

Human Kindness Foundation

a little good news

Spring 2007

THE REAL "SECRET" IS A DARK ONE

Dear Family,
In the past several months as I've been speaking across the country, many people have approached me and asked with some degree of excitement in their voices, "Bo, have you seen *The Secret* yet? Oh, you'll love it! It will change the world! Let people know about this!"

So I did watch *The Secret*, as well as an Oprah show that featured its "teachers," and I think we all need to reflect very deeply on the message that is passing for wisdom these days. "New Age" centers, "New Thought" Churches, the Christian "prosperity" movements personified by the likes of Joel Osteen, and now Oprah's enormous fan base, are really falling off the deep end into a pseudo-spirituality that is not just a little self-indulgent, it is *primarily* about selfishness and materialism.

The Secret itself is a childish exaggeration of a minor energetic principle – "The Law of Attraction" – which simply means what most of our grandmothers have said to us at one time or another: "If you think negative things, your life will be negative. Keep your mind on positive things, and you'll attract more positive things and people into your life." That's pretty basic stuff, who could argue with that? It's true. Got it? Be positive!

But to frame this as *The Secret*, as the "greatest power in the universe;" to open the film with suspense-movie scenes of scholars and monks throughout history desperately trying to hide this "secret" for future generations while they are being pursued by armies and assassins; to claim that every great man or woman from Jesus to Thomas Edison knew this specific "Secret" and now you and I are finally going to be let in on it, oh, please!! It's a minor part of life; nothing profound about it. Both teams in the Superbowl should "think positive" and visualize winning, but only one is going to win, because being positive is not everything!

The way we think factors into our lives along with many other realities such as our past karma, genetic and acquired strengths and weaknesses, the needs of our family or society, the politics of the age we live in, our willingness to work hard, and of course, God's plan for us.

And maybe I'm old-fashioned, but I thought **God** was the greatest power in the Universe. I thought the best things in life are free. I thought we're supposed to dedicate our lives to the greatest good. I thought God gives us a Peace that worldly riches can never give. Not so in *The Secret*. This film and a lot of the pop-spirituality I see these days has

become so self-centered that the religion it most closely exemplifies is Satanism. I'm not being sarcastic. It's true.

I know the word "Satanism" conjures up images of abusing children and sacrificing animals, but the actual Church of Satan has never endorsed that stuff. In fact, two of the "Eleven Satanic Rules of the Earth" are:

- ❖ Do not harm little children.
- ❖ Do not kill animals unless attacked or for your food.

So suspend your media images of Satanism. **The biggest difference between Satanism and other religions is simple: Classic religions put God at the center, and Satanism puts the self at the center.** The Great Religions share a theme of *unselfishness*. Satanism's theme is *selfishness*. The Great Faiths say we are here to *love our neighbor and serve God's creation*. Satanism says we are here to please *ourselves*, and **creation is here to serve us** – exactly what is emphasized in *The Secret*. All of you who have seen *The Secret* and have jumped on the bandwagon about how wonderful it is, *please* take this comparison seriously. You are unknowingly leaning toward Satanism.

"The Secret" and Satanism

Anton LaVey, the founder of the Church of Satan, wrote: *Satanism is the only religion which serves to encourage and enhance one's individual preferences. Since Satanism is essentially a religion of the self, it holds that the individual and his personal needs come first.*

Now read an exchange on Oprah between Lisa Nichols, one of *The Secret* "Teachers," and an audience member:

Nichols: *So, you serve everyone else, don't you?*

Audience member: *You got that right.*

Nichols: *So, make 2007 the year that you show up in the now for **YOU!** (thunderous applause) Now repeat after me: I choose today, to give myself the best life ever!!*

Audience member: (repeats it, to cheers and applause)

Honestly, that would qualify as a nice Satanic initiation.

The following (in **bold**) are principles of the Church of Satan, followed by teachings from *The Secret*:

Satanists do not worship a living deity.

The Secret makes it clear that the Law of Attraction (not God) is the most powerful force in the Universe, and this force is amoral and "scientific." One man in the film says he wants lots of women, three or four a week, and is shown how to attract them into his life, and he succeeds. When he decides he wants one lasting relationship, he changes his

thoughts and again attracts what he wants. No higher or lower desires, just whatever we want. If there is any object of worship implied in *The Secret*, it is personal success. Big houses, lots of money, fame, glory. There is no greater God to worship, no sanctity in serving the poor, the unfortunate, the sick. Just have a good time. That's the lure of Satanism.

