

Connie Barlow & Michael Dowd's Great Story Tour

Turtle Log

ON THE ROAD TO THE ECOZOIC ERA



Number 3

July 15 — SEPTEMBER , 2002

Where We've Been Lately

OHIO, MICHIGAN, INDIANA, ILLINOIS

Our Latest Adventures

[Performing Sunday services at five UNITARIAN Churches](#)

Great Story talks at [two CATHOLIC centers](#) and a [LUTHERAN Church](#)

[Teaching children and adults at a UNITY church](#)

Taking the Great Story to two ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION centers

Presenting "The Marriage of Science and Religion" at a small COLLEGE

[Michael writes "Biblical Christianity and The Great Story"](#)

["Coming Home to North America" evolves in various living rooms](#)

[Connie's "Deep Time" essay appears in Wild Earth magazine](#)

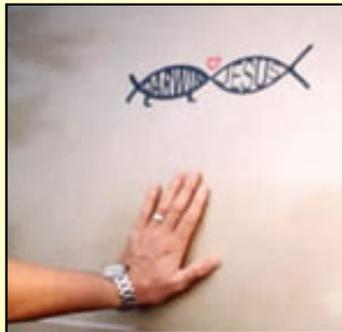
[Great Story Beads reported in EarthLight magazine](#)

[Two new parables and a beads curriculum contributed from the community](#)

Experiencing ecological restoration in an Illinois prairie

Connecting with leaders and other enthusiasts in this movement

Collaboratively producing audiotapes of our talks



Connie and Michael's decal collage on their Turtle Tour van: a playful symbol of their own marriage of science and religion.

Kentucky. During these past seven weeks, Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, and Illinois have been our homes.

The Richness of This Itinerant Life

Four months have passed since we shed home and possessions to become full-time itinerants, teaching and preaching "the Great News of The Great Story and fostering the Great Work." Yet it feels as if we have gained and gained again. Rarely do we miss something that just wouldn't fit into our van, and often we are surprised by how the homes we are staying in happen to have exactly what we need: colored pencils at the home of Mary Mueller in Cary Illinois, when Connie needed to add color to line drawings of extinct North American animals; a fax machine at the home of Frank and Lynnette Bisconti in Rockford, when Michael needed to order another print run of his book EarthSpirit. Our summer schedule has afforded us time to get to know folks and the countryside whenever and wherever we give talks and workshops. All this is possible only because of the goodwill and generosity of many, many people who open their homes and their hearts to us. In the previous two "Turtlelogs", we wrote of our journeys in North Carolina, New York, New Jersey, Vermont, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, then down into

[top](#)

"This Changes Everything!"

Everywhere we go, everywhere we speak, participants find our message helpful and often deeply inspiring. Occasionally, we are privileged to witness someone really "getting" it. We see a face light up in the audience; the energy is barely containable. At that moment, The Great Story enters someone's life in a way that suddenly makes sense of decades of personal experience, or that quells some mental or psychological confusion or fear, or that expands and makes more intimate one's relationship with God or the divine, or that awakens a sense of calling and personal destiny.

"This changes everything!" Those were the words spoken with deep gratitude by a participant near the conclusion of a Great Story workshop we held at the EarthVoice Center for Ecological Education in Volo, Illinois. After four hours of immersion in the 13 billion year story of cosmos, Earth, life, and humanity — through storytelling,

participant play-acting of parables, ritual, guided meditation, sharing, and a science-rich introduction to the 70 million year story of this continent — this participant "got" The Great Story and his own role in it in a profound way. It seems that at every presentation we give, there are a handful of people who have this kind of response. Sometimes the awakening happens in a more private way that we hear about only later, by email or conveyed to us through the event sponsor, as has happened at Catholic convents where we have presented. And sometimes, we are sure, our visit serves more as a prelude, so that the next time or the time after that when someone encounters these ideas, then and there the world will shift.

[top](#)

"Coming Home to North America" — in your living room?

