

When Awed Ones Gather

An Inquiry into Redemptive Christian Community

by

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Introduction:

Who are the Awed Ones?

Who are the Awed Ones? Everyone is an Awed One. The Awesome is occasioning Awe in everyone at every moment. Each of us has to work hard to escape the Awe.

At the same time, escaping Awe often seems to be the easiest path, because each of us has spent our entire lifetime creating our characteristic patterns for escaping Awe. We usually call these characteristic patterns our "personality." Our personality has practical value for our living: it includes all the skills and knowledge and practical guidelines we have ever learned in the course of our lives. Our personality is so important for our practical living that we simply take it for granted. We are in large measure unconscious of it. Our personality is the default settings for our living. It is the automatic operation of our lives at this point in our life story. So it is not obvious to all of us all the time that our personality is also serving a negative function – namely, blocking Awe from predominating in our lives.

Why should we want Awe to predominate in our lives? If it is easy and comfortable to simply allow our personality to do what it does, why should we not be content with that? Well, two things need to be considered: (1) our personality is the source of all our despair, and (2) the Awe we are blocking out is our True Strength, our True Freedom, our True Compassion for ourselves and others, our True Peace, Tranquility, Equanimity, Joy, and Happiness. Our personality, in spite of a considerable measure of disgust for itself, seeks to preserve itself in its present form. Therefore, our personality distrusts the Awe and the Awesome. When we trust the Awe and the Awesome, it means that we also distrust our personality's habituated distrust of the Awe and the Awesome.

Distrusting the Awe and the Awesome is another word for despair. Why? Because the Awe and the Awesome are the real world, the real life we have on our hands. You can fight City Hall and win, but you can't fight the Awe and the Awesome and win. Fighting against or seeking to escape from the Awe and the Awesome is a losing game. But this is the game that every personality plays all the time.

To not notice this game is common, for noticing would mean that we would see that our own personality is the source of our despair. We could no longer blame our despair on events, on other persons, or on any dynamic outside our own personality. Furthermore, these outside encounters are bringing with them the Awe-experiences we are resisting. Thus we are missing the happiness of living that we are constituted to enjoy.

It is not that our personality is a bad thing. Without it we would not be a human being. But our personality is not the whole person that we are. It is a very small part of who we are. In the living present of our being, our personality is actually a complex memory bank with useful automatic functions. And thus the personality is past oriented. It does not actually experience the present in its fullness. It only experiences the present through the filter of those established patterns which have become established in the past. If we believe that we are only our personality, then we never experience the present. We only experience that part of the present which our past-oriented personality allows us to experience.

Furthermore, if we believe that we are only our personality, we never anticipate the full future and never realize the full possibilities that the future holds. We only anticipate and respond to those possibilities that our past-oriented personality is programed to handle.

Living beyond personality means living in the fullness of the present and in the fullness of the future. It also means living in the fullness of the past; for personality only remembers that part of the past which it is useful for it to remember in order to keep itself intact. In order to access the full past, the full present, and the full future, each person has to surrender the assumption that that personality is the "full me." The "full me" is in Awe. Awe is who the "full me" is. The "full me" is in Awe of the past, in Awe in the present, and in Awe of the future. The personality is never in Awe. The personality cannot be in Awe. Awe is precisely the experience of living beyond the personality.

Yet the personality is not the enemy of the Awe-filled life. The enemy of the Awe-filled life is the belief that the personality is the "full me." And living beyond personality does not mean living without a personality. Rather, it means seeing the personality for what it is and for what it is not. That is, when I inquire into my own inner life, I can see that I am not identical with my personality. I am something larger than my personality. I am some mysterious actuality that has created my personality, can live beyond my personality, and will shape the personality I become in the future. I am Freedom, and Freedom is a state of Awe. I am Compassion, and Compassion is a state of Awe. I am Strength, and Strength is a state of Awe. I am Peace, Tranquility, Equanimity, Joy, and Happiness, all of which are states of Awe.

When Awed Ones Gather, we each bring with us our personality and thereby bring with us all those characteristic patterns for escaping from or fighting against Awe. We might say that the main purpose of a useful religious gathering of Awed Ones is to defeat the belief that we are our personality and thereby widen our living. We gather together in order to learn how to operate out of our Awe rather than out of our personality. This can sometimes be a painful experience, but the pain is only our personality dying to the belief that it is the "full me." Therefore, this particular dying is a good thing. It is the path to enlightenment, resurrection, salvation, sanctification, or any other description of becoming more fully the Awed Ones we are.

