

Céu do Montréal: From Orthodoxy to Universalism

All Faiths Seminary International

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“Summing up in the broadest possible way the characteristics of the religious life, as we have found them, it includes the following beliefs: that the visible world is part of a more spiritual universe from which it draws its chief significance; that union or harmonious relation with that higher universe is our true end; that prayer or inner communion with the spirit thereof . . . is a process wherein work is really done, and spiritual energy flows in and produces effects . . .”

—William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*

ABSTRACT:

This thesis, entitled, *Céu do Montréal; From Orthodoxy to Universalism* explores the role of my Inter-Faith training with All Faiths Seminary International which took place during the time of the transformation of Céu do Montréal (Eclectic Centre for the Universal Flowing Light) from an Orthodox Santo Daime Church to an independent, Universalist Santo Daime Centre.

The Santo Daime is a syncretic spiritual practice founded in the Brazilian Amazon state of Acre in the 1930's by Raimundo Irineu Serra, known as Mestre Irineu. The Santo Daime is syncretic, in that it incorporates elements of several religious or spiritual traditions, including Christianity, South American Shamanism, African Animism, Kardec Spiritism and Eastern transcendental wisdom. Central to the Santo Daime practice is the sacrament, also known as Santo Daime or Daime taken in spiritual rituals, referred to as Works. The Santo Daime became a worldwide movement in the 1990's, and currently has an international presence.

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Chapter 1:

Introduction:

A Brief Overview of my Spiritual Journey from the Anglican Church to Inter-Faith

I was born in England in 1949 and we immigrated to Canada in 1952. My mother's family was Anglican, and church attendance was an unquestioned part of life. My father did not attend church (other than christenings, weddings, and funerals) as he had a greater interest in science, nature, and the universe than traditional religious practice.

Although there is beauty in the Anglican service – the hymns, prayers and ritual – the practice of Anglican Christianity did not resonate with the spiritual experiences that I have had since I was a young child nor did it address some deep questions that I had about life in general. My spiritual experiences were both “pulling” and in a sense defining me, however, I found myself searching for spirituality in what was at the time, culturally, a rather dry environment.

The late 60's brought cultural, social and spiritual revolution, and by the time I was twenty-one I began exploring different religions, particularly Eastern religions. Hinduism and Buddhism had provided a number of “maps” to aid my journey of self-discovery, and I finally had some answers to deep questions born of my spiritual experiences. The last forty years have been an extraordinary time of personal growth and discovery as I have sought out, been guided to, and participated in a wide variety of religious and spiritual rituals, trainings and apprenticeships. My trainings in Psychosynthesis and with Dr Stanislav Grof provided me with more tools and permitted me to deepen my understanding of my self and my Self. A number of the teachings and lessons have been difficult, others joyous, and a few I will be “in my study with” for the rest of my life. I am deeply grateful to the teachers and elders that I have met along the way, who have contributed so much to my understanding of human and spiritual life.

In 1996, after the International Transpersonal Conference in Manaus, Brazil, I, together with forty-five other professionals, embarked on an excursion to Mapia. The tour *The Wisdom of the Serpent* was organized by Stephen Larsen Ph.D. and Robin Larsen Ph.D., and it was the first group of international visitors to visit the community. Mapia is a Santo Daime community in the heart of the Amazon rainforest. It is the Mother Church of the line of Padrinho Sebastian (Padrinho means godfather) and a branch that developed from the line of the founder of the religion, Mestre Irineu. The

leadership of Mapia is managed by members of the family of Padrinho Sebastian, in particular two of his sons, Padrinho Alfredo and Padrinho Valdete.

The Santo Daime seemed to embrace many traditions and respect all religions, fitting well with my eclectic spiritual practice of Christianity, Eastern traditions and Shamanism. The Works (spiritual services) offered opportunities for transformation and healing. During a Work deep in the rainforest, I re-encountered Juramidam (Master Guide of the Santo Daime), who I had met in an out-of-body experience nine years earlier. I received the message that I was to bring the Santo Daime back to Canada. On my return I shared my experiences with a few friends and colleagues, many of whom expressed the desire to learn more. A year passed, one of profound inner reflection on my experiences and the message that I had received. I continued to participate in Santo Daime rituals in a number of international churches. In 1997 I returned to Brazil and became a member of the Santo Daime.

Chapter 2

The History of the Santo Daime as a Syncretic Spiritual Practice

The Santo Daime was founded in the Brazilian Amazonic state of Acre in the 1930's by Raimundo Irineu Serra, known as Mestre Irineu. Raimundo Irineu Serra was born in Brazil in 1892 to African parents and migrated to the Western Amazon region in 1912, attracted by a boom in the rubber tapping industry. While learning the rubber trade, he was also serving a spiritual apprenticeship with the Native Peruvians with whom he worked. He first drank Ayahuasca in the border region between Brazil, Bolivia, and Peru. Mestre Irineu had been raised Roman Catholic, but during the time he spent with the Indigenous people of the Amazon he learned many of their beliefs and practices. His apprenticeship with Ayahuasca included learning the correct way to prepare it, methods for journeying into ecstatic states, and how to integrate the visions and knowledge he brought back from those journeys.

Ayahuasca has had many names including Hoasca, Yage, and Caapi, and has been used for millennia in South American indigenous cultures. It is one of the traditional sacred technologies of South American Shamans. In many regions it is still used traditionally as a medicine, for discerning and treating various ailments as well as for its vision-inducing effects, which are said to be profound and life-changing.

Mestre Irineu's first significant vision was of the Divine Feminine, appearing in the full Moon, who he referred to as the Universal Goddess. He received the instructions from her to retreat into the forest for eight days, with only Ayahuasca to drink and boiled manioc to eat. In the forest he received the instructions for a new faith in which the Ayahuasca was to be called 'Daime'. Dai-me means « give me » in Portuguese, as in « daime força, daime amor » (give me strength, give me love), phrases found in several of the tradition's hymns. These directions were given to him by a Spiritual Being he knew as the Queen of the Forest. From these encounters he determined his future, as well as the future of those who would come to follow his footsteps: the Juramidam people. As a result of this experience he began to conduct spiritual ceremonies using the Daime.

The Santo Daime differs from Ayahuasca, which can contain other medicinal plants, in that the Santo Daime Sacrament (hereinafter the Sacrament) is made from two plants, the vine Jagube - *Banisteriopsis Caapi* and the leaves of the tree *Psychotria Viridis*, known to members as the "Queen of the Forest". The Sacrament is prepared ceremoniously by members in a festival called a "Feitio". During the Feitio Santo Daime hymns are sung and the Daime is taken by the followers, while the men shred the vine with wooden hammers and the women clean and sort the leaves. Due to the specific

manner in which the Sacrament is prepared, being that it only ever contains the two plants, and is only taken in spiritual rituals, the Sacrament is not called ‘Ayahuasca’, but rather ‘Santo Daime’.