Major emphasis is placed on the power and authority of the individual... rather than on a god or goddess.

One so-called "metaphysician" of *The Secret*, Joe Vitale, tells us "The universe is merely your CATALOG." You just "shop" for whatever income, product, person or experience that you may want by *thinking and visualizing* constantly of it. Cut out pictures of a car, a house, whatever you want, and post them on a "vision board." Do rituals to affirm that you will receive them. Satanists do a lot of this kind of stuff. They call it Ritual Magic. Please don't do this.

Satanists believe that "no redeemer liveth" - that each person is their own redeemer, fully responsible for the direction of their own life.

Just to make sure we know there is no need for God in this new theology, Neale Donald Walsch, of "Conversations With God," appears in *The Secret* to tell us there is no such thing as *God's Will* for you – **You are entirely in charge of whatever you want to do.** That's exactly what Anton LaVey says! No God to surrender to, no God of Love, no God to guide us or to humble ourselves before.

Another "Teacher," Esther Hicks, tells us we *entirely create our own reality*. That exceeds even Anton LaVey's view. I guess our young men and women dying in Iraq, and all the Iraqi victims of this crazy war, are just creating their deaths with negative thoughts? Along with all those hungry kids in India, millions dying of AIDS in Africa? Nothing more complex about Life than to "ask, believe, and receive"? How dare you be so arrogant, Ms. Hicks? How dare you!

Enough, Bo! What's the point?

But *The Secret* did not arise in a vacuum. *The Secret* is just the latest descent of pop-spirituality into a materialistic, self-centered new **theology** truly similar to Satanism, that seems to be taking hold in many churches, spiritual centers and households. It's a theology of "Me First;" a theology of entitlement ("I deserve *everything* good in life and I should *not* have to struggle for it"); a theology of disconnection from our influence on others and their influence on us; a theology where modesty and sacrifice are seen as unhealthy and pride and vanity are seen as essential.

Most of all, it is a theology of "prosperity and abundance" where lip service is paid to words like peace and joy, but the bottom line is GETTING RICH, no two ways about it. In fact, even *gratitude* and *forgiveness* are explained merely as strategies to attract more success into your life. It's always about *you*. I'm sorry, that's just not deep religion.

And neither is it responsible politics. At a time when the world is at war over oil, clean air and clean water are fading memories, and Al Gore's *Inconvenient Truth* begs us to take

seriously the jeopardy our planet is in, this new theology says not a word about living more simply or about wanting less consumer wealth. It does exactly the opposite, and encourages us to *think and get rich*. This theology of the self cuts us off from any sense of responsibility for ecology or conservation. None of that is our problem, it is just "scarcity consciousness." These "teachers" actually say with a tone of scientific authority "The universe has plenty of resources for everyone to have everything they want!"

Well, maybe the universe has unlimited resources, but the Earth clearly does NOT. Many species are already extinct, rainforests already damaged beyond repair, icecaps already melting, from our relentless consumption of resources. It is more than immature; it is viciously irresponsible to entice us to want *more* luxury and wealth instead of encouraging deeper happiness from living more sustainably and simply.

One of *The Secret's* "master" teachers, Jack Canfield, shows off photos of his \$4½ million-dollar house, his "wife to die for," and his exotic vacations. That's a "master"?! A rich guy who brags about his life? How much petroleum does it take to sustain Canfield's mansion? How many little kids around the world work like slaves to produce the products such a household consumes? How many maids and gardeners take care of his estate? Why doesn't he tell them *The Secret* so they can get rich? It's all just so sad.....

The biggest sorrow about this new theology is not just that it echoes Satanism, but that it *robs us of the greatness of our Spiritual Adventure*. If life is just a catalog of our petty worldly desires, then where is higher consciousness? Where is holiness? Where is the "dark night of the soul" and our subsequent transformation? Is there truly no spiritual journey? Just a shopping spree to get the stupid external props that we think will make us happy?