The pain of Spirit healing is good pain. There is nothing morbid or ascetic about it. It is the pain of renouncing unreality for Reality. It is the pain of renouncing passivity and cynicism for Strength. It is the pain of renouncing victimization and hopelessness for Freedom. It is the pain of renouncing apathy and indifference for Compassion. It is the pain of renouncing futility, restlessness, and despair for Peace, Tranquility, Equanimity, Joy, and Happiness.

The death salvation requires of us is itself the resurrection. We do not die to something and then get resurrected to the life we died to. No, we die to that which was never real and such dying is the resurrection to THAT which was always Real and always will be Real.

I sometimes hear people say that the past is not real and the future is not real, that only the Living Now has Reality. In one sense this is true, but in another sense this is not true. The past and the future are part of the Living Now. There is no Living Now as a singular point without past or future. Every Living Now has a past and a future. Every Living Now is part of an ongoing flow of "Nows." Each "Now" is "coming from" and "going to." What is not fully real is our personality's memory of the past and our personality's anticipation of the future. The past is always more than we remember, and the future is always more than we can anticipate. Yet however limited our memory and anticipation may be, the presence of memory and anticipation witness to the real past and the real future.

When only our personality remembers the past and anticipates the future, these memories and anticipations cannot be fully trusted. But when we as the Awed Ones remember the past and anticipate the future, we are contacting the Real Flow of Reality. The Awed Ones remember

Awe in the past and this memory creates Awe in the present. The Awed Ones anticipate Awe in the future and this anticipation creates Awe in the present. Personality does not remember any Awe nor anticipate any Awe. For personality there is no Awe to remember or to anticipate. A personality is made of rational patterns created in the past and these patterns simply play themselves out in the present. This function is useful. Without our personality, we would be pre-human, pre-mammalian, or even pre-living. Nevertheless, personality cannot be trusted to remember the past accurately nor to anticipate the future fully. The Awed Ones, on the other hand, remember that life has always been Awesome and anticipate that life will be Awesome. The Awed Ones know what personality does not know – that living the Awe occasioned by the ongoing and inescapable Awesomeness is the calling that makes all living meaningful.

The Awed Ones do not presume to have full rational knowledge of the past or future. The Awed Ones do know, however, that what most needs to be remembered of the past are those Awe moments that inform our living as Awed Ones in the present. When Awed Ones hear the story of Moses and the Exodus, they are hearing about an Awe moment in the past. When Awed Ones listen to an ancient Psalm, they hear the Awe which inspired that Psalm writer. They hear this Awe in the present moment. They hear Awe as Awed Ones living in the crunch of Awe-filled present life. Nevertheless, they are also making connection with the past, with a real Awed One who really lived in the real past. Moses, the prophets, Jesus, and all the writers of the New Testament are speaking to us from the real past and thereby assisting us to notice the Awe in our present lives. Such Awe-consciousness is essential for understanding the usefulness of any and all religious heritage. As human beings with cultural memories we are given the advantage of knowing many centuries of Awe-filled living. This resource is invaluable for widening our own experience of Awe in the present.

Similarly, it is a service to the future of Awe-filled living to renew our religious heritages and pass along those renewed resources to future generations. Heritage renewal means experiencing the Awe expressed in past witnesses, mingling those experiences with our present experiences of Awe, and then passing along this enriched heritage to the next generation of Awed Ones.

This book is about spelling out the dynamics summarized in these overview paragraphs. Also, it will be the thrust of this book to encourage each person to think through for themselves the practical issues involved in gathering together with other Awed Ones to widen and mature the experience of Awe.

Part I

**Spirit
Intimacy**

1.

Touching the Tabletop of Spirit Together

Many years ago I was in Australia teaching in an eight-week residential training program for about 90 Australians, six of whom were Australian Aborigines. These dark-skinned people had learned English at a Presbyterian mission, but they were still members of a relatively intact aborigine community. In all my travels I have never met a culture that was more different from my own. I sometimes wondered if I was communicating with these people at all. Then one morning after I had given a talk on the Land of Mystery that penetrates all our ordinary living, one Aborigine man came to me and said, "When you speak of the Mystery like that, I can hear you in my own stories."