Mestre Irineu started his new centre in Rio Branco, the capital of Acre, in 1930. He had continued to receive visions from the Forest Queen and he had begun to channel hymns. Originally, the Santo Daime teachings had no basis in written text, as many of the early practitioners were illiterate. The practice was oral and the learning was experiential through the singing of the hymns during the Santo Daime Works. The hymn collections of early practitioners have since become the scriptures and guiding principles of the Santo Daime. (1)

Due to the diverse religious and spiritual practices that Mestre Irineu, his companions, and other, accompanying and founding members of the Santo Daime, were raised in or exposed to, the Santo Daime evolved with elements of a number of traditions woven into the early development. Those influencing and seeding traditions were Christianity, South American Shamanism, African Animism, Kardec Spiritism and Eastern transcendental wisdom. The form of the ritual evolved throughout the Mestre’s life, as did other elements such as the uniforms worn in the Works.

Mestre Irineu died in 1971; however, his work was continued by many of his followers as the Santo Daime religion spread across Brazil. The Santo Daime became a worldwide movement in the 1990’s, currently having an international presence.

Chapter 3:

Founding Céu do Montréal: Eclectic Centre for the Universal Flowing Light

Céu do Montréal was founded in 1997, a year after my initiation into the Santo Daime religion. The small group that had been meeting regularly to study the Santo Daime practice and participate in Works, made the commitment to found a centre, Céu do Montréal. Over the next few years, many people in Quebec and Ontario visited our Works, and over time many other centres/groups branched out from Céu do Montréal. In 2010 Céu do Montréal became an independent Santo Daime Centre.

Until September 2000, I imported the Santo Daime sacrament through Canadian Customs, with the appropriate Brazilian agricultural documents. At that time, a shipment of the Santo Daime sacrament for our Centre was intercepted by Canada Customs and given to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP, the Federal Police) for investigation and analysis. Upon explaining that the Sacrament is used only for religious purposes, I was informed that an exemption was required to be able to import the Sacrament in the future, as the Sacrament contained controlled substances, DMT and harmala alkaloids. It is important to note that the RCMP was extremely respectful throughout the investigation.

In April 2001, having hired a lawyer to represent us and done the necessary research for the application, our church applied to Health Canada, the Department of Controlled Substances, for an exemption under section 56 of the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act, for the importation, transportation, and administration of the Sacrament. Five years of research and investigation followed, and in July, 2006 I was informed that the evaluation of our request had been concluded and that we were granted an exemption, in principle, pending Brazilian export permission. Again, it is important to note that throughout this period, the government officials working on our file have been and continue to be, entirely respectful towards the Santo Daime and our request. (2)

The request for Brazilian export permission revealed the complexity of the situation; Brazil in fact has no policy on export, and therefore many factors needed to be examined, which included existing Brazilian national regulations as well as international laws and policies.

In 2009, based on the evidence of Brazil permitting the export of Ayahuasca -for religious use only – to nations that had been granted import permission based on court cases, such as the United States (UDV) as well as Holland and Spain (Santo Daime), I initiated a request for Health Canada to research and consider the question of Canadian import permission. They have informed me that they are favourably inclined to consider this request and we are currently awaiting the issuance of the import permit.

From 1996 onwards, the rate of international expansion of the Santo Daime increased, and over the years a number of things became increasingly evident. The challenge of cultural differences exists wherever and whenever a tradition is migrating, and the Santo Daime was rapidly and simultaneously spreading across many continents. When I became a member of the Santo Daime, I was troubled by the lack of structure in the organization, especially in light of rapid expansion. I felt both guided and compelled to write a Code of Ethics, codify the Tenets of the Faith and compile a Member's Guidelines booklet along with other documents and booklets pertinent to ethical and sound organization. I created a Medical and Scientific Advisory Committee and a Counselling Committee adjunct to our Board of Directors.

It was, and continues to be, my intention to support the development of a sound, ethical organization, working within the regulations of Brazil and Canada, and dedicated to the core teachings of Mestre Irineu. Of additional importance are strong connections to the Scientific, Transpersonal and Inter-Faith communities.

Chapter 4

The Evolution of Religions and Spiritual Practices: The Seed, the Tree, and the Branches.

In the history of human development, most great traditions begin with a seed – usually the life and teachings of a great Master. After the growth of a movement and the passing of a Master (and sometimes even during her or his lifetime), it is to be expected that the trunk of the tree that grows from the seed will branch out. Great teachers of all spiritual lines incarnate, share the perennial philosophy in a culturally relevant manner, awaken those who are willing, and then leave. It is the rest of humanity that mythologizes the teacher and her or his life.

For example, twenty-five hundred years ago the seed planted by the life of the Buddha became a great many-branched tree: Buddhism. Two thousand years ago the seed planted by the life of Jesus of Nazarus became a great tree: Christianity, also with many denominational branches.

The death of Mestre Irineu in 1971 resulted in a diversification within the Santo Daime community as the seed planted by the life and teachings of Mestre Irineu has continued to grow. In Brazil there are many Daimista (Santo Daime practitioner) centres in the Santo Daime, some are affiliated, and some are independent. Centres can have diverse studies regarding the Santo Daime practice that are unique to the individual centre, with each study having its own merit. I have visited Centres that have strong connections to Native Peoples, Eastern teachers, and Jewish traditions. In addition, individual centres usually have a specific “flavour” and charitable mission. It is considered part of the tradition that the leader of each centre, together with the congregation, will bring a sense of personal mission based on shared vision, spiritual knowledge, experience, karma, cultural aspects, or other factors. Senior members of individual centres will usually receive hymns which contain specific teachings for that local centre.

The structure of the Brazilian GMT/CONAD (Multi-Disciplinary Working Group and the National Anti-Drug Council) committee reflects this diversity by its members. The committee is comprised of government officials, members of the scientific community, and six representatives of the various Ayahuasca Religious lines.

There is a natural evolutionary process to all aspects of life, including people, cultures, and beliefs. Many factors contribute to the developmental aspect of a religious movement; cultural, social, and legal influences, personal interpretations, scientific advances, and visionary revelations. It is possible to stay in alignment with the ‘perennial

philosophy' within the essential teachings of a philosophy or religion, while noting that with the passage of time, aspects of the great teacher's teachings that were culturally and/or politically relevant for the era and location of the Master's life, may not be pertinent in different cultures and in the emerging consciousness of today's world. Considerable discernment and integrity, as well as a direct inner experience of spiritual truths, is required to preserve the essence of the wisdom teachings of a spiritual practice while supporting evolutionary eclecticism.

One can see throughout the history of religious traditions and movements, and continuing until the present day, that it is possible for the branches of a religion or organization to live in harmony with each other by acknowledging that they are from the same roots and part of the same tree. Respect and harmony can be maintained when individuals, groups, and organizations choose to consciously live the spirit and truth of consciousness teachings 'the formless essence' while recognizing the need for the ritual or practice 'the form' to adapt to an ever expanding and transforming global human experience.

