathedral where a musician was quietly playing. This was one of the monthly Friday evenings when the labyrinth is open to the public in this way, 6pm –9pm. We followed Lauren around the Cathedral aisles with a lighted candle, to place for ourselves and joined the other pilgrims to walk this ancient path. The atmosphere was wonderful, a proper time and space to reflect!

Sunday was free to join the church services and further reflect and experience the labyrinths. Monday and Tuesday were intense training days, in the well appointed conference centre. We were taken into all aspects. Choosing a good site, building methods, styles. The making and use of the canvas portable model for workshopping with new groups.

- How to introduce the subject and give the experience.
- Accompaniments like candles, incense, and types of music including bells.
- How to help a group to organise themselves. The resources available, books, videos, CD's, finger labyrinth, stamps and T-shirts. The Cathedral shop is well organised and stocked.

Throughout we had sensible breaks with good food, attractively served. There was time for group discussion and questions. The whole Course was very professionally run and serviced. The final evening was planned to make it very special. Again a delightful shared meal and candlelit procession in an empty Cathedral. While everyone was processing around the spirals we were showered by red and white rose petals from the heights. Stunningly beautiful and moving.

I really enjoyed this Course and the others people who participated. . Veriditas is an excellent back up institution for anyone wanting to work in this field. Anything I need to know, I will be able to ask! The whole time I was in San Francisco I attended the monthly Labyrinth Walks on Friday evenings. There were subtle variations each time, plenty to remember!

While away, I have visited as many labyrinths as I could find in the area and designed a 5 circuit Chartres model for my work. It has 20" paths and 10" herbal borders, with a rose and jasmine covered pergola in the centre with six sitting bays. It has been designed to fit into the smaller space of the nursing home garden, and to be wheelchair and walking frame friendly.

I feel that the use of plants and healing herbs is a very important addition to the labyrinth. When people leave their homes to come into places of care, they leave behind their beloved gardens and pot plants. They miss them! We all have a personal need to be connected with the earth. Friends bring them bunches of flowers, but it is not the same as having a bit of dirt to plant with colour and enjoy daily. My idea is to be able to give people in nursing homes the choice of a punnet of potted colour, to plant in the labyrinth. Then they can go out each day to see how it is going, and take that reflective walk. They can water and talk to their plants, and so maintain that loved, enlivening contact with growing things.

On Dec. 8th. I went by appointment, to visit the healing courtyard at Marin County Hospital's Cancer care centre. This garden is visible to patients while they are having their treatments and is highly regarded. I documented the place and species. Meanwhile I was researching the healing properties of herbs and their size, shape and habitat. I photographed species and started a file, to be shown to clients in selecting herbs.

I also found and purchased a very individual book by Ellis Cowan called Plant Spirit Medicine. He has spent time studying under a Yaqui Indian medicine man, and presents the novel idea that the plants can say what medicine they can provide for any single patient. This teaching is in accord with the shamanic practices of Native Americans like Frank Fools Crow, a very respected Teton Sioux Chief. These topics are for ongoing research and trial in healing places.

LIST OF LABYRINTHS WALKED & DOCUMENTED.

Grace Cathedral - the Mother House as it were.

1100 California St, San Francisco.

Chartres 11 circuit replica, indoor woven carpet, and outdoor terrazzo.

The indoor venue was better because of the cold winds and fogs, which frequently come in over Nob Hill, where the Cathedral is situated. It was interesting that Dr Artress had our group warm this outdoor labyrinth, by forming a circle, before we walked it. I walked it at different times of day and preferred not to be the only user. It was cold feeling, compared with the indoor carpet model, which is located in exactly the same position as the famous one at Chartres. This was wonderful on the monthly Friday evenings when it was open to the public, with candles and live music.

Mercy Centre, 2300 Adeline Drive, Burlingame
Retreat Centre.

Chartres 11 circuit model outdoors in beautiful garden setting.