That statement stunned me then and still impresses me. I don't know what stories he associated with my stories. I am sure that his stories and my stories were very different, but on the level of experiencing the Final Mystery, he and I had a genuine meeting. As I looked into his eyes and saw him looking back, I knew that he knew that we were both Mystery-experiencing beings.

What does it mean for one human being to deeply and genuinely meet another? We can be father and son or mother and daughter and still not deeply meet one another. We can even join in sexual intercourse without deeply meeting. On the other hand, the eyes of two strangers stepping off a public bus may see each other in a deep and genuine manner. Why are these things true? What are we talking about when we speak of meeting another person at the deepest level?

Distinguishing personality from Spirit assists us in defining what we mean by Spirit intimacy. If we meet one another only as personalities, we do not see each other fully. I see you through the screen of my personality, and you see me through the screen of your personality. I am limited by my culture, and you are limited by your culture. I judge you by my criteria, and you judge me by your criteria. I see you in terms of my "needs," and you see me in terms of your "needs." No genuine Spirit meeting takes place.

What is personality? Personality is like a stack of children's blocks constructed on a tabletop. The tabletop is Spirit Being; the stack of blocks is the habits that comprise the personality. The personality has been built over the years of one's life out of the encounters and responses that have characterized one's particular life history. Each personality is complex and only partially known by the one whose personality it is. But this much is clear: my personality is not the "full me." The "full me" which I also call "Spirit" includes the "Freedom" that built the personality, that can stand beyond personality, and that can reshape the ever-changing personality into a new personality.

When I have reached beyond my personality and touched the tabletop of Spirit, then I am open to meeting another person in Spirit intimacy. If that other person is also touching the tabletop of Spirit, I can have a Spirit meeting with that person. If only one of us is touching the tabletop, no Spirit meeting occurs.

If the other person is touching Spirit and I am not, I am being challenged by that other person to access my Spirit Being. Perhaps I do. Perhaps the presence of this other Spirit-accessing Being inspires me to also access the tabletop of Spirit Being. When I experience being

Awed by the speech or the presence of another person, this is what is happening: that person's Spirit appropriation is functioning as a means of grace through which I am enabled to appropriate my Spirit Being, my capacity for Awe before the Awesomeness of life.

When two personalities meet as personalities there is always (or almost always) what we call "personality clash." Personalities fight one another overtly or subtly for status, for position in the group, for attention, satisfactions, and resources. Spirit, on the other hand, is beyond personality. Spirit celebrates the other person as well as the self. Spirit sees that both "I" and "you" are occupants of the same tabletop of Spirit.

These reflections focus our awareness on the importance of intimate experiences in any effective religious community. These considerations reveal why small-group meetings are an important factor in religious renewal. The dynamics of Spirit intimacy tell us what needs to take place in those small groups in order for them to be something more than a superficial association. For small-group meetings to be Spirit nurture, effort has to be made to focus attention on Spirit Being. Some depth sharing needs to occur. Some Spirit-provocative material needs to be studied. Some Spirit-expressive rituals need to be enacted. Some Spirit-challenging topics need to be discussed. Complete silence and meditative practice may characterize this group time together. Or group time may be spent in oral processes of Spirit inquiry into common topics that characterize the Spirit journey of this group.

Whatever the specific activities of small-group life, the key to its religious meaningfulness is this: does Spirit intimacy happen? Do some or all of those present touch the tabletop of Spirit and thus notice that Spirit is also being touched by others in the group? Perhaps we have been in meetings where this happened. Perhaps we have noticed the mood or quality of talk taking place at the end of such a meeting. Perhaps we have left such a meeting strangely refreshed. Or perhaps we have been soberly convicted of some foolishness in our living or frighteningly called to some fresh departure in our living. Awe takes thousands of forms and is always unpredictable. But whatever quality of Awe happens, a healthy group of Spirit intimates support one another in being in Awe. Awe is celebrated rather than ignored or fled or fought. Awe, whether painful or joyous, is understood to be good for us, worth coming again and again and again to experience. Maturing our awareness and skill in living our Spirit Being is the goal of intimate religious meetings. Awe is the purpose for attending them, for planning them, and for conducting them in a skillful fashion.