Equality in Theory and in Practice

My early years in the Santo Daime were focused on apprenticeship, initiations, and training. During this time, I questioned the elders on many aspects of the tradition and practice. The hymns spoke of equality for all people and yet what was becoming obvious to me was that the Brazilian patriarchal culture had become woven into the original visionary experiences and teachings of Mestre Irineu. This was most noticeable in the roles that men and women held in church office and responsibilities. Although there was an appearance of equality between Madrinhas (senior female members; Madrinha means godmother) and Padrinhos (senior male members; Padrinho means Godfather) in reality there were no women on the Board of Directors or holding any real position of authority or role in administrative decision-making. Women were denied access to the feitio house during the making of the Daime. Furthermore, in the house where the women cleaned the leaves in preparation for the feitio, a man was always present to serve the sacrament. During the Works, only men served the sacrament.

In addition, although Madrinha Rita was held in high esteem as the widow of Padrinho Sebastian, cultural restraints left her in the unquestioned position of always deferring to senior men, including her own sons Padrinho Alfredo, and Padrinho Valdete. This did not sit well with me, and equality was one of the issues that I raised with Madrinha Rita, Padrinho Alfredo, and Padrinho Valdete. I was assured by all of them that the teachings affirm equality, but I could never get clear, specific answers from them on this topic. They were delicate issues, particularly in light of my position; I had brought

the Santo Daime to Canada, was responsible for the founding centre, the legalization process and was active internationally. I was responsible for, and the guardian of the sacrament, as well as the recognized church leader, and during regular Works I would always serve the sacrament. I had never been told outright that I could not serve; however, whenever a Brazilian committee of elders would come to visit, it was an unspoken rule that only men would be serving the sacrament. I therefore found myself at these events being served sacrament by men less senior than myself, usually study group leaders of groups that had grown out of our centre, or senior men in our centre. (A study group is the first stage of development of a Santo Daime Centre, usually supervised by an established church or centre)

One facet of the problem is the law in Brazil regarding rights of women. For example, for twenty-six years the women of Brazil petitioned the courts to change one specific law, a law which in effect gave a husband the power to make decisions for his wife and children. The petition succeeded, thereby providing married woman with equal rights, however this only took place in 2000. At a Madrinha retreat in 2001, I spoke with two senior women of the line, Madrinha Rita and Madrinha Julia. They had no knowledge that the law had been challenged, let alone changed. However, even though the law had been changed, in practice, the reality of the situation demonstrated how rights enconced in theory can considerably differ from rights in practice.

In “Turning Women’s Rights into Reality” by Mario Osava, Rio de Janeiro, August 16th 2007 (ipsnews.net), Osava addresses the status of women in Brazil, writing that the Brazilian government has had problems when it comes to putting into practice the resolutions adopted in dialogue with society. She states that equality in the workplace, non-sexist education, improvements in health including respect for sexual and reproductive rights, and more effective action to combat violence against women are four areas which must be focused on and that although they make up the majority of the population and on average have a higher educational level than men, women in Brazil continue to earn less than men doing the same job. Evidently this situation was national, not a just a symptom of rainforest traditions.

Despite rights based in written constitution – as well as within the hymns of the tradition – men and women in this Santo Daime line, to a large extent, were still being viewed through a patriarchal lens. The leadership of Mapia seemed unwilling to address the fact that both in Brazil and internationally, many women were being spiritually called to leadership positions, to founding Centres and to taking responsibility for legalization processes. How this matter was challenging the patriarchal worldview and what changes were needed to permit a natural evolutionary process were not being addressed.

Cultism, Orthodoxy and Additional Challenges

In addition to gender equality, I had other concerns. One was that over the years it was becoming evident that the family members of the Mapia line held “cult status”, and was beginning to operate more like a family cult than a spiritual organization. This I believe was due to two factors; the first being what I perceive as a “rainforest tribal worldview” that in this situation fostered codependency amongst the family towards certain members and issues, a kind of “tribe first” attitude.

The second factor was the “guru” status that was being afforded the elders by many people in the international community. In naïve enthusiasm for spiritual enlightenment, it is not uncommon for people to project their higher self onto others, particularly those in positions of authority. Unfortunately, this dynamic, if not addressed by the elders through open dialogue and ethical practice, can lead to considerable harm to both the elders and the community.

In my perception, this line of the Santo Daime was also rapidly becoming what I can only describe as more orthodox. In the space of a few short years “Eclectic Centres” (Mestre Irineu was connected to three main Centres; Centre for Regeneration and Faith, the Open Centre, and the Universal Light Christian Illumination Centre) became “Churches.” The Christian elements of the tradition were becoming more strongly emphasized and other elements - South American Shamanism, African Animism (Umbanda), Kardec Spiritism, and Eastern transcendental wisdom - were either diminishing or disappearing from how the tradition was being practiced.

In a stunning move, the Padrinho of a Rio Church, who with his wife were influential members of the family of Padrinho Sebastian, removed hymns that mentioned Shamanic or Umbanda (African Spiritism) Beings from his hymnbook, declaring that “they are not Christian.” Not content with that, he went on to create what I have referred to as “a campaign of darkness” against a number of people (myself included) who were questioning the growing orthodoxy as well as irregularities in his administration. This was not unlike the campaign that (Saint) John Chrysostom, 347- 407 CE, the archbishop of Constantinople, made against the Jewish people and women, based on competitive reasons and personal power issues.

In *The Fundamentalist Mind, How Polarized Thinking Imperils Us All*, Dr. Stephen Larsen examines the psychological roots of fundamentalism. Fundamentalist thinking occurs, says Larsen, when people read metaphors literally and being certain or “right” becomes more important than anything else. He believes that we are all fundamentalists whether we acknowledge it or not, for we are born into a world of myth

and metaphor. Each of us internalizes the stories we were told as children as the literal interpretations of much greater and deeply symbolic lessons. Myths can be used as metaphors to guide us in our everyday lives, however, when a myth is held as literal truth one crosses a dangerous threshold. Larsen suggests that these unconscious patterns cause the loss of flexibility and freedom of thought, and that one can become split by dualistic thinking: bad versus good. These patterns of definitive, concretistic principles and behaviors will alienate us from one another. Any one of us can fall prey to inflexible, black-or-white thinking, and eventually, the brain can be hardwired to believe this way. Larsen affirms the advantage in recognizing fundamentalist thinking in ourselves and in others in order to address these tendencies, encourage our personal psycho-spiritual growth, and create a more compassionate and harmonious world.

By 2006, at the height of the “campaign of darkness”, and under the guise of conforming to regulations, Mapia informed all its affiliates that “Churches” must follow the following rules; (i) the Mapia calendar of Works must be followed, with the hymns and prayers as stipulated by them, and (ii) all Works must be in uniform and (iii) all Works must be in “Church”. First, this meant that all Works done in Nature were not permitted. A very important aspect of the Santo Daime tradition had been Works done in Nature in designated sacred areas called “terreiros”, an outgrowth of Mestre Irineu’s apprenticeship in Nature with the Shamans. This was troubling, to say the least, as contact with Nature is considered to be an essential aspect of the tradition. It also meant that all Works that had been developed in local Centres through visionary inspiration, even those that had received permission, were to be immediately discontinued. This was very difficult for me, and for most members of our Centre, however, under the circumstances we felt obliged to follow directions.