Do use the "Law of Attraction" in your daily life – pray first thing every day to be less selfish, to love thy neighbor, to be humble, to keep God in mind all day, to have constant faith in Life's ultimate Goodness. We can use a hammer to build a house or to beat someone to death. The "Law of Attraction" is just a hammer. Please don't use it to beat God to death in this weird age when the tiny egoic self's worldly desires become your god. This is no "Secret" at all. It is the classic road to Hell.

*The source of all happiness is to cherish others
more than I cherish myself.*

*The source of all suffering is to cherish myself
more than I cherish others.*

-- Buddhist Scriptures

THE PASSING OF A DEAR ELDER...



Father Murray in NC to perform Josh and Melissa Lozoff's wedding, 1999.

Human Kindness Foundation, and the Lozoffs personally, lost a dear friend and elder this autumn. Father Murray Rogers was on our board of directors for many years, and was a radiant example of humility who had a great influence on our work from the mid-'80's on.

Father Murray and his wife, Mary, who also passed away just a couple months later, were sent to India in 1946 by the Church of England to evangelize among the poor, and convert Hindus to Christianity. But soon after their arrival they were introduced to Mahatma Gandhi and spent some time at Sevagram, his community, being radicalized both politically and spiritually. They sent word to the church that they would no longer live in relative luxury with Hindu servants, but would live *among* the poor with respect for their Hindu spiritual traditions. They stayed in India for 27 years in that capacity and became a vital force in what is often called the Interfaith Dialogue between Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam. Then they lived in Hong Kong for ten years, and then Jerusalem for ten years, doing much the same in both those regions.

While in Hong Kong, Father Murray was given a copy of *We're All Doing Time* and he wrote to Bo & Sita and established a friendship that would last for the rest of his life. Sita was fortunate to visit the ailing Father Murray and Mary in England just a few months before they passed away. Bo was on tour at the time.

Bo often quotes Father Murray in his talks. Father Murray spoke a lot about faith. He once said, "Bo, faith is not the most important thing, you know." Then he added, "It's the *only* thing!" He also said, "Every problem, every crisis, no matter what it may look like, is a crisis of faith." Father Murray and Mary lived their faith in a profound way. When Father Murray traveled around the globe he often had no more than a cloth bag holding a change of undergarments and his few toiletries. He wore a simple brown monk's robe and washed it in the sink

when it was soiled. He lived humbly on the Earth yet beamed with true spiritual abundance. Our beloved Father Murray was buried in that robe in a simple cardboard box.

Father Murray also had a wonderful British wit. When Bo said once in France, "Father Murray, it would make Sita and me very happy to take you and Mary out to dinner tonight," Father Murray replied, "Well, old boy, do you think you could find another way to make yourself happy?" And after spending a few weeks with all of us in North Carolina, and having had private meetings with many people in our surrounding communities, Father Murray said to Bo one night before he left, "You know, Bo, I wonder whether Americans are psychologically healthy enough for the spiritual journey. It seems they must feel *good* about themselves all the time! How far can you go on the spiritual journey if you must feel *good* about yourself all the time?"

Father Murray, we will miss you dearly. And we will strive to live humbly with unshakeable faith as you and Mary exemplified so beautifully for so many years.

LETTERS

Hello Sita & Bo!

You are touching and helping to change the lives of tens of thousands of people... You must believe, know and feel that you are blessed as only few have ever been! I must share with you some incredibly beautiful experiences I have enjoyed since receiving your response!

You see, I live 24/7 inside a large square room with sixty-four other inmates. So there is absolutely zero privacy to be had and anything we do is subject to intense observation by all. As I studied We're All Doing Time I hesitantly decided to practice meditation for a half-hour/day!

Others took notice. First I was ridiculed (they feared what they didn't understand) then outright confronted by both inmates and guards. I never argued back—but never did I submit to any particular demands or ultimatums. I simply continued to pursue my interests and moved about peacefully—experimenting with times and areas until I came upon that which now seems to be working perfectly.

I practice on my bunk—late night after hours. The peace, release I've begun to experience is incredible. When things got a little confrontational—I never allow them to become physical—I didn't exactly give in or fold up—Hell—I even 'hissed' a little whenever it was appropriate—But today—things are changed—It's different now!