2. Intimate Association and the Healing Presence

“When two or three are gathered together in my name, I am there in the midst of them.” These words were placed in the mouth of Jesus by the New Testament community to indicate a real experience they were having. When an intimate association of Awe-capable beings gather together with the express purpose of accessing and maturing their Awe-capacities, the Awed One appears shining through one or more of the persons present. Any person in whom the Awe appears is a healing presence to all the others. No one can predict how this is going to happen. No one can predict who will be the embodiment of the healing presence. The appearance of the Awed One cannot be limited to the group leadership or to the most senior members of the group. Anyone, anyone at all, may be the embodiment of Awe at any time.

The leadership of an intimate group can, of course, use skillful means that increase the likelihood of Awe happenings, but no one can control this. No one can even be sure that Awe has happened, how it happened, or what healing impacts were affected in whose life. Nor is it necessary to know this. It is only necessary to use skillful means and be open to the ever surprising coming of the Awed One.

So what are skillful means? Here is one example that has stood the test of time in various groups. Light three candles while singing a song. Sing a couple more songs and then ask each member to respond with intimate truthfulness to some significant and imaginative question. The question might be: When in the last week have you experienced an unusual bit of wonder or reverence entering your life? Or the question might spin off of a line of poetry in one of the songs that was sung. The group might sing “Sometimes I Feel like a Motherless Child” and then be asked to respond to the question: When in the past week have you felt particularly alone? Or when in the last week have you felt far away from home?

The person leading the group can use whatever Awe-sensitivities he or she possesses in choosing the appropriate songs and in inventing the appropriate question for this particular group on this particular occasion. The results, however, will be unpredictable. No leader, no member of the group, can predict whether or how Awe will occur. Everyone may notice when Awe happens. And then again Awe may happen secretly, invisible to the view of anyone. When the meeting is over, everyone may feel healed and not know why. Or again, some or all may know precisely when something significant happened. Often things are happening on a level too deep for words, completely inaccessible to any evaluation that the group might attempt. So it is not necessary or wise to keep taking the Awe temperature of the group. Just do the skillful means and leave the consequences to the Almighty Determiner of all things.

It is useful to know, in a general way, what skillful means are and how healing Awe happens. **ONE:** Healing happens when the consciousness of a person becomes aware of some of the specific habits that are closing him or her off from the Awe that is the actuality of this particular moment in time. **TWO:** For healing to occur this awareness of aweless living needs to be framed within the understanding that Awe is good for us and that we, everyone of us, are forgiven of all our awelessness and welcomed home to the land of Awe with open arms by the Awesome Overallness that is the Source of our entire lives and all the Awe therein. **THREE:** For healing to be appropriated, this understanding of the goodness of all Awe and of this particular Awe must be actively accepted and taken in by the person who has just experienced ONE and TWO.

In an actual experience of healing, these three steps of healing may not be fully reflected upon, but they are all three happening if healing is happening. These steps are not like steps in a furniture assembly process. It is not one-two-three and you have a bookcase. These are three dynamics of consciousness that take place in their own way uncontrolled by the person in whom they are happening. All that is required of that person is consent, openness, willingness to be healed. Then this is followed by a willingness to be a healed person, a person who is opting to live life beyond the boundaries of personality and ordinary social conditioning, a person in Awe.

The religious leader needs to understand these three dynamics of healing well enough to judge what religious activities might be effective with this particular group at this particular time. Yet even a genuine and skillful leader cannot control the results. As the old Indian in **The Little Big Man** movie put it, "Sometimes the magic works and sometimes it doesn't." The skillful leader simply pulls out of his or her kit bag of skillful means something he or she thinks might fit this occasion. He or she does it, and then releases the results to the Almighty Determiner of all results.

Nevertheless, skillful means are important. In this chapter I will not describe the details of skillfully leading songs, rituals, study sessions, workshops, go-rounds, Bible conversations, spirit conversations, and so forth. Yet mastering such skills is an important part of the maturation of small-group Spirit leadership. For Christian groups, good methods for pursuing dialogue with the biblical literature are of central importance. On the one hand we do not want to bog down in literalizations of the ancient biblical metaphors. And on the other hand we want to move beyond historical and rational approaches to direct personal encounters with this Awe-filled literature. These same needs apply to our overall study processes and to our study selections. How we study is as important as what we study. Yet we also need to choose what we study with the current Spirit journey of our group in mind. Such broad guidelines allow us to consider for study a wide range of materials: contemporary Christian theology, secular works that are Spirit challenges such as Thomas Berry's *The Great Work*, or works from other-than-Christian authors such as Stephen Batchelor's *Buddhism Without Beliefs*. Psychological works, political works, and many others may also provide grist for Awe-filled study and for informed ethical commitments in our lives.