A noticeable rigidity was creeping into the line in other areas, in attitude and tone. Claims for “the right way” or “the only way” were being made about everything from how to sing a specific hymn to how to interpret what was being referred to as “The Doctrine”, which is a combination of the tradition as practiced by Mapia with their particular beliefs and worldviews. It usually took a few decades, if not centuries, for fundamentalism to develop in a spiritual practice, this seemed to be taking place almost overnight. On a personal level, deep within my soul, a six-thousand-year karmic pattern that I have had with religions was being awoken by these events. Initially, what a shock...but more importantly, what an opportunity was being provided for me to find my truth and resolve my karma in this area.

To add to this, to my great sadness, over a number of years I was witnessing what I considered to be serious ethical transgressions, which, due to aforementioned attitudes, were being covered up and ignored by the elders of the organization. Based on these

concerns, in 2000, I wrote a Code of Ethics for Céu do Montréal which can be found in Chapter 7.

Training, or what I perceived as the lack thereof, for the leaders of Centres was another, grave, concern. In Canada and elsewhere, individuals – usually well-intentioned and often having many skills – were being granted permission to be church or group leaders. My concerns were a lack of apprenticeship or training in areas of pastoral counselling, visitor’s screening, ethics, regulations, and administrative management. I raised these concerns and eventually wrote Recommendations for International Expansion, which can be found in Chapter 8.

My growing disquiet regarding ethical misconduct was confounded by an ongoing lack of adherence to Brazilian regulations on the part of the organization. On the one hand we were being asked to adhere to a more rigid practice of the Santo Daime tradition, and on the other hand certain regulations were being continuously ignored. From 2000 until early 2010 I challenged the elders on these issues, to no avail. Here in Canada, I was attempting to create a solid, ethical foundation for the study groups and centres that were developing out of Céu do Montréal in an expansion of the line nationally. By the spring of 2010, I had been shown spiritually that my karma with this line of the Santo Daime was complete, and that it was time for me to begin the process of terminating the affiliation that Céu do Montréal had with Mapia.

This decision was tremendously difficult. There were many people in the organization that I had genuine love for, and many that I considered as friends and colleagues. While I had deep gratitude for all that I had received and learned, I knew that for my own well-being and the integrity of our organization that this step was necessary. This step required amending our application for an Exemption 56 with Health Canada, and finding a new Brazilian affiliate.

In the autumn of 2010 most of our members agreed to the decisions that our Board of Directors had struggled with; (i) to terminate our affiliation with Mapia; (ii) to “hibernate” Céu do Montréal – that is – to cease all Works; (iii) to focus on achieving our legality; and (iv) to search for a Brazilian organization that shared the same values as we did and would agree to abide by a Code of Ethics and the regulations of Brazil and Canada. By November 28th, 2010 we put into effect these decisions, and an extraordinary year began, for only as we took the courage to close one door, would others open. I envisioned this period of time as one of transformation, in which we could shed the old form and allow spirit to guide us into a new chapter

In the words of W. H. Murray, of the 1951 Scottish Himalayan Expedition:

“Concerning all acts of initiative (and creation) there is one elemental truth, the ignorance of which kills countless ideas and splendid plans: that the moment that one definitely commits oneself, then Providence moves too. All sorts of things occur to help one that would never otherwise have occurred. A whole stream of events issue from the decision, raising in one’s favour all manner of unforeseen incidents and meetings and material assistance, which no man could have dreamed would have come his way.”

Since November 2010 most of these goals have been accomplished. In the summer of 2011, accompanied by another Board member, I travelled to Brazil and formed an affiliation for the supply of the sacrament with a new organization, Céu Sagrado, as an independent Santo Daime Centre. Céu Sagrado is also committed to sound ethical practice, as well as gender equality in all aspects of the Centre, including administration.

Our Exemption 56 application with Health Canada has been amended. The two committees that are adjunct to our Board, the Medical and Scientific Advisory Committee and a Counselling Committee, have been reorganized and have new members. Since the spring of 2012 all of our documents and booklets have been reviewed, revised and in many cases adapted, including our prayer books. Our goal was to return to the core of Mestre Irineu’s original vision and practice, restore some elements of our practice that had been previously banned, and to stay very attentive to the current direction of spirit and the Santo Daime. Below is our revised Mission Statement, the changes being; (i) centre replacing church; (ii) principles replacing doctrine; (iii) the acknowledgment of the eclectic and universalistic aspect of the Santo Daime and our Centre; (iv) the affirmation of full gender equality in the Centre; and (v) consciousness of the need to preserve Mother Earth.

CÉUDO MONTRÉAL MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Céu do Montréal is to uphold the central tenets of the Santo Daime. The intent of Céu do Montréal is to provide for transformation and evolution of all persons seeking enlightenment in communion with Divine Creator Consciousness through the use of the entheogen Santo Daime in the rituals known as Works. The rituals are called “Works” because through them we believe Initiates have the conscious responsibility for correcting personal flaws and transforming themselves during the spiritual services.

Although all are welcome to participate in the rituals for the gaining of truth, knowledge, and self-transformation, proselytizing is strictly forbidden. Membership in the Santo Daime is gained only upon the serious request of the participant.

The responsibility of members of Céu do Montréal is to live the teachings of the Hymns and Tenets, love the Divine Creator, love the Earth, love all beings in creation, including oneself, love and respect all brothers and sisters, accept the truth of one's divinity and one's faults, and learn to embody forgiveness, compassion, and humility.

We believe that the Santo Daime Doctrine represents an evolutionary eclecticism, one that changes and adapts to survive and thrive in the different cultures to which it has migrated during the international expansion that began in the 1990's. In order to remain relevant and meaningful to the emerging consciousness of modern society, Céu do Montréal preserves tradition while embracing evolutionary, universalistic diversity. We affirm beliefs without rejecting those who doubt, and endeavor to bring faith to sacred texts – the hymns - without sacrificing critical scholarship.

We encourage:

- *the study of the Santo Daime principles through the hymns, the music, prayer, meditation, inquiry and self-reflection*
- *personal self-reflection and spiritual inquiry with the intention of self-actualization*
- *full equality of women and men in all aspects of church leadership and religious life*
- *personal responsibility for all aspects of one's health and well-being, as well as religious choices made based on knowledge and commitment*
- *dedication to the care and sustainability of Mother Earth and all creation through personal transformation and acts of service and of social justice*

Inter-Faith Ministry

Concurrent to these changes was my enrolment at All Faith's Seminary International for admission in September 2011, and the subsequent year of study that has followed. When I first felt Spirit guiding me to apply for the program, I was astonished, and yet once past my initial reaction, I began to see the wisdom in Spirit's guidance. On a personal level, I am enriched by the course material and the contact with other traditions. It has also been invaluable in helping me to return to the more eclectic and Universalist spiritual vision that I originally had for Céu do Montréal. The program was helping me to affirm the deep sense of connection that I have with the transpersonal realms and with what Aldous Huxley termed "the perennial philosophy", the great truths inherent in all

spiritual teachings. As so often happens when one is willing to trust Spirit and venture into the unknown:

“When you have come to the edge of all light that you know, and are about to drop off into the darkness of the unknown, faith is knowing one of two things will happen: there will be something solid to stand on or you will be taught to fly.” Patrick Overton

Chapter 5:

The Rituals; the function of Prayer, Hymns, Music and Dance

The Rituals

Santo Daime rituals are known as “Works”. Centres traditionally have a rectangular or star-shaped central altar, on which stands the Cross of Caravaca, with its double horizontal beam, four candles representing the Sun, the Moon, the Stars and all Divine Beings, photographs of Mestre Irineu and other respected elders, and fresh flowers. Centres may also contain statues, images or photos of Spiritual Guides, Teachers, or Beings of Light, as well as sacred objects such as crystals or ceremonial feathers. In general, the Daime is served from a separate altar (referred to as the Daime table) usually placed directly behind the head of the main altar.