"Have you read Tim Flannery's new book yet?" Paul Martin prodded Connie a year ago. After that, everything changed for her. Entitled, *The Eternal Frontier: An Ecological History of North America and Its Peoples*, Tim Flannery's 2001 book is far more than that; it is the very foundation for a 70 million year mythic telling of the origin story of this continent. And Connie now feels called to tell this story — this glorious component story of the Great Story — wherever we go. In our previous two Turtlelog reports we told of a slide show Connie developed on the North American story, which she has presented at retreat centers in Vermont and in Kentucky. We also told of how she was inspired one day to create the script for a 90 minute co-creative participatory [ritual](#), which is now available on this website. The discovery these past 7 weeks has been that, given even a little time to search the home and yard of our hosts, enough props can be found onsite to support a spontaneous telling and participation in anyone's living room, on a moment's notice, and from a half hour to several hours in length, each time performed for or co-created with a small group.



Connie dramatically presenting The Story of the North American Continent. The rope on the ground outlines the borders of the continent.

In Dayton, Ohio, at the home of Diana and Jim Spiegel, 20 friends and neighbors gathered one evening, on one day's notice. There, a blue scarf laid out on the living room floor served as The Bearpaw Seaway that divided the nascent continent into east and west 70 million years ago. Hand puppets became dying dinosaurs, and stuffed animals represented origins and immigrations of diverse mammals in the long Cenozoic period that followed. White napkins became falling snow during the Oligocene cooling 30 million years ago, and then again during the Pleistocene time of glacial ice.

In Cleveland, at the home of Jim and Ana Toth, and with a group of 30 gathered for the annual "Northern Ohio Windstar Symposium," a blue towel served as the Bearpaw Seaway, and a glorious soft sea turtle pillow borrowed from the home of Dave Korow (who had hosted us the previous night) marked the "Golden Age of Turtles" that followed the dinosaur extinction. In a serendipitous meeting of science and indigenous story, that same turtle then served as the icon of the very birth of the North American continent, when the Bearpaw Seaway receded some 60 million years ago.

North America was born during the Golden Age of Turtles, which reached its peak of glory and abundance right here. As it happens, Turtle also plays a central role in the Iroquois origin story, for whom North America is, truly, "Turtle Island." It was there that one participant awakened to a profound identification with Turtle. Another, for whom the Dog family had been a guide for many years, was ecstatic to discover that the first canid evolved right here, on this continent, and that he could begin to work with the Deep Time journey in this way.

[top](#)

Unitarian Sunday Services

The sermon, children's storytelling, and other components of worship services have been a core part of our work this summer at Unitarian Universalist churches and congregations — and an utter delight for us. More and more, we have come to trust the flow of spirit (and one another!) when extemporaneously delivering these talks. "The Great Story: A Bridge for UU Diversity" was our sermon title for the Heritage Universalist Unitarian Church in Cincinnati (Ohio) and for The Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Fort Wayne (Indiana). "The Marriage of Science and Religion" was our topic at The Unitarian Universalist Church of Flint (Michigan) and at The Unitarian Universalist Church of Kent (Ohio). The Unitarian Church of Evanston (Illinois) gave us an opportunity to present on "What Is the Human Role in Evolution?"

Connie, having had her childhood religious education in a Congregational church in Michigan, has been thrilled to discover that most of these midwestern UU congregations include a doxology as a standard component of their Sunday services. The melody is exactly that of the doxology she grew up with, but the words have been modified with inclusive language — language that bridges UU diversity, from theistic to pagan or nontheistic relationships with Ultimacy. In turn, we were pleased to introduce several of these midwestern UU congregations to a practice we had picked up at a UU church in Vermont: Whenever the hymn "Spirit of Life" is on the program, we encourage congregants to follow up the usual singing with a slower, softer, prayerful way of deeply feeling this hymn in song, of going inward, and at the same time experiencing a wondrous connection with everyone in the room. It is a powerful experience, often bringing people to tears, and we look forward to sharing this practice with more UU congregations.

On very short notice, and thanks to the organizing skills of Mary Ellen Failey, Wanda Hambrick, and Eric Davies, we presented on The Great Story for a gathering of 70 people on a weekday evening (open to the public) at The First Unitarian Universalist Church of Columbus (Ohio). Thanks to Eric Davies for securing a guest appearance for us on Fred Andrle's well-known WOSU AM radio program.

[top](#)

Artists of The Great Story



Sister Mary Southard with a painting in progress.



Sister Mary with Michael Dowd in her studio.



