

Quench

FALL 2012
BRIDGING

A resource seeking to satisfy spiritual
thirst in community

Crossing the Bridge

BY COURTNEY MULLER

For as long as my family can remember, crossing over the Sagamore Bridge, from Massachusetts to Cape Cod, marks the official start of summer. As soon as we see Sagamore's soaring steel cables on the horizon, we roll down the windows and breathe in the fresh, salt air. We have been waiting all winter for this moment. Our family is ready to cross over and begin new adventures. The excitement of summertime and all its promise is palpable.

While we look forward to summer, the necessary crossing of Sagamore Bridge is also a little scary. The curve of the bridge is very steep, and its steel frame is an ominous dark gray. Sagamore is always crowded with cars speeding over it. Ironically, there is always a little tension in the car as we cross over the bridge. My husband knows to move into the center lane to avoid the outer edge.

Well for the Journey, particularly The Well Website Circle, took a similar trip this summer. Looking towards its next decade, The Well is being called to grow further into its mission. A critical step in that growth is to develop a clear identity and message; a message that would resonate with anyone who is interested in The Well. The Circle began to ask questions, like "What symbols best represent The Well?" "How do we tell The Well's story?" "Do we need to change our image to better reflect our story?" These questions made us pause and discuss the differences in our opinions. They bridged our own ideas of a concise "Well identity."

As we moved further along in finalizing the new logo,

deeper conversations began to unfold. The logo, while a new marketing symbol for the organization, unexpectedly became a personal symbol of our own individual journey. We could not talk about the meaning of The Well's new logo, from an organizational point of view, without talking about the logo from a personal point of view. For me, the new logo represents the different stages of my spiritual journey. It seems to bridge them together. For example, it symbolizes a water well providing nourishment. This represents how The Well is a source of daily spiritual nourishment to me. It also represents a labyrinth, the continuous path that I follow to answer my Call. One logo was bringing us together, yet also taking on a different meaning for each person.

What the Website Circle experienced is also something that often happens at The Well. Bridges are built and crossed over: the individual with oneself; the individual with the group; and, the individual with the unknown. These interchanges create relationship and community.

The Website Circle continues its marketing work. The Well's new website, launched this Fall, connects our community to others. Like crossing Sagamore, with the duality of excitement and uncertainty, the new logo and website will bridge our past and present with our future.

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What's On Your Night Table?

BY FRANKLIN ADKINSON

A Post-Religious Culture?

Has Christianity in America come and gone? Dietrich Bonhoeffer in *Letters and Papers from Prison*, wrote more than 70 years ago that "...we are moving toward a completely religionless time." Diana Butler Bass, sociologist of American religion and Episcopal priest, documents in her new best-selling book, *Christianity After Religion*: church membership and attendance is way down since 1990. Not only mainline denominations, but evangelical and "mega church" movements are faltering.

In the first half of the twentieth century, people were born into a religion, but in the current century about 45% of Americans have left their childhood faith, often in search of a broader, more inclusive spirituality. Among the under-thirty set, 75% have no religious preference and never attend religious services. More than 90% of young adults outside the church have very negative views of religion and institutional Christianity.

The irony of this situation as documented by Bass is that since the 1960's American culture has been undergoing what sociologists call a "Great Awakening"—a returning to a forgotten path of mystical wonder and awe which the ancients called *religio*. Bass argues in the third part of her book that this newly rediscovered spiritual hunger provides a real opportunity for churches and religious institutions to reinvent themselves to meet this need.