Each session begins and ends with prayers, mainly adapted Christian prayers. Santo Daime rituals include Concentrations (seated meditation Works), White Works (official, dancing Works), Curas (healing Works) and the Mass. Participants drink Daime in all types of ritual; but the format and focus can differ. Concentrations include the singing of hymns with silent, seated meditations, while hymnals involve dancing and singing hymns accompanied by maracas and other instruments. Some Santo Daime Works can last up to 12 hours, and the effects of the Daime combined with dancing, singing and concentration both requires and engenders stamina or ‘firmeza’ – firmness. During the Works women and men are separated; women sit or dance on one side of the Salão (temple room) and men on the other side.

Participants in the ritual learn to surrender themselves to the process of the Santo Daime through which they may learn things about themselves, the nature of life and of the Universe. This may include various wonders, in that the Sacrament is known for the visions it generates, as well as fostering a sense of communion with nature and spiritual reality. The Santo Daime offers an opportunity to align with the divine. The Sacrament facilitates the opening of all levels of being -physical, emotional, mental and spiritual, thereby allowing access to and communion with spiritual energies, guides, healers, and teachers.

The Daime expands consciousness, giving one the opportunity to experience love and truth at depths previously unimagined. Within this space it is possible to sense and feel many things. Some will be very beautiful, and some may be painful. The Daime is capable of revealing aspects of both the higher and lower self, sometimes resulting in difficult ‘passages’ involving the integration of dissociated psychological content. The

purpose is to use the higher self in order to transform the lower self, as to a certain extent; each is not complete without the other.

One learns to trust that whatever happens is for the highest good, for we cannot transform and heal what we do not recognize as part of ourselves. It is important to know that whatever one experiences, one is not alone. There are ‘guardians’ (specially trained church members) available during the Works to assist, and whether or not one is aware of them, there are also spiritual guides and healers present during the ritual.

The Hymns

In most religious traditions and spiritual practices, sound plays an important role, usually in the form of chants, songs, and hymns. In Hinduism, Om or Aum is considered to be the greatest of all the mantras. Composed of three sounds, it represents the three-fold nature of earth, atmosphere, and heaven, mystically embodying the essence of the universe. This is similar to Christian and Judaic beliefs that all creation arose from sound (the Word), as well as the beliefs of many aboriginal peoples that the universe was sung into creation.

The Santo Daime tenets affirm the belief that the hymns received by the elders, masters and more experienced members of the Santo Daime are sacred and contain spiritual teachings of perpetual and universal value. In addition, it is believed that the principal messages of the hymns include spiritual communion with the Divine and celestial beings, the respect and compassion for all peoples, and the respect and preservation of Nature.

All of the essential teachings of the Santo Daime are transmitted through the hymns, which, when sung, it is believed, create a direct link to the astral and the Divine. Master Irineu received 129 hymns within his hymnal, and his hymns record his spiritual journey and evolution from when he began drinking the Daime until his death. Through the singing of his hymns, the participant is able to connect with the teachings of Mestre and, in many ways, begin to walk the same spiritual path which Mestre walked.

Since hymns are considered to be direct transmissions from the astral, it is through the singing of hymns that teachings of Mestre and other elders are passed to the members. Through the force of the sacrament, the hymns become living testimony and bring specific energies of healing, strength, communion, forgiveness, and remembrance. Many Daimistas receive hymns and there are literally thousands of hymns within the Santo Daime. Depending on the type of Work, specific Hinários are sung, such as for a Concentration, Cura or Official festival Works of the Santo Daime calendar.

Dance

Dance has a rich history in the cultural and spiritual traditions of the world. It is used in religious rituals and social celebrations dating back to prehistoric times. Dance can contain teachings and relay stories. Historically, dance is an aspect of initiation rites, where the discipline of the dance calls forth spiritual surrender, ego death, and deep physical challenge.

The Santo Daime tradition includes dancing Works and the focus of the dance is to create harmony with the singing, the musical instruments, and the movement of the dance in order to facilitate an inner work of spiritual uplifting and an expansion of consciousness. The “current” is the spiritual force of the Work and it relies on the efforts and energy of all participants to create a sacred union in which to obtain spiritual results. The firmness of the current rests within the firmness and state of consciousness of all present in the Work.

In the first few years, we would generally dance a series of hymns at the end of most Concentration and even Cura (Healing) Works. This is what I had learned, and they were the guidelines that had been given to me by various elders. The main reason being that dancing for a short while (about 30 minutes) at the end of a Work got people up, got the energy moving and was very grounding. It was particularly helpful when there were new people. In the aftermath of the “campaign of darkness” surprisingly, and with no other explanation than “this is how we do it” we were informed by Mapia that we could no longer dance at the end of Works, but rather were required to stand still for the last set of hymns. Although standing during hymns provide valuable teachings, we have determined that the former way will be reinstated; with the leader of the Work choosing whether to dance or stand dependant on discernment of the needs in the moment, in each Work.

The Santo Daime tradition provides opportunities for the study of stillness and silence as well as movement and dance. The importance of spontaneous movement and emotional expression during either seated or dancing Works is recognized. Areas of the church designated as “healing areas” (which are often separate rooms) are available for women and men to explore their inner journey more deeply and, when necessary, to give expression to the transformation process.

Prayer

Prayer can be an expression of worship or gratitude, an appeal, a supplication, or an invocation—a call to a specific being. There are two main types of prayer: traditional prayer and personal prayer. The first is the traditional prayers of religious and spiritual practices. Such prayers may be chanted, sung, or repeated silently or aloud by the practitioners. Traditional prayer may have a heritage of hundreds or thousands of years, whether said alone, with others, in ritual settings, or in private devotion. These prayers establish spiritual intimacy, affirm faith, calm the mind, and connect those praying with the Beings that govern that particular spiritual line. The moment a traditional prayer is begun, one joins a spiritual current of intention and devotion being created by many people around the world who are simultaneously praying the same prayer of the particular spiritual line.

Traditional prayers are very effective in opening or “cleaning” a mind cluttered with worries or negativity. They are also helpful in easing a burdened heart, or when one is feeling stressed or out of balance. It is best to say traditional prayers slowly, whether silently or out loud, breathing consciously and relaxing the body in order to truly enter into the heart of the prayer.

The second type of prayer, personal prayer, is a personal dialogue with the Divine. In essence, this form of prayer is communion with the Light. It is verbal or non-verbal, an energetic, instinctive communication between the self and the Self; the self and Ancestors; the self and nature; the self and others; the self and the Cosmos. It is a free-flowing expression of what is within one’s soul, whether hope, despair, joy, or sorrow.