A now-classic painting of Earth elders (including Thomas Berry), with the artist.

At the Sisters of St. Joseph in LaGrange, Illinois, we were thrilled to meet community members and acclaimed artists Mary Southard (painter and sculptor) and Kathy Sherman (composer and singer). Mary Southard's drawings and paintings (celebrations of an ecstatic relationship with Earth, Cosmos, and the sacredness of all) have long enchanted us. They have appeared as the artwork in calendars and ecospiritual publications, including a new book co-authored with Joyce Rupp, *Cosmic Dance*. What a privilege to enter Mary's work spaces and witness works in progress, along with small-scale models of sculptures already produced. On display in one of the Mother House rooms are all the paintings that will appear in the 2003 calendar. In the large chapel is a moving sculpture of Mother and Son. And on the floor where we stayed for one night were hung framed originals of many of Mary's most beloved paintings from years past.



Sister Kathy Sherman in her music studio.

Down the hall from Mary's workrooms is the music room of composer Kathy Sherman. Her songs and chants celebrate this new cosmology, a renewed intimacy with Earth, through the medium of music. Kathy's "Touch the Earth" is now sung and performed widely in this movement. Kathy led some 80 participants in this as the closing song, following Michael's presentation and slide show in the chapel, "Can the Universe Be Trusted?" What a treat to meet Kathy, to hear the composer herself sing this familiar and beloved song! These two sisters, Mary and Kathy, have truly found their calling. So many of us have been moved by their creations! We therefore made sure to take the time to interview them both, along with our inviter and leader in this movement, Sister Pat Bergen, to hear and record their personal testimonials of awakening to The Great Story and how they have been drawn to participate in the Great Work of our time.

[top](#)

The Great Story in Unity Churches

This summer marked our first occasion for bringing the great news of The Great Story to a Unity Church. We knew that Brian Swimme had recently taken this message to Marianne Williamson's Unity / New Thought church in the Detroit area. So we were grateful for the chance to bring this message to another large midwestern church, Unity in Chicago, on September 1 and 4. (We thank Connie Eyer, director of communications for Unity in Chicago, for not only putting us on the Unity church programs but also for hosting us at her home for two nights.) On Sunday morning, Connie brought the story "We Are Made of Stardust" (with a ritual of glitter and singing) to the young children as guest teacher in Unity's religious education program, while Michael brought The Great Story and discussion of God to the adolescents. We then partook of the late morning Sunday service, led by Unity's senior minister, Ed Townley. Reverend Townley delivered an inspired sermon, energized by a large and enthusiastic congregation.

Midweek we returned to Unity in Chicago to offer an evening presentation to Unity members for whom our message, "The Great Story: The Mysticism and Power of the Universe" confirmed what they already knew in their hearts. Only two participants were familiar with the writings of Thomas Berry or Brian Swimme. Nevertheless, we found that our portrayal of the Universe Story as a sacred story was easily grasped by those who experience the indwelling presence of God. But how does this story directly link to a spiritual path? That question was raised following our presentation. And Michael answered it this way: Once we learn the Story, we realize that God or Spirit is ever creating in this Universe. So if we have come to the point where we find that same power within ourselves, too, (as many Eastern spiritual paths, as well as Unity, offer), then the question becomes: What does God or Spirit want to create through us? Where do we become actively engaged with this world? What is our calling, our path of participation, our own

contribution to the Great Work of our time?"

[top](#)

The Wisdom of Children

During her "Stardust" program for the young children at Unity, Connie was astonished with the answers the children gave to an introductory question. She first asked the children whether they were wearing anything of metal: the metal in a barette or belt buckle or zipper, or the eyelet of a shoe. After the children discovered and pointed to these materials, she asked, "Where do those metals come from?" Answers circled among these possibilities: the store, recycling, the dump. Not a one said "Earth," much less "the stars"! Finally, one little girl remembered that iron was found in the center of Earth. "Good!" Connie responded, "and there are also tiny particles of iron and many other metals in the rocks around us. So ultimately, these metals come from Earth, where humans dig them out and then process them into pure metals."