One morning while standing at the back of the line for breakfast—I used to always be one of the first!!—a very humble voice spoke next to me—a voice that used to antagonize and belittle me—the exact words I don't recall, I was pretty blanked out—But this inmate wanted me to read him a letter he got in the mail... He could not read! Man, I wanted to ask him "why me?" but I said sure man—bring me the letter. He handed it to me right then & there!

And so, I read him the letter as we waited in line for our breakfast—we ate at a table together in contented silence—as we rose at the finish he reached out to pick up my tray—to return it for me—when we made eye contact he lowered his head and said: "keep doing whatever it is you're doing bro...don't stop!"

Every now and then he comes and sits at my table with me and shares his meal in silence. He always insists on taking my

tray back—and never have I been more humbled by the single act of another.... I don't try to understand it, but I go to my bunk and sit quietly letting the feeling just flow all through me! It's incredible and entirely impossible to explain.

And just this final "happening" I do wish to share with you!

One day as I sat reading "Lineage," a younger inmate came next to me and asked... "yo what chu reading man?" I started to explain—I'm reading a story about....and he interrupted me. He said "no, no, no, man—don't tell me about it ...read it to me!" I looked at the book in my hands—looked back at him...to the book—to him—turned the book to its first story and read aloud - The Saddest Buddha, and have continued to read aloud to him and approximately six or seven others every night!

That first young man and I have been through all the stories and are on our second reading. Each night they slowly gather around my bunk and quietly wait for me to pick up what I have come to know in my heart as "Bo's book." I sit amazed in complete wonder at what is happening before my eyes as I read again a few short stories to these guys!

Bo, Sita.... Thank you so much. I pray every day—I meditate and say, let Bo and Sita feel a small piece of what they have given me this day!

My love, D



Bo,

I'm here doing yet another violation. This is really getting to be too much of a habit for me. Each time I come back I have an even deeper feeling of disgust in myself and even lesser trust of the people who've done all they can do to strip me of any meaning or purpose in life.

I don't want to live anymore if I'm not gonna be able to trust those that I've been placed under (the DOC) rather than being given the rehab I really need. I end up locked up again for longer and longer imprisonment with no hope of my addiction to alcohol being addressed.

Fuck the DOC!!! That's how I feel...I'm not allowed help. I'm only deserving of a prison cell with no help at all period. But yet I'm supposed to learn how to trust these people. How could anybody in their right mind trust this kind of system

that's only concerned about putting you in a cell, lock the door and walk away? The human race is a really fucked up group of people, you know.

Bo, I'm homeless, have no family even though they are all alive. I have no money, no real friends I can trust. I just feel totally disregarded and thrown away like an empty soda pop can.

It's this and a whole lot more that has me feeling that I'm not supposed to be alive. So I've chosen to want death. I've also failed at death. I can't even do that right. Man, what a miserable person I am. Am I meant to suffer? And if I am will I be given an "F" in that as well?

Signed, Want to Die

Hey A,

Sorry you're in so much pain, brother. We have a package of my books on its way to you, hope they help in some way.

I won't argue with you at all about the DOC or the human race being "a fucked up group of people." You're right on both counts. But there is something you're missing, and that's the ONLY thing that makes life worth living – the real spiritual journey. It's not just a bunch of flowery ideas to put into our kids' heads to help them cope with life. And there is no force in the world, including the DOC, that can keep you from succeeding in it.

There is a power in you that is the greatest mystery on Earth. People who have solved that mystery are called saints, and they're the most trustworthy people who have ever lived. Many were tortured, imprisoned, executed, yet they possessed that force that made all of it trivial. I have personally touched this power, this force, many times. It's not bullshit.

Yes, the DOC is a horrible failure. Modern life is a horrible failure. But whether you and I are failures or not is up to us. It's never too late to take that deep and mysterious road inward. And when we do, we look around at all those same people with compassion instead of hatred, because "they know not what they do." And they suffer plenty for their ignorance!

You said you don't trust anybody. Well, it's your choice, bro – trust me or not. The only way to find out is to try it with all your heart. That's what all my books are about. Read them like your life depends on it. It does.