Prayer is an integral aspect of the Santo Daime tradition. There are traditional prayers said at the opening and closing of each Work, as well as optional prayers – at the leader’s discretion – at any time during the Work when it is deemed appropriate. Optional prayers include those from any and all spiritual traditions that are in alignment with the principles of the Santo Daime. Of note was that in the Mapia line, diversity in the prayers disappeared, until only the orthodox prayers were sanctioned.

Meditation

A novice can bring many expectations to meditation and to the spiritual path. Eventually one learns that willpower, discipline, an open heart-open mind attitude, and a willingness to be present with whatever might arise, are the qualities essential for meditation.

The practice of meditation is essential in the Santo Daime and is often referred to as “concentration”. The two main monthly Works established by Mestre Irineu are called “Concentrations”. In the Concentration Works, there are opening prayers, then one and

one-half to two hours of silence, followed by a selection of hymns. In his Decree of 1971, Mestre advised the following:

“For us to be able to reach the main objective, we need to work together in the most profound silence in the Work. No one will be allowed to talk during the time that the concentration is taking place, nor even during the hinario. The same applies to those conducting the Work, unless they need to communicate an order between themselves”.

Chapter 6:

The Tenets of the Faith

The Tenets of the Faith were originally codified due to a request by the Canadian government for the beliefs of the Santo Daime. The Santo Daime had been an oral tradition, and the beliefs were contained in the hymns and oral teachings. For decades the hymns were memorised, and only in the recent decades had hymnbooks been made. Since the government's request was both reasonable and necessary, I took the request into a Work and prayed, afterwards I made notes and prayed some more. Once I had sketched out the main points I sat with a small committee of members from our Centre and at the end of an evening inspired by Spirit and guided by intuition, the Tenets were done. I contacted Alex Polari de Alverga and asked if he would kindly review them to see what, if any, changes were needed. Remarkably, he told me that nothing vital had been left out, and nothing unnecessary had been added. He advised me that he was adding some minor points and would put some of the Tenets into more ecclesiastical language.

Only minor changes have been made in our recent revision, such as replacing “doctrine” in various places. None of the core beliefs are changed. Some corrections were made to be historically accurate, for example in Tenet 14 and 15 we more clearly acknowledge the historical use and include the reference to Ayahuasca, and in Tenet 31 we included the importance of “ecological consciousness.”

The Tenets of the Faith

The Santo Daime promotes a wholesome lifestyle in conformity with Mestre Irineu's motto of « Harmony, Love, Truth and Justice » as well as other key doctrinal values such as strength, humility, kinship, and purity of heart.

1. *We believe in the existence of an omniscient, omnipresent, and omnipotent God, whose principal attribute is universal cosmic love and who manifests throughout all creation.*
2. *We believe in the existence of an Imperial Kingdom of Divine Beings including: the Divine Eternal Father; the Divine Sovereign Mother; Lord Jesus Christ; the Patriarch St. Joseph; St. John the Baptist; Angels; Archangels and other hierarchies of Angels who, together with the illuminated saints make up the Celestial Court.*
3. *We dedicate special devotion to the Archangels Michael, Raphael, Gabriel and Uriel, and to the different spiritual beings of the Astral who emanate from the Holy Spirit and serve Christ in illuminating human consciousness.*

4. *We respect the manifestations and the spiritual beings from the different native traditions of Africa and the American continents, ancestral spirits who are entities with healing abilities and immense wisdom.*
5. *We believe in the protection and guidance of these Divine Beings for the purpose of cleansing our emotional, mental, and spiritual bodies.*
6. *We believe in the Holy Doctrine as received by Master Raimundo Irineu Serra, through an apparition of Our Lady in the form of the Queen of the Forest.*
7. *We believe that the Second Coming of Christ, symbolized by the second arm of our Cross of Caravaca, refers to the mission of Master Juramidam.*
8. *We believe that the Second Coming of Christ also has an esoteric meaning and must be interpreted with His presence that dwells within and can be experienced by each one of us.*
9. *We believe in the Divine purpose of the communion of our Sacrament, Santo Daime, in the search for self-knowledge which is revealed through the direct and personal experience with the manifested presence of the consciousness of Christ that dwells within each of us.*
10. *We believe that this Christic presence is experienced as an intimate counselor who teaches us how to become instruments of his peace and wisdom, realigning ourselves with our internal Divinity.*
11. *We believe that the Sacrament of the Santo Daime is a vehicle to the direct experience with the Divine and the Celestial Kingdom where the Divine Beings dwell.*
12. *We believe that the Sacrament of the Santo Daime is fundamental to the ritual of Santo Daime since it provides the possibility to access the higher states of consciousness of genuine mystical experience.*
13. *We believe that the Daime Sacrament is a sacred marriage of the masculine and feminine principles, through the boiling of the Rainha leaf and the Jagube vine.*
14. *We believe that the tradition of the Santo Daime is based in the millenary traditions of the Incas and native pre-Colombian cultures and that it developed out of the*

- direct communion with the Divine through this living Sacrament used by sages, clairvoyants and shamans from Antiquity.*
15. *We believe that this unbroken current of tradition culminated with Master Raimundo Irineu Serra, who denominated Ayahuasca - named after an Inca Prince, and the Sacrament of the peoples subjugated by the European conquest – into the Santo Daime.*
 16. *We believe that our vegetal (plant) Sacrament is the vehicle of a Divine presence (known as Juramidam) which represents the spirit of Christ and reveals His doctrines and teachings through the mirações (state of visionary consciousness) and the hymns.*
 17. *We believe that the hymns received by the Elders, masters and more experienced members of our religious faith are sacred and contain spiritual teachings of perpetual and universal value.*
 18. *We believe that the principal messages of the hymns include the spiritual communion with the Divine; the praising of the celestial beings; the respect and compassion for our brothers and sisters; faith in the Divine Eternal Father and the Divine Creative Mother; and the respect and preservation of Nature.*
 19. *We believe that the rites of this syncretic Doctrine allow the participants to experience a connection with the Divine in Nature, with the Universe and with the Superior and Internal being (higher self).*
 20. *We believe in Redemption and Baptism in this true water of life that is the Santo Daime, for the remission of sins and the entrance into a new life.*
 21. *We believe that the Santo Daime Doctrine is experienced by its followers as a Eucharist of Nature.*
 22. *We believe that the making of the Sacrament is a sacred and initiatory process, to be performed according to rules handed down directly from the Queen of the Forest to Master Irineu.*
 23. *The Santo Daime rituals are called “Works”, because through them we believe initiates have the conscious responsibility for correcting personal flaws and transforming themselves during the religious service.*