On the drive from the Unity church to our next speaking engagement that evening, at Emmanuel Lutheran Church in Rockford, Illinois, Connie recounted her astonishment to Michael. And we both were saddened that the children seemed so out of touch with Earth and unaware of how the human realm ultimately depends upon Earth. And then it happened: an awakening! While presenting a joint talk with Michael at a Sunday evening gathering of the Forest City Center for Creation Spirituality, Connie realized that the children's ignorance of where metals are now obtained actually reveals a profound truth of where they ought to be taken from: endlessly recycling within the human realm. These children were expressing the most advanced economic thinking, as espoused by Paul Hawken and by Bill McDonough: Our species has already taken enough from Earth; it is time for nonrenewable materials, such as metals, to be derived solely from the store of materials that are already part of the human economy or what we have attempted to rebury as wastes.

[top](#)

Creation Spirituality and the Great Story

Creation Spirituality (CS) folk in the Midwest — those who have been touched by the message of Matthew Fox and others that creation matters, that creation is itself divine — have been an enthusiastic part of our audiences in the Midwest. CS connectors are also among our inviters and have opened their homes to us for a day or two or three. Rev. Jim Roberts regularly brings the Creation Spirituality message to his Emmanuel Lutheran Church, and he invited us to do a Sunday evening presentation on the Great Story for the CS community in Rockford, Illinois, which meets at his church. Afterwards, we enjoyed the hospitality of local CS folk: Kathy Rennert, and later in the week, we moved across town to the home of Frank and Lynnette Bisconti.

All of our engagements in northeastern Illinois, over a period of ten days, came about because of the commitment and organizing skills of CS connector Deb Weaver, director of the EarthVoice Center for Ecological Education in Volo, IL. We had met Deb (and also Jim Roberts) at the EarthSpirit Rising conference on The Great Work that took place in Louisville, Kentucky last year, and which brought together many strands

of the related Creation Spirituality and Universe Story movements. Thank you Deb! Deb also arranged for us to overnight with CS participants Judy and Jack Speer, up near the Wisconsin border. This couple is so drawn by the Great Story that they have created and led their own version of The Cosmic Walk, including one that they installed temporarily at McHenry County College. At many of the stations along their walk, they enriched the science story with scriptural passages drawn from a variety of world and indigenous religions. (We hope to eventually post their Cosmic Walk, along with other versions, on our website.)

[top](#)

The Great Story in EarthLight, Wild Earth, and NPR

An essay Connie wrote on the Deep Time story of the North American continent appeared in the Summer 2002 issue of Wild Earth, along with essays by others on this theme. This essay brought her an invitation to record an interview for the NPR program, "To the Best of Our Knowledge."

We are also happy that Sharon Abercrombie contributed a report on Great Story beads (also known as Cosmic Rosary and Earth Prayer beads) in the Summer 2002 issue of EarthLight magazine. For more on the origin, uses, and how to create your own Great Story beads, see our own website file: beads. Especially, don't miss reading our 19-page timeline, where you will see many examples of how the meaning of an event is as important as the science. It's one of the most valuable offerings on our website.

The Summer issue of EarthLight also contains an evolutionary parable by Larry Edwards, which you can access directly on our website. "The Dance" is a poignant exploration of death: the naturalness of death and how humans have grown estranged from the healthy rhythms of life.

[top](#)

Parables and Other Additions to this Website

For church services and other group presentations, Connie often performs her "Earth Had a Challenging Childhood" parable. Freshly up in the parables corner of our website, too, is a new teaching story for children (and adults!) by our dear friend Leslie Pilder. "[Earth's Eyes](#)" is a delightful way to teach and remember the nested connectedness of the Universe. Here Leslie shows that when the first creatures evolved eyes, it was not just animals learning to see, but Earth learning to see herself for the very first time. We are grateful, too, that Leslie Pilder also contributed a Curriculum for Great Story Beads , appropriate for young children. This curriculum begins with Montessori-based "beading" projects for learning the story of one's family, then gradually expanding to more encompassing stories, culminating in the sacred story of everyone and everything.