In order to make good choices and lead sound processes, the Spirit leader needs some mastery of this context. The enduring context that informs all these issues is the practical means of healing our aweless lives. Such healing moves us toward the Awe-filled realism of Freedom, Trust, Strength, Compassion, Tranquillity, Joy, and Happiness. Releasing us into these aspects of our Essential Personhood is the meaning and purpose of our practical, intimate, small group, religious meetings.

The Spirit leader needs a willingness to access his or her own Awe experiences and create imaginatively from that center. If the leader is creating from his or her personality center, then it will occur that some quest for status, approval, control, or self-satisfying results will get in the way of having good meetings. Good leadership skills are important, yet even the unskilled leader may be exactly the inspiration needed with a given group on a given occasion. This is most likely to be true if that leader is, however imperfectly, accessing his or her own Awe-experience and thus expressing genuine reverence toward the actualities of nature, toward other human beings, and toward the Infinite ground of events.

3.

Mutual Commitment to Spirit Practice

Commitment to Spirit maturation is a huge challenge to the customary mindsets and lifestyles of our individualistic and overly busy industrial cultures. The proposal to spend two hours each week in a small-group Spirit practice is resisted by many people. Even those who see their need for a vital Spirit life allow other claims to take precedence over the scheduled meetings of their group of Spirit inquirers.

Jesus tells several stories on this theme. There is the story of the man who wants to follow Jesus but wants first to go and bury his father. Jesus tells him to let the dead bury the dead, implying that the man's first priority is finding Spirit intimacy among those who follow Jesus down the dusty roads of Galilee. Another man wants to say goodbye to his family. Jesus tell him that the man who sets his hand to the plow and looks behind him is not worthy of membership in the commonwealth of Spirit. On another occasion, Jesus tells a story about a man who found a treasure in a field. The man reburies the treasure and *sells all that he has* to buy that field. The implication of this parable is that this should be our attitude toward the treasure of a Spirit life.

These may seem like extreme examples, but the main point is clear: Spirit maturation needs to be *first priority* not some also-ran activity we fit into our schedule when we can.

We can give Spirit first priority in our lives without falling into some new version of the old moralism about never missing church on Sunday morning. Sometimes there are good reasons for missing a meeting, even the regularly scheduled meeting with our Spirit intimates. But this wisdom about flexibility needs to be balanced with the wisdom contained in the old commandment about honoring the Sabbath day and keeping it holy. Any Spirit practice requires time. If our Spirit practices are not a high priority in our lives, we simply do not want a Spirit life. Perhaps we merely want a veneer of Spirit experience decorating the surface of a life that is going in some other direction.

So when a group of people decide to be a Spirit group who meet every Tuesday night from seven until nine, that group needs to emphasize to one another that this means every Tuesday night, on time, and staying there for the full two hours. Exceptions to this need to be extremely rare – as rare as missing a doctor's appointment or failing to show up for a speech you agreed to give.

And this is not moralism. This is Spirit teaching. This is the nature of genuine Spirit living: it includes commitment to the maturation of Spirit living. If we want to see a genuine renewal of Christian practice, we will need to make such commitment a bedrock principle.

In addition, we need to make sure that the meeting we are asking one another to attend is worth attending. Part of our commitment to Spirit maturity is making every meeting a Spirit event worth the time we have set aside for it. This means that leadership for that meeting is an important topic. Someone needs to make certain that each meeting is going to take place with quality. This includes the setting of the room and having needed materials available as well as preparing effective processes for the meeting. A commitment to Spirit maturity also includes the assignment of leadership for the group processes that maximize the promise of this meeting being a Spirit evocative event.

Spirit, of course, cannot be controlled. Spirit is an accident that happens when it happens. But good preparation and leadership can make a meeting more accident-prone to happenings of Spirit. Commitment to this on the part of most and preferably all members of the religious group is essential.

Without moralistically beating up one another, lapses in attendance or in meeting quality need to be discussed and corrected. The survival of quality intimate Spirit practice cannot be assured unless attention is paid to this ongoing need for commitment.