Love, Bo

GOODWORKS

The Honor Program

By Kenneth E. Hartman

Several years ago, at the beginning of the worst series of riots and violence in the history of the California prison system, I wrote a proposal for what would become the Honor Program. After five years and numerous political battles to keep the program going, we remain what California State Senator Gloria Romero has called, “the shining star of the prison system.”

In its entire existence, there have been no riots, no major incidents, and no mass actions of the type that have gripped this prison system (315 riots in 2005). The racial separation that characterizes most prisons in this state is lessened, if not eradicated. In short, for a prison, things run pretty smoothly, but how do they actually run, on the ground?

The first component of the process is the prisoner signing an agreement to live a different kind of life. “I agree to work to better myself and help in the creation of an environment in which growth is possible.” Additionally, all agree to mandatory, random drug testing. There is an assumption that this contract also obligates the state to providing the means in which to realize these higher goals of self-improvement and improvement of our world. This last may be less reliable, but we have patterned ourselves on the approach to serving time described by Nelson Mandela: We will conduct ourselves with more dignity than some of our captors and move them to a higher place along with us, if necessary.

After signing the agreement, the participant creates an “Individual Development Plan,” that details his goals, both long and short term, and seeks whatever assistance may be available from the state. For most, this means setting out to alter the course of their lives in their own way, at their own pace, but we strive to provide as many avenues as possible. The primary thrust is on service to the community. Honor Program participants counsel at-risk youth, donate beautiful works of art to be auctioned off for local charities, and build toys for disadvantaged children. We also refurbish eyeglasses for people in Third World countries, and readily participate in charitable giving as the need arises in specific cases.

We still have a long way to go to realizing all of the ideals and aspirations of the Honor Program, but we are moving forward. Our reach still exceeds our grasp, to be sure. However, our connections to the community grow apace with our desires to effect the world for the better.

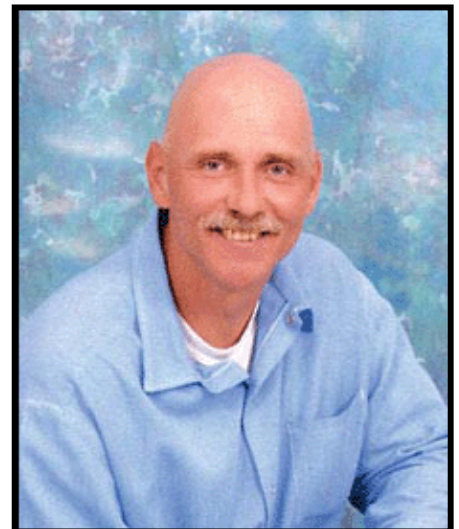
The fundamental concepts for the day-to-day operation of the Honor Program are individual accountability and positive reinforcement of behavior. This stands in stark contrast to the failed group punishment/negative reinforcement model of most prison systems. The statistics, which show tremendous, double-digit decreases in all forms of illegal and inappropriate conduct, demonstrate the success of the Honor Program Model.

We who have worked to make this reality believe the possibilities are endless; we believe the Honor Program can transform the prison system. More to the point, we believe we can change the world, one heart at a time.

I am currently the Chairman of the Steering Committee for the Honor Program. For contact information go to www.kennethehartman.com, or write to me at:

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Kenneth Hartman, a life prisoner with more than 27 years served, is a nationally recognized, award-winning author who has worked for more than 16 years to effect transformational change inside prison. His essay, A Prisoner’s Purpose, was one of the winners of the Templeton Foundation’s worldwide essay contest, the 2004 Power of Purpose Awards. He also won a 2005 Maggie Award for his editorial piece on prison reform which was published in California Lawyer. He has an unshakeable faith in the power of personal transformation, and a limitless determination to work for real change within the prison system. –ed.



NEWS, NOTES, AND OFFERINGS

KINDNESS HOUSE IS UP FOR SALE

After many years in the same location, Human Kindness Foundation is moving to smaller quarters and is selling the property known as Kindness House, a 70-acre community on which we have constructed many passive-solar cabins, workshops and other buildings and have held many retreats and other events. **Our mailing address (PO Box 61619) will not change.** Our new headquarters is a 7-acre place without any facilities for retreats or overnight visitors – just a house that will serve as our office, a warehouse, and a cabin that we plan to build for Bo and Sita to live in.