[top](#)

Biblical Christianity and The Great Story

Michael has added his own contribution to the "Meta-religious Essays" niche of our website. For months he has struggled off and on, following a standard essay format, to write his personal experience of how The Great Story enriches and is enriched by biblical Christianity. The struggle dissolved when, inspired by the dialogue style of Brian Swimme's most beloved book, *The Universe is a Green Dragon*, Michael decided to try his hand at writing an interview/dialogue. His imagined interlocutor is a Christian college student. We are very pleased with the result. See if you are too. "Biblical Christianity" can be accessed here in FULL TEXT format or as a downloadable PDF file. Michael has already distributed this essay widely on his personal email list, and he has received some heartfelt words of gratitude and enthusiasm for his ideas.

As with everything else posted on this website, we encourage you to print out and make this essay available to any Christians in your life for whom the Great Story / New Story has not yet been presented in a form that fully validates and supports their personal faith experience. And then, let us know how they receive it!

Michael@TheGreatStory.org

Consider, too, that Connie (a life-long "religious naturalist" and Unitarian Universalist in spirit) finds that Michael's imagined dialogue helps her to translate biblical language and stories into forms that are no longer alien to her science grounding and deep-ecology worldview. As with the other six meta-religious essays already posted on our website, "Biblical Christianity" builds bridges between a wide range of religious and philosophical perspectives. Whatever you believe and whatever your faith journey, these meta-religious essays will surely connect with your own truths and commitments, helping all of us to more than just tolerate or accept diversity. Rather, we come to outright applaud such diversity as distinctive faces of the divine.

[top](#)

"The Great Story" on Audiotape

An audiotape of our two most popular sermon presentations is now available for purchase whenever and wherever we speak and also on the [MJB Communications](#) website, which regularly records and distributes audiotapes from symposia at the Sophia Center in Oakland, California. Side A is "The Great Story: A Bridge for UU Diversity" (by Connie Barlow and Michael Dowd). Side B is "Can the Universe Be Trusted?" by Michael Dowd. We thank Jim Brauner in Missouri for offering to produce and sell this tape (also available as a CD), and we look forward to collaborating with him again on more topics.

In addition, Michael is looking forward to the opportunity to offer soon a second audiotape of specifically Christian sermons on The Great Story. He has had several opportunities to present to Christian audiences, but none thus far have been professionally audiotaped. "Christianity in an Evolving Universe" was his theme, for

example, at a special presentation he gave in July for the Sisters of St. Francis in Oldenburg, IN (thanks to an invitation from Sr. Donna Graham). A Christian tape by Michael will be possible for us to produce (and market through MJB Communications) after Michael delivers talks and sermons at Methodist and Congregational churches in Minnesota and Kansas in October 2002.

Family Time

Connie was thrilled to spend the summer of 2002 doing Great Story missionary work in the American Midwest. It has been thirty-some years since she spent a summer in the climate and landscapes of her early childhood and youth. Heat and humidity? Ah, bliss! Fields of Queen Anne's Lace and blue-flowered chickory; flatland bicycling with cornfield vistas and dairy farm aromas; summer evenings that stay balmy well beyond nightfall; sunsets and moonrises spectacularly splayed across a low horizon; clouds that fade, rather than abruptly edge, into blue. And opportunities to visit with family and extended family in Michigan, many of whom came to the Unitarian Sunday service we presented in Flint.

Michael, too, thrived on our midwestern summer, as this gave him a chance to spend more time with his 17-year-old son Shane and 12-year-old daughter Miriam. For almost three weeks we enjoyed the hospitality of Michael's first wife, Alison Rene, and her partner Charles Griffith at their home in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Connie enjoyed the chance to get to know Alison better ÷ and, of course, to trade stories about a particular man in our lives.

[top](#)

Of Pawpaws and Prairie Flowers

People, presentations, and ideas are not the only focal points of our itinerant lifestyle. Becoming acquainted (or reacquainted) with landscapes and, as the Native Americans say, "all our relations" is an important part of our travels too. Connie was thrilled to experience vast patches of pawpaw in the understory of an old growth forest now protected by the Cincinnati Nature Center. She enjoyed the communion with pawpaw just prior to her slide talk for nature center staff and volunteers. Her topic, "The Ghosts of Evolution," featured pawpaw and Kentucky coffee tree (also on the grounds). Connie always enjoys offering to others a "deep time" understanding of these plants ÷ how their very large fruits indicate that the plants are missing their extinct Pleistocene dispersal partners, with whom they coevolved for millions of years.