Brick edging, stone infill and tamped cinder paths. It had a peaceful rather timeless quality.

Lake Merrit Park Oakland

Off Grand avenue at end Staten Ave.

Classic Cretan Model, 7 circuits outdoor.

Raised lawn borders, footworn dirt paths

Small and comfortable, well worn, excellent sunset meditation location in the middle of a major urban complex.

Private home garden of Haillie Inglehart Austen

On top of hill at Inverness, Marin County CA.

Cretan 7 circuit model with central goddess statue.

Grass paths bordered by stones.

This one felt loved and loving, the privacy and setting helped.

San Francisco Theological Institute

Seminary Rd, off Ross Rd, San Anselmo CA.

1. Cretan 7 circuit model in front of retreat centre.

Brick borders sunk below lawn for easy mowing well hedged from street for privacy. Beautiful to walk in bare feet.

2. Chartres 7 circuit painted on concrete terrace in front of Geneva Building. Outlook high towards the sacred Mount Tiburon.

Felt much more exposed and colder, best used with other people?

California Pacific Medical Centre

Corner Clay and Buchannon Sts, San Francisco
 Chartres 11 circuit model, at back of plaza entry from street
 Used with calming effect by waiting patients, hospital personnel on breaks
 and medical staff.

Community Congregational Church

Top of Rockhill Rd, Tiburon, California.
 Octagonal Amiens Model, 11 circuit outdoors.
 Paved path with thyme and chamomile borders.
 The centre was very powerful, on a ley line?
 The walk was very energising, and perfumed by the crushed herbs.
 Very well sited good relative privacy and public access.
 This was my personal favourite.

Sibley Park,

Volcanic Regional Preserve East Bay Hills, old quarry
 site north of Round top Take Grizzly Peak Blvd to Skyline blvd. and Park
 entrance; take gate through into grazed areas.
 3 sites with Cretan 7 circuit models bordered with stones on the turf.
 One on plateau above quarry floor, best on the quarry floor,
 Smallest one over the next hill.
 All made with volunteer labour, and valued by the community.
 Used in rituals at full moon and Solstices by arrangement.
 Stunning and good outdoor locations, Very available to public

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

I enjoyed the personal freedom to concentrate on new subjects which excite me at the University of Creation Spirituality. I had always wondered how you could teach Art as Meditation? Could you teach real Art on the right side of the brain? Could you switch off the mind? What did they do? I had to go as a student and observe and experience the process. I'm so glad I did. The first week's experience of Art as Meditation was the Yoga of Sound. If I had been able to choose painting, I would have missed this. BUT it was a better way into understanding their method and process. I was outside my range of knowledge with Hindu chanting, but the classes quickly took me into a relaxed state of altered consciousness. An ancient combination of devotional music and dance, provided a method of switching to the right brain. The key to empowering pain management and the health solutions, which I sought.

Walking many different Labyrinths at different times of day and in different locations, I documented the experiences and am fascinated by trying to analyse what makes a Labyrinth work? Is it the type and spacing of the turns? What causes the different mode of being and the moving into a quieter, reflective objective space? Is there any association with the actions involved in Sufi twirling or Hindu yogic art of Sound rotation?
How does the brain change modes?



This may sound a bit off course, but I am trying to understand and harness methods for changing these brain modes as the key to helping people trapped in chronic pain or the fears associated with ageing and terminal illness.

I am currently discussing the design of one for a site at Encounter Bay which has a big aboriginal story associated. Can we design an Australian labyrinth which is appropriate and in keeping with this dreaming? Why do we have to continue with the Cretan and Chartres models, which have the history of working. So if I can analyse what makes a labyrinth work, I can apply that knowledge to the design of an Australian landbased design. Positioning its centre in relationship to ley lines enhances its power. Very powerful spiritual sites like Glastonbury tor, are at the confluence of ley lines. So it is important to consult and work with dowsers in choosing the best location for any new labyrinth.