Bass' book is worth a careful read by those who seek to understand the changing roles for religion and spirituality within an increasingly secular American society. And it provides thoughtful and well-grounded guidance for organizations like The Well which are trying to fill the void as traditional religious institutions struggle for meaningful survival. Bass concludes, "it is up to us to move with the Spirit instead of against it, to participate in making our world more humane, just, and loving."

brilliance and God-driven inspiration behind it. When I first looked at it, I thought of the Fibonacci sequence which moved me into the spiritual, mystical realm. Then I saw how closely the shell also resembled a labyrinth, and the idea of a journey inward towards new life arose. Finally, I looked at the watermark and felt that my spiritual experience (and that of everyone looking at the logo) was inextricably bound or overseen by the godhead, universe, or cosmic consciousness – whatever term one uses to describe the source of creation and unity. I'm not all that visual a person, so this logo had to be pretty darned powerful to engender such a response. Great job and congratulations to everyone involved!" -Christine Tetrault

In Our Mailbox

WHAT WE ARE HEARING ABOUT OUR NEW LOOK...

"I love the new look." -Mimi Bourgeois

"I love your new logo! I think the nautilus is the perfect symbol for your spirit and image. When I look at it I see a spiraling staircase to God and it reminds me that we are all connected – past, present, and future – through this Eternal God! The words of wisdom that you send daily always seem to connect to what is happening in my life. Thank you!" -Caroline Smith

"This new logo is fantastic! There was clearly both...

Crossing Bridges Together

BY GREG COCHRAN



Greg Cochran

This past summer, I did a fair amount of traveling. I crossed many kinds of bridges: covered, one lane, spanning large rivers, small creeks and streams, over dry beds, busy ones, picture-book ones, ones I've crossed before, unfamiliar ones, over still waters and over waters that raged.

In our lives, we are constantly interfacing with bridges: crossing over them or trying to decide whether to cross over; standing in the middle - over life's raging rivers, over the "dry beds" of our lives, or taking in the still waters we have longed for; celebrating the new adventures waiting for us on the other side.

At The Well, bridging and providing a safe place for individuals to cross their bridges are important parts of who we are. The Well invites people from different backgrounds and experiences into community while honoring each

person's uniqueness and journey.

This was my experience long before I became Executive Director. In a time when I was in spiritual turmoil – not satisfied with where I was...not sure where I was going – I signed up for a couple of Well programs (*The Artist's Way* and *Group Spiritual Direction*). Within these safe, nurturing environments I was allowed to explore, to listen for, and to discover the bridges God was inviting me to cross. I learned so much. I grew so much. My faith deepened, and I let loose new gifts I was afraid to reveal. It has been life changing.

My hope is that others will experience this liberation. I invite you to join us at The Well as we cross bridges together. I invite you to take a step – just a step – toward what calls you into being whole...into community. I invite you to come and see!

Thank You

What a year 2012 has been thus far for The Well! - a 10th year birthday celebration bash; defining more deeply our mission; a new logo born out of listening and discernment; increased programming; an addition of a five-day part-time Office Administrator; Sutton moving to the position of Program Coordinator; and much more. All of this has been and is possible because of those of you who gave to our "Gifts to Grow" appeal last spring. Words can only begin to express our gratefulness to you for your generous gifts. A more formal thank you will be included in our annual list of donors to be included in our winter addition of Quench.

Growth still continues and exciting things are happening as The Well continues to follow the vision given to us and as we live into our mission. Please consider how you might be a part of this journey – through giving (look for our fall giving appeal in October); through volunteering; or through participating in one of our programs. Again, we give thanks to and for you.



OUR VISION

Gathering...

Seeking the Source of
Wholeness and Life

Quenching a Common Thirst
Nurturing One Another.

In Community...

Being Nourished and
Renewed

Becoming Living Water
For Others in the World.

OUR MISSION

To encourage and support spiritual wellness in daily life through innovative programs and resources.

CORE VALUES

Bridging: Inviting people from different backgrounds and experiences into community while honoring each person's uniqueness.

Reflecting: Taking time amidst the busy-ness of life to explore faith, find meaning, and grow into wholeness.

Discerning: Helping one another listen for and become open to, and respond to the lived experience of God.

Wellbeing: Tending the spiritual life as an integral part of wholeness in people and communities.

Reaching Out: Becoming more compassionate, creative, contemplative, and joyful in our relationships and our world.

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