4. Consensus Processing and Spirit Leadership

In Spirit life together, quality leadership is an important factor. Someone has to be an Awe-filled presence and have the skills necessary to communicate Awe to others. It is never true that every member of a group is equally qualified to do this. Yet it is also true that every member of a serious group of Spirit inquirers has leadership potential. So the question arises: how should leadership of the group be assigned? Should one or two persons do all the leading? Or should leadership be spread around and if so, in what manner?

In many instances a group has come into being because one relatively capable Spirit-manifesting person has drawn the group together. An example of this is the image of Jesus walking down the road. Those who walk with him and sit with him on the hillsides are the group. It was the consensus of those following Jesus to have Jesus lead. They had come out to be led by him. Quite often an occasion of Spirit intimacy happens by going to be with some person or persons we believe will provide such leadership.

But in the ongoing life of a regularly meeting group, leadership roles are not so obvious. It may or may not be the consensus of a group to have one person assume all the leadership roles. While everyone may have leadership potential, it is seldom if ever true that everyone is equally prepared to lead Spirit processes. Furthermore, what is true may not be fully visible to every member of the group. Persons in the group may have different views on who is and who is not most prepared to lead Spirit processes. Nevertheless, to the extent that a group is able to operate out of Spirit awareness rather than their own personality habits, it can be commonly discerned who needs to do most of the leading. When maturing Spirit is everyone's goal, everyone will want leadership that enables this to happen. Everyone will see that having quality leadership is more important than following some ideal of strict equality in leadership assignments.

It is also helpful if leadership is not seen as a status position but as a servant role. No one needs to be a leader in order to be a significant person. Spirit leadership is a service performed for others like any other piece of honest work. Understanding this, a group can build a consensus on leadership with the same objectivity that they consense on a place and time for the meeting. Leadership selection can reflect the consensus of the group that its leadership is actually serving the group in a Spirit manner.

All this implies that effective small group life needs to move away from the understanding that certain persons by virtue of their formal status, like ordination, have an inside track on being qualified Spirit leadership. The formal religious training of some members may be a gift to the group, but the ordained and/or religiously trained person needs to take his or her seat alongside everyone else as one more human being who may or may not be the only or best source of Spirit leadership in this group.

It is also true that every human being is, at some level, capable of Spirit leadership. So it may be useful in a somewhat established group to assign leadership roles as a way of training leadership and encouraging leadership skills to be developed. Some limits, however, need to be placed on leadership training, for we do not want to undermine the value of making every meeting a significant Awe experience for everyone who comes.

All these values need to be resolved through a consensus process that allows every member of the group to participate in authorizing the leadership fabrics of this group. Consensus processing has the great advantage of resolving conflicts by seeking out statements of practical truth that everyone can support. Instead of a majority of winners getting their way over some minority of losers, in good consensus processing there are no winners or losers. Everyone adds their truth to the discussions and then efforts are made to create decisions that embrace all rather than some of this truth.

Consensus need not mean perfect agreement from every person. A stated consensus is only a currently practiced construct with which everyone can consent to operate at this time and place. The important factor is for everyone to own the stated consensus as their choice. If one or two persons persist in sternly opposing every leadership arrangement that the rest of the group affirms, the topic of discussion may need to shift to why or whether these opposing persons want to be in this group and why or whether the rest of the group want them to remain.

Consensus processing reaches a limit to its applicability when a few members persist in operating out of a context that is irreconcilably different from the rest of the group. In these cases these members need to decide whether they want to be in this group. And the whole group needs to decide whether they want these members to stay in the group more than they want their view of the practical truth to prevail. Sometimes groups will see that staying together is more important than insisting upon a particular course of action at this time. At other times groups will decide that a particular course of action is more important than keeping everyone in the group.

Consensus processing works best in intimate groups when all the issues, feelings, and doubts about things are kept in the open and thoroughly discussed. But even in larger associations, good consensus processing can be maintained. Delegates, chosen by consensus from many small groups, can meet together and form manageably sized decision-making bodies that handle decisions that are appropriate for this larger scope.

The details of good consensus processing, for groups large and small, is subject matter for an entire book. Much new learning must be done by most groups; nevertheless, consensus decision making is the correct direction of development for a viable resurgence of Christian community.