In America and England, Art Therapy is becoming an integrated part of health services for those in care, and is a paid profession. In South Australia we are still far from achieving this goal. The Health Profession is welcoming to the ideas, but budgets do not enable their implementation, and unfortunately, as the role of the churches has decreased, chapels are not so often included in the architectural planning of health facilities. While we acknowledge the multi racial nature of Australian society today, we are not ready to include planning for withdrawal rooms of quiet beauty as an essential service to the aged and dying.

If you study the research of Prof. Larry Dossey, there is now medical evidence on paper, to prove that prayer, art and health, are intertwined in the healing process and that Therapies can achieve often where drugs and surgery fail.

I believe in teaching by example. I may be only one person in the system, but I am confident that there is a need, and that as I publicise, volunteer and create both beautiful meditation spaces and labyrinth, the users and health carers will observe the value and help one example to produce more opportunities for the health and happiness of those who are confined to hospices, hospitals and old peoples homes.

I believe that both things I studied, Art as Meditation and Labyrinth facilitating, are tools which can enhance the holistic quality of life and enjoyment for people who find themselves living in the closed confines of hospices, hospitals and old people's homes. I feel strongly that we are living in a time when attitudes to quality of life for the elderly and dying are changing. Perhaps it's the pressure of increased numbers as the baby-boomers move into that category, or the knowledge that the ratios of working people to the retired are rapidly unbalancing the economy. But, I hope that we are just sick enough of the material society, that we are questioning its dominance and destructive effects upon community and the health of our planet and beginning to return to

the human values of love and compassion and the simple dignity and importance of every created being.

Why our society has elected to sanitise and conceal the fact of death, and deny the importance of that last journey we will all take, is a mystery to me! We celebrate our entry into the world but currently deny that our exit might also be a wonderful right of passage. How? Especially when descriptions from those who have had near death experiences, are so full of peace, beauty, white light and reunion with those who have already passed over? Why do we make it something to fear and leave being there to chaplains and professionals?

I sincerely hope that the new skills and insights which I have acquired as a result of the Churchill Fellowship, will be put to good use in this society in helping to change the quality of life for those in chronic pain and moving toward death. To help them prepare for that last great journey in surroundings of beauty, supported by a community which values each individual life.

How I propose to disseminate and implement my findings .

Seminars

It is my intention to work very hard to get onto the Medical Conference circuit to present well illustrated papers on the role of Art Therapy in Health and Dying. In fact I have just accepted an invitation to present the labyrinth at the next Palliative care course on 24th April in Adelaide. I will also demonstrate the use of the Labyrinth as a valuable calming meditational tool to hospices, hospitals and old people's homes. This involves making new contacts, and to that end I am starting to attend conferences and gatherings where I can meet people who can help me. Eg Nurselink's Palliative care course Feb.10th-13th at Sophia centre, Adelaide, entitled "Beyond Physical Needs".

I am developing a power point presentation for Cd rom, which I can present at such conferences based on my studies, aiming to make it visually stunning and amusing for the dead spot after lunch!

Publications

I am developing a Cd-rom, which will demonstrate the use of the labyrinth and Art as Meditation courses to distribute to appropriate centres to help promote the results of my studies.

Having been the beneficiary of new skills through the generosity of the Churchill Trust, I can only recommend that I spread their positive life enhancing and healing powers, as wide as I can cast a net by speaking publicly, and volunteering to establish these facilities for others.

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Note

I do have more books, but they are still in a mail sack on their way back from America, so I could not list them all.

APPENDIX

CREATION SPIRITUALITY IS

Honouring all of Creation as
Original Blessing, Creation Spirituality
Integrates the wisdom of Eastern and
Western spirituality and global indigenous
Cultures with the emerging scientific
Understanding of the universe
And the passion of creativity.
It is both a tradition and a movement,
Celebrated by mystics and
Agents of social change from
Every age and every culture