The nature-communion highlight of our midsummer wanderings was a county land preserve in northern Illinois that is a model of prairie and marsh restoration: **Glacial Park in McHenry County**. We were privileged to experience this once-glaciated landscape through the stories and passion of its director, Ed Collins. Ed is a consummate storyteller as well as a mentor, leader, and professional land manager. We were moved to tears at times hearing this story unfold as we ventured from woodland to creekbed to the top of a reconstructed kame (glacial mound).

"The river has its voice back," Ed spoke reverentially, as we stood alongside a riffle of a now-meandering Nipersink Creek, which only a few years earlier had still been forced to flow through a straight channel ÷ the product of an agricultural "reclamation" project some 80 years earlier whose goal had been to drain the lowlands and marshes sufficiently to make farming possible. Acre by acre, the headwaters of the Nipersink are now being reclaimed for marsh birds, aquatic mussels, and migrating monarch butterflies.



Ed Collins tells the story of oak savanna restoration in Glacial Park of northern Illinois, while Deb Weaver, Michael Dowd, and others listen.

At the riffle,
Michael shed his
shirt, lifted his
arms in prayer,
then lowered
himself flat-out
into the creek for a
full-body baptism
in a watershed of
hope. The Ecozoic
Era is surely
emerging in Glacial
Park, Illinois! What
struck us, too,
about Ed's stories
were that, at every
step of prairie and
creek restoration
(the headwaters of
the Nipersink
River) in this
county park, there
were opportunities
for student crews
of restoration
workers and for
the community at
large to
experience,
through ritual and
other poignant
actions, that
restoration work is



as much a spiritual practice as a science.

Michael in prayer alongside a restored Nipersink Creek.

For the students it was a rite of passage, an opportunity to contribute to the world in a way that their grandchildren's children will still cherish. Guided by aerial photos, Ed's youthful crew not only had removed clay drainage pipes. The young men and women also drove earth-moving equipment to restore the original contours of the stream meanders. "When you go in for a job interview, anywhere," Ed coached his student workers at the closing ceremony, "and if there is any question about whether you are qualified for the job, just say: 'Yes. Of course, I can do it: I've built a fuckin' river!'" The youth bulldozed the overburden of sand and gravel away from the flats and drove it in dumptrucks back up to where the glaciers had placed it some 16,000 years earlier: as a massive and steep-sided hill ("kame").

Deb Weaver and Judy Speer stood with us atop that rebuilt kame, spellbound, as Ed told us the story of what it was like to roll back the sediment, revealing the dark soils of the original marsh. Marsh seeds that had been waiting patiently for 80 years sprouted in profusion. And there, too, at the boundary, were the now-colorless and empty shells of snails and freshwater mussels that had been buried alive. "Ed, if you saved any of those shells, I would love to have one," Connie ventured. "What a symbol of hope, that we can undo violations to the land!" When we returned to headquarters, Ed went into a building and came out holding a lovely ornamental container. He gave it to Connie. Opening the lid, she found one perfect shell of a large native snail ÷ whose inhabitant had died thirty years before she herself was born.

[top](#)

Gratitude

For our travels from mid-July to the beginning of September 2002, we especially wish to thank these people for opening their homes and hearts to us: Jim and Diana Spiegel in Dayton OH, Mary Ellen and Mike Failey in Columbus, Joanie and Jeffrey Weidner in Cincinnati, Bill Creasy in Cincinnati, Bill and Peggy Barlow of Midland MI, Alison Rene and Charles Griffith of Ann Arbor, Martha and John Kluth of Kent OH, Dave Korow of Cleveland, Jim and Ana Toth of Cleveland, Kathryn Farnsworth of Fort Wayne IN, and Doug and Linda Germann of South Bend, Gretchen Brewer and Connie Eyer of Evanston IL, Kathy Rennert, and Frank and Lynette Bisconti of Rockford IL, Mary and Ted Mueller of Cary IL, Sister Colette Fahrner of Woodstock IL, Sister Pat Bergen of Lagrange IL, Jack and Judy Speer in McHenry County, IL.