Kindness House once served a purpose for our prison work by offering room and board to people who wished to help us full-time. But our live-in volunteers declined steadily over the past five years and have been replaced by part-time local volunteers who live in town, so some of our buildings have been empty for some time, and have been a burden to take care of rather than a support for the prison work.

Our new location will be more convenient for volunteers and our main energies will go toward answering the mail (500-600 letters/wk now), sending out our materials, and coordinating Bo's tour schedule for talks and workshops. We hope whomever buys Kindness House will have use of its seven residences, three wells, two workshops, and ample facilities for retreats, camps, meetings, etc. You can see photos and the realty listing at www.ncsanctuary.com.

TWO MORE LANGUAGES FOR OUR #1 BOOK

We're All Doing Time is now available in a beautiful Dutch edition called *We Zitten Allemaal Vast*, translated by Frans Drost and published by Synthese (www.synthese.ws). Sales of the book will help fund its free distribution to Dutch prisoners. And Vaclav Vsetin is most of the way through a Czech translation that he is posting online as he goes (www.volny.cz/cdk.vp/we_are_all_doing_time_b2.doc), and is hoping to interest a publisher in printing when he is done.

This means *We're All Doing Time* is now available in English, Spanish, French, Italian, Dutch, and Czech, and we hear rumors that prisoners in far-flung places have been translating sections into Russian, German, Sinhala, Hindi, Farsi, and who knows how many others?



We're All Doing Time in Dutch

MICHEAL/ARJUN UPDATE

Many of you may remember Arjun Nicaastro (formerly Michael Nicaastro), who paroled to NC in 1998 after doing 23 years in Alabama prisons, and became part of our full-



Arjun, Janaki and Dylan

time staff. He got married here in 2001 and had a beautiful baby boy in 2002. As head of our InterFaith Order, he wrote to many of you between 1998 and 2003, so we thought you'd like to know what's going on in his life.

In December, Arjun was diagnosed with leukemia. He is currently in remission, but is still undergoing aggressive chemotherapy, and is considering a bone marrow transplant, to prevent a recurrence. He and his wife, Janaki, deeply appreciate your prayers in this difficult time. Arjun is continuing with his job as a counselor in an addiction recovery program, and with his studies. He plans to finish his master's degree in Social Work this May.

MIRACLES PRISONER MINISTRY

This Christian ministry is founded on the teachings of Jesus, the 12 Step Program (based on AA) and A Course in Miracles. MPM provides inmates with written literature, audio/visual tapes and CD's, as well as on-site individualized self-help training programs. Their purpose is to aid in the change of an inmate's mind from one full of hate and fear to one fostering forgiveness, peace, self-determination and cooperation. To receive materials, send your name and complete and accurate mailing address to:

Miracles Prisoner Ministry
501 E Adams
Wisconsin Dells, WI 53965
www.miraclesprisonerministry.org

(Be sure to tell them about any special mailing requirements, and *include your ID#*)

TOUR UPDATE

Here are some responses to Bo's continuing tour:

"Your books and personal presence here have impacted my life and transformed it forever. Keep up the love and never stop shining. You are truly a beautiful soul! Life is GOOD, even when it is not great!" – Always, Loida Lugones

"I had the pleasure to be at the program here in Lincoln Correctional Center, where Bo was talking to us. I've never felt such peace and serenity in so long. It was a wonderful feeling to have. It was such a pleasure to meet Bo." – Deborah Jennings

"Bo's visit turned out to be one of the most spiritual experiences of my life. Here are the top five:

1. The birth of my son
2. Being born again
3. Getting married
4. Bo's visit
5. Seeing Bruce Springsteen in concert"

– Thomas McDonnell



Bo will be doing the Northeast part of his tour starting this June. We're already working on a large number of prisons, but if you're on the East Coast, between North Carolina and Maine, and would like for Bo to do a public talk and/or concert in your city, write Sita at sita@humankindness.org.



Artwork by William A Nolan
El Dorado, Kansas

Our Newest DVD!!