24. *We believe we have the responsibility to transform ourselves and to develop into more evolved and Christ-like beings.*
25. *We believe in the eternal life of the soul, in reincarnation and in the examination of our incarnations, in the light of the clairvoyance provided by the Santo Daime, to understand our Karma and to remove the obstacles for the evolution of our spirit.*
26. *We believe that in our “work” it is possible to obtain spiritual healing – since it is part of the natural process that one experiences in the search for one’s true Self and unity with the Divine.*
27. *We believe in the daily practice of prayer and meditation, in the practice of forgiveness, of charity, humility, and in the obedience to the spiritual teachings revealed internally through the communication with the Divine provided by the Santo Daime.*
28. *We believe in a sacred life in the context of a community dedicated to this goal. The community of the Santo Daime believes that living a religious life is more important than having religious experiences.*
29. *The community is viewed as a brother and sister hood and this familial relationship includes also a profound identification and empathy with the elements of Nature, the spiritual beings of the forest, rivers, oceans, the wind, the sun, the moon and the stars of the firmament.*
30. *We believe in the importance of preserving and respecting Nature, fauna, flora, and all living creatures.*
31. *We believe that harmony with Nature and other beings, as well as living a community life with ecological consciousness is part of the foundation of our spiritual Doctrine.*
32. *As individuals and responsible citizens, we believe in the respect and fulfillment of our responsibilities, civil and collective.*
33. *We recognize the right of an individual to choose his/her religion and/or spiritual path.*
34. *The adherence to the Santo Daime is voluntary. The initiation (official entrance into the brother/sisterhood) is also voluntary. The retirement from the Santo Daime*

is voluntary; no type of restriction applies. Proselytism is prohibited. The Santo Daime receives all who search spiritual comfort. The same principles are followed in all communities of the Santo Daime, independently of nationality, race, color or belief. The Santo Daime differs from other religions of masses by not searching for new followers. It assumes the charitable mission of not inviting, at the same time receiving, without discrimination, all who search.

35. *Our religion, although a Christian confession, has eclectic roots and as such respects and sometimes incorporates into its teachings some elements from other main spiritual traditions of humanity.*

The Tenets of the Faith, Copyright Céu do Montréal; revised April, 2012.

The Tenets of the Faith were originally compiled by Céu do Montréal in 2000, and we wish to acknowledge Alex Polari de Alverga for his assistance at that time.

Chapter 7:

The Code of Ethics

The Code of Ethics was written in 2001, based on growing concerns that I had about the Santo Daime communities. The training with Dr Stanislav Grof (Grof Transpersonal Training; hereinafter “GTT”) includes training modules on ethics, and we were most fortunate to work directly with Kylea Taylor, a GTT training supervisor and author of *The Ethics of Caring* (3). Another significant aspect of the training was the module “Insight and Opening”, in which the teaching shared by Stanislav Grof M.D. and Jack Kornfield Ph.D. Kornfield often spoke of the needs for ethical guidelines in spiritual communities, and in 2000 he published “*After the Ecstasy, the Laundry*” (4) a book in which he outlined ethical challenges on the spiritual path and offers suggestions and standards. In the book he suggests that if you have joined a spiritual path and there is no ethics code, write your own and take it to the elders.

The advice came at just the right moment. Inspired by Kornfield’s words, I wrote the code, and offered it to our Brazilian affiliate, which regrettably, they never adopted. I am happy to report, however, that numerous churches and centres in Canada and internationally have, and continue to, contact me for permission to adopt the Code.

Code of Ethics

Introduction

As members of this community, it is our aim to uphold the traditions of the Santo Daime and to provide for the transformation and evolution of all persons seeking enlightenment. We desire to live the teachings of the Santo Daime, love the Divine Creator, love the Earth, love all beings in creation, including oneself, love and respect all brothers and sisters, accept the truth of one’s divinity and one’s faults, and learn to embody forgiveness, compassion, and humility.

*The principles of the Santo Daime ask us to live with sincerity and respect with one another, and to clear up any misunderstandings that might occur (as stated in *The Decree of Mestre Irineu*). This spiritual direction recognizes our humanity, and therefore our tendency to make mistakes; it indicates where the moral line of behavior is drawn, and what to do when a mistake is made. The Code of Ethics outlines areas of behavior and interaction that are potentially vulnerable and gives guidelines for healthy boundaries and behavior.*

Intention

Members of the community are to serve in ways that reflect honesty, integrity, and wisdom.

Money

We agree to respect the property of others, to assist in bringing consciousness to the use of all the earth's resources, to be honest in our dealings with money, and at all times maintain clear and honest business practices. In the spirit of service we strive to accommodate participants regardless of their ability to pay or make donations. We also respect the sacredness of the spiritual work and therefore avoid the promotion of products or services, or the solicitation or exploitation of members and visitors in any form in the vicinity of the Works. We endeavor to ensure honourable financial practices regarding the planting, harvesting and production of the sacred plants used in the making of the Santo Daime sacrament.

Harassment/Discrimination

We agree to provide an environment that is free of harassment of any form including discrimination because of age, sex, religion, creed, ethnic origin, or sexual orientation. To protect the welfare of all people, we realize that inappropriate sexual relations or the imposition of opinions, prejudices, or personal preferences of any kind is detrimental to the welfare of the individual and the community.

Participants Rights

We seek to preserve the autonomy and dignity of each person. Participation in the Works must be voluntary and based on prior disclosure and consent given individually by each participant. Disclosure shall include discussion of any elements of the religious ceremonies that may present physical or psychological risks, including medication contraindications and dietary considerations. Consent shall include signed consent forms, as well as general guidelines for the Works. Participants must also be advised that participation can be difficult and transformative. The Santo Daime is a religion and the works are religious services; no claims are made for healing and the Works are not intended to be a replacement for any medical or psychological treatment or support. Limits on the behaviors of participants and community members are to be made clear and agreed upon in advance. All reasonable measures will be taken to ensure each participant's health and safety during the Works and during the vulnerable periods that may follow.

Integrity

It is usually not constructive or necessary to talk about other people. We agree to speak that which is true and necessary, to refrain from gossip in our community, to cultivate conscious and clear communication, and to cultivate the qualities of honesty and kindness as the basis for our speech. We recognize that competition, mistrust, or the spreading of rumours destroys the spirit of kindness and union which is the heart of our spiritual beliefs. In the event of conflict or interpersonal difficulties, we strive to first resolve the problem directly with the individual. If the situation does not resolve we agree to seek counsel and/or guidance while maintaining sincerity and respect regarding the matter.

We strive to be aware of how our own belief systems, values, needs, and limitations affect us, and therefore our ability to serve others. We are willing to examine our own motives, practise self-reflection, and we subscribe to the value of self-examination in order to promote personal growth in ethics. When uncertain whether a particular situation or course of action would violate the Code of Ethics, we agree to consult with appropriate counsel in order to choose a proper response. If a situation arises whereby the Code of Ethics has been violated, we agree to practice truth-telling and agree to seek help to remedy the situation.

Competence

To maintain integrity within our community, we agree to assist with only those practices for which we are qualified by personal experience, training, and education. Peer feedback is essential for community health, as is individual willingness to recognize and address issues of projection, transference, and counter-transference. This includes personal, monetary, religious, racial, or sexual considerations. We acknowledge the need to ask for assistance, training, or supervision where necessary to maintain this integrity.