Our traveling ministry is possible—psychologically as well as financially—only because we almost always have a home to (temporarily) call our own. We wish to publicly thank, as well, inviters, providers of food, and those who extended to us other expressions of generosity and collaboration not already mentioned in this report. We are grateful to Rob Montessorin of the Cincinnati Earth Institute and the Cincinnati Nature Center, Claire Whalen, Sister Rita Agnes Werner, Marya Grathwohl, Helen Prejean, John Feister (at AmericanCatholic.org), Chuck Lynd of Agape Retreat Center, Rick Dilling, Al and Angie Hofmann, Mike and Lisa Kelly, Dawn Yunker, Judy Tipton, Christopher Reynolds, Sister Paula Gonzalez, Peggy Logue, Rev. Laurie Proctor, Linda Bunyon, Joann Hill, Barbara Steele, Rev. Ann Tyndall, Rev. Barbara Pescan, Rael Bassan, Raol Brenner, Terry and Bob Davis, Jan Troyer, Evelyn Pease Tyner, Jim Ivars, Ed and Denise Collins, Rev. Jim Roberts and Sallyann Roberts.

A special thanks to Diana Spiegel for entrusting her personal collection of slides for us

to use in our Great Story and North American slide programs and for lending us her family's slide projector and trays. Also, deep thanks to Patricia Gordon for donating the camera that took the photos you see in this report, to Ed Collins for the sacred snail shell, to Kathy Sherman and Mary Southard for inviting us into their world of art, to Ev Pease Tyner for the surprise set of photos of our wedding, and to dynamic Deb Weaver for her great gift of time in organizing events and hospitality for us in northern Illinois.

Sustaining Our Ministry

Along with home hospitality, financial gifts have been crucial boosts in this early stage of our lifework. We thank Donna Graham, Doug Van Houten, Marge and Donald Show, Marion Francis, Ana and Jim Toth, and Gordon Vars for such gifts. We also thank the many anonymous donors who have made love offerings at the conclusion of our talks. Almost everywhere we present (other than college classrooms) we offer a table of books and videos for sale. In addition to Connie's and Michael's own books, we now carry a range of books and videos vital to this movement: Thomas Berry's *The Great Work*, Brian Swimme's *The Universe Is a Green Dragon and Hidden Heart of the Cosmos*, Jennifer Morgan's *Born With a Bang*, Joyce Rupp and Mary Southard's *Cosmic Dance*, Duane Elgin's *Promise Ahead*, and ten additional titles.

We are grateful to Steve Torma and "[Creation Spirituality Resources](#)" for supporting our ministry by helping us buy these books wholesale. We can continue to offer our services for free because we earn money selling books after our talks, because of the occasional guest honoraria we receive, and through generous donations of those who believe in our work. If you, too, are inspired to contribute to our traveling ministry and website efforts, you can find out how to do so on our [JOIN US!](#) page.

We thank Betsy Koenigsberg (Connie's sister) and Miriam Dowd (Michael's youngest daughter) for offering their time to periodically forward mail to us. Graphic artist Karen Holmgren has become a vital partner in our ministry, too, by continuing to serve as our volunteer website designer. All the formatting and color and picture inserts you see in this and other Turtlelogs, as well as all the headers and detail work on all our pages are thanks to Karen.

[top](#)

Where To Next?

Our next Turtlelog report will cover our intensive tour of Madison, Wisconsin (39 speaking engagements over the course of 17 days, thanks to our volunteer organizer Dave Creswell), followed by appearances in Minneapolis and St. Paul (thanks to local organizers Jack Phillips and Jack Heckleman). For our full itinerary [click here](#). And please do browse the rest of this website. It is designed to support YOU in deepening your relationship to this story and sharing it with others. Our www.TheGreatStory.org site is by and for all of us committed to "a mutually enhancing human-Earth relationship."

Till next time, we are ALL together in the Great Work!

Ecozoic blessings,

Connie and Michael

[top](#)

For previous issues, *click* [HERE](#).

[Home](#) | [About The Great Story](#) | [About Us](#) | [Traveling Ministry and Events](#)
[What Others Say](#) | [Programs and Presentations](#) | [Metareligious Essays](#) | [Our Writings](#)
[Great Story Beads](#) | [Testimonials](#) | [Parables](#) | [Sacred Sites](#)
[Highlights of Our Travels](#) | [Favorite Links & Resources](#) | [Join Us!](#)