**AN INTIMATE LOOK AT
BO LOZOFF ON TOUR**

"You Can Do This"

In May of 2006, B Sullivan of Santa Rosa, California, took his video camera and followed Bo Lozoff to two prison workshops (men's and women's), a public talk and a house concert, and then spent many hours assembling this beautiful portayal of what it is that Bo has been doing on tour. See the interactions, hear the haunting music, and feel the power that makes people in nearly every community tell us "my life changed the day Bo came through here." A very well-paced, engaging DVD (one hour).

Code: .DYC.....60 min DVD.....\$20, plus \$3 shipping if you are ordering only this DVD

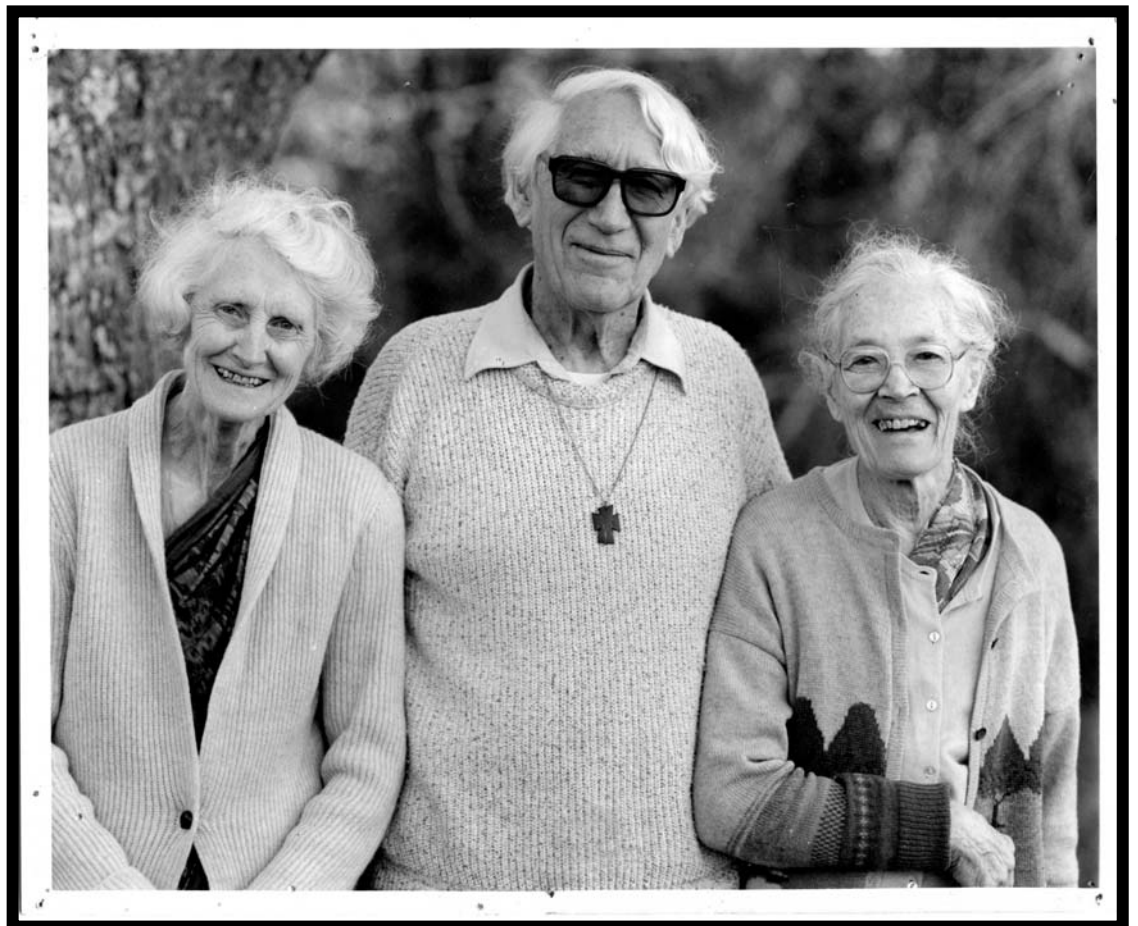


a little good news

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*They lived humbly
on the Earth, yet
beamed with true
spiritual abundance.*



Father Murray and Mary Rogers (r) with Heather Sandeman, who shared community for more than 50 years