Tolerance

We agree to practice openness and respect toward people whose beliefs are in contradiction to our own. We share the teachings of the Santo Daime with those who seek this path and these truths, while recognizing that proselytizing is forbidden. To help safeguard against the harmful consequences of personal and organizational ambition we avoid active promotion of the Church.

Substance Use

The use of alcohol or any illegal substances during the Works or in the vicinity of the Works is forbidden.

All those wishing to adopt this Code of Ethics may do so; however, the following must be included: Céu do Montréal Copyright 2001

Chapter 8:

Considerations for expansion of the Santo Daimé in Canada

The last twenty years has brought the internationalization of the shamanic and religious use of Ayahuasca, and this expansion has been accompanied by particular challenges. While the sacred and medicinal use of Ayahuasca is respected as a cultural heritage in the countries of the Amazon basin, has been thoroughly researched by many branches of science, and is legal for both shamanic and religious use, it remains a controlled substance in most other countries. The result being that the obtaining of an exemption for import and distribution is required for ritual use.

Kenneth Tupper Ph.D. is the author of a number of articles addressing policy issues as well as some of the controversy that is a result of the international expansion of the ritual use of Ayahuasca. To gain a fuller understanding of these matters I highly recommend his work. (5)

Marlene Dobkin de Rios Ph.D. is a medical anthropologist. Her book *The Psychedelic Journey of Marlene Dobkin de Rios, 45 Years with Shamans, Ayahuasqueiros and Ethnobotanists* (6) presents a fascinating overview of her research. She shares her concerns about what is known as “Ayahuasca tourism”, a phenomenon that holds potential risk both to indigenous practices and to adventurous “North-Western” seekers.

Evgenia Fotiou is a medical anthropologist who researched shamanic tourism in Iquitos, Peru. (7) She presents the theory that historically, shamanism fosters intercultural exchange as a source of shamanic knowledge and experience, and that western interest in participation should be regarded more in the light of a pilgrimage, and in the context of an emerging new paradigm. The authors asked two questions: first, what are the motives of westerners participating in Ayahuasca ceremonies, and second, how are they conceptualizing and integrating the experiences in their existing worldview. She considers ritual participation to be an opportunity for personal transformation while simultaneously challenging a participant’s cultural constructs and worldviews.

It has taken decades for the gifts of the East, such as meditation practices, Eastern religions and philosophies, oriental medicine, etc., to be accepted and integrated into mainstream Western culture, and it bodes the same for the gifts of the South. Since 1996 I have had ongoing concerns regarding the rapid, transnational growth of the ritual use of Ayahuasca. Differences in world-views, cultural norms, laws, and spiritual/religious beliefs complicate the process of integrating the best of what is being offered by both sides. Added to this are human susceptibilities in the areas of ethics and fears of the unknown. The expansion of the ceremonial use of Ayahuasca brings to mind the wisdom of trees: a tree never develops more branches than its roots can support.

The powerful awakening of psychospiritual material that can occur during and after participation in an Ayahuasca ritual often requires support for integration. The current lack of organizational structure, ethical codes and training to support the leadership of developing international affiliates (whether of shamanic or religious lines) in an ethical and sound manner renders the expansion of ritual use more vulnerable on all levels, for both participants and those responsible for the ritual.

Stephen Trichter Psy.D. is a clinical psychologist and author of an article “Ayahuasca Beyond the Amazon, The Benefits and Risks of a Spreading Tradition.” He takes a thoughtful look at this trend and concludes that there is a need for education, for dialogue and community building, for the sharing of knowledge and the setting of ethical codes and standards of care in order for the successful integration of Ayahuasca ritual experiences on individual and transnational levels to occur.

“Setting up ethics for the communities and ayahuasca ritual leaders also would be beneficial so that the powerful temptations of power, sex and money can be discussed transparently, and the leaders could be held accountable. Currently, there are no cross-cultural ethical standards by which Ayahuasca ritual leaders must abide. They receive no coursework in ethics, nor are they advised nor required to go through any type of personal psychotherapy, consultation, or supervision to examine any personal issues that may come up in the work they conduct...More dialogue needs to be created, not only within communities but between communities, so that those seeking guidance and healing from this plant medicine are adequately protected when entering such powerful and vulnerable states of consciousness.” (8)

What has been evident to me, and has been part of the motivation for my year of study with All Faiths Seminary International, is the need to create norms for Santo Daime ritual leaders and standards for Santo Daime communities. The historical way of apprenticeship must adjust to international cultures and the needs and habits of our rapidly changing world. People globally are seeking out ways to awaken not only their personal consciousness, but to actively and positively participate in the global consciousness shift necessary for the survival of our planet Earth and the evolution of humanity. It is necessary that Ritual Leaders be sufficiently prepared for the responsibilities of a Santo Daime Centre, and in light of this I recommend the following three areas of training:

1. Brazilian Apprenticeship:

This apprenticeship would include a series of trainings in the feitio, the history, the tradition, and the elements of the ritual and calendar.

2. Administration:

During our dialogues with Health Canada about national expansion, they suggested that a study group leader become a Board member of an established Centre. This was an excellent suggestion that would provide individuals with management experience, and would include active participation at the Board level and participation in the supervising Centre's Works.

3. Pastoral Counselling:

This training would include: basic pastoral counselling, issues of spiritual emergence, spiritual emergency and psychological disorders, visitor's screening, a study of the Code of Ethics, and Inter-Faith concepts.

Summary

The Inter-Faith Minister's program with All Faith Seminary International has contributed to my personal growth at a time of significant transition. It has helped me to "shed" the stories and dogmas that had obscured the simple truths of spiritual reality in my quest to find truth, integrity, and authenticity. It is my deepest hope that the changes that I have instigated, supported by members and colleagues, will enable us to manifest the simple principles put into place by Mestre Irineu: Love, Harmony, Truth and Justice. In so doing, Céu do Montréal can then support the awakening Christ/Buddha/God consciousness of humanity.

I believe that the strong roots that were formed through the years, ethical principles, sound organization structure, adherence to regulations, and a clear vision have helped us to weather the various storms that have challenged Céudo Montréal. We will continue to foster strong connections to consciousness science, research and education, the Transpersonal and Inter-Faith community, knowing the truth within Einstein's words:

All religions, arts and sciences are branches of the same tree. All these aspirations are directed toward ennobling man's life, lifting it from the sphere of mere physical existence and leading the individual towards freedom.

Albert Einstein

I believe that all authentic spiritual traditions share common values of respect, wisdom, peace, tolerance, compassionate service, and love for all creation. Beyond the diversity of theological beliefs, rituals, and traditions there exists the universal human longing for oneness with the Divine and the uniqueness of individual, authentic spiritual experience. It is through direct experience with Universal intelligence, truths and realities that consciousness can be awoken to recognize and embrace the oneness that exists within all humanity and all creation.

Jessica Anne Rochester
June 2012

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Author's note:

Some of the material in this thesis is based on previous writings by the author, and all copyrights are maintained by the author. Sources include excerpts from *The Study, Consciousness, Self-Discovery, Self-Care and Self-Mastery; The Seed, the Tree and the Branches*; Content for the *Céu do Montréal* website, and *Santo Daime Canada*.

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