
The White Wing Report

The Top Seven Spiritual Trends of 2009

From Sedona, Arizona
December 2009

As we leave the time of darkness in the yearly cycle,
so too, can the *Top Spiritual Heroes of the Year*
help us on our spiritual journeys from the darkness to the light.

The 5 Top Spiritual Heroes of the Year

Leading the way on our spiritual journeys
5 Heroes, 5 Gifts to the World

(Alphabetically)
Amma, Sri Karunamayi
Michael Bernard Beckwith
Dr. Joan Borysenko
Sister Joan Chittister
Sri Sri Ravi Shankar

Spiritual Growth vs. Spiritual Failure

2009 is not only the end of a year but the end of a decade, an important one, as we work our way into the meaning of our lives and our spirituality in the second decade of the 21st century.

It has been a year of definite spiritual growth. World leaders gathered to discuss way to support a peaceful planet from The Global Peace Initiative to www.tenmillionclicksforpeace.com to The Global Peace Tour. Groups both small and large are starting up all over the world to support causes to sustain the planet. There are also new and growing groups offering spiritual guidance and encouragement. But 2009 also contained spiritual failure, as evidenced in the shocking shootings such as the Fort Hood incident.

In one of the world's most spiritually famous locations, tragedy strikes here in Sedona with the sweat lodge deaths at James Arthur Ray's "Spiritual Warrior" event. This horrific yet unresolved controversy reminds us of the dangers of not

trusting our inner guidance and giving over our spiritual common sense to a guru. In all spiritual paths there are challenges to be aware of.

Last year's Top Spiritual Hero Eldon Taylor said of the coming year, "*When we look into the world in this first year to end the first decade of our new Century, let us remember that we will undoubtedly find exactly what we are expecting or looking for. As such, let us remind ourselves daily to expect the miracles that life holds for all of us if we but open our hearts to joy! May you all know Love, Life, Laughter, and Liberty! Accept the blessing and know the joy—you are eternal.*"

Good advice to go into the next decade.

Surprising Vatican Research

A world-wide questioning of long held spiritual beliefs is leaving no stone unturned, even in formerly staunch traditionalists such as the Vatican. For example, in startling news by the AP press titled, "*Vatican Looks to Heavens for Signs of Alien Life,*" writer Ariel David writes, "*The Vatican Observatory has also been at the forefront of efforts to bridge the gap between religion and science.*" The event hosted by the Vatican was a gathering of thirty scientists of many faiths for 5 days to explore the possibility of intelligent life on other planets. Quite a switch from not too many years ago.

Rev. Jose Gabriel Funes, a Jesuit priest and director of the Vatican Observatory said, "*Just as there is a multitude of creatures on Earth, there could be other beings, even intelligent ones, created by God. This does not contradict our faith, because we cannot put limits on God's creative freedom.*" Yes, this came from the Vatican.

The Vatican also does interplanetary research at the University of Arizona observatory in Tucson AZ. With such reversal in spiritual positioning, even traditional religion sees the need to continually redefine itself in a world of unprecedented change and discovery. Nothing should surprise us anymore, even in the world of spirituality.

A Religious Survey is Questioned

One of the main annual religious surveys, *The Pew Survey* from *The Barna Group* came under scrutinization this year because of the phrasing of one of the surveys questions. There was a concern that the results gathered had been slanted because of that question. The 2015 adults surveyed were asked, which statement they agree with, "My religion is the one true faith leading to eternal life," or "Many religions can lead to eternal life." The slight change in phrasing led to a mini uproar in the religious community although a rephrasing and subsequent survey led to only slightly different survey results.

The initial poll found that 70% of those surveyed said there were many paths to salvation. The retake on the survey only lowered that figure to 65% according to a USA Today report. Thus the questioning appears to not be that far off base after all.

Another religious survey, the American Religious Identification Survey. (ARIS) found that followers of Christianity appears to have decreased 11%. The survey confirmed what many have suspected, that even though immigration and population growth have increased, almost every religion has lost followers. Spiritual seekers are exploring other spiritual territory with information so readily available today.

The **Pew Forum Survey** by Barna Research is focused on specifically religious affiliations and not the spirituality movement, but religion is one important sector of spirituality worth noting as it changes along with the changing world.

All in all, there's a lot of spiritual searching going on.

Here are the Top Trends in Spirituality in 2009

1. Increased Polarization of Fear and Love:

Decisions made from either love or fear, appear to drive not only individuals today but also whole nations and societies. The worldwide economy continues to bring out much hidden fear related to money and survival issues. But there is a growing surge of both individuals and societies wanting more spiritual connection. A more genuine form of love is being espoused by many religious and secular leaders as well as the general populace.

2. Renewed Feminism Linked to Spirituality:

Women are gathering together in forces to lead the way spiritually. Taking their spiritual leadership roles in new ways they are using an inclusive feministic approach that includes what is nurturing and compassionate in both men and women. This is evidenced by the work of *Top Spiritual Hero of the Year* Sister Joan Chittister.

3. Secrecy to Revelation – The Truth is Harder to Hide:

With the world connecting more, and the increase in social communication via blogs, Facebook, Twitter, and others, news now spreads like lightning. Society's moral transgressions, most recently involving Tiger Woods are almost impossible to hide. The world appears to be one big connected body of information and the head seems to know what the foot is doing almost instantly. The truth is forcing the darkness to the surface.

4. Spirituality as Big Business:

In one of the negative trends of the year, more longtime spiritual leaders are bemoaning the fact that their once sacred turf is being exploited for profit and not necessarily spiritual merit.

5. A Positive Contagion Builds:

Via social sites like Facebook and Twitter, people are turning to other "friends" for uplifting. The positive nurturing of the soul not provided in most traditional media is proliferating rapidly on these sites including Youtube where uplifting or funny movies pass along rapidly from friend to friend.

6. Raising Energy Levels Needed:

Health issues and higher energy of all kind is needed today to stave off epidemics, whether mental, via fear, or physical. This is in part perpetuated by

the media. The health crisis headlines could be viewed as health opportunities in order to make spiritual advancement. Health care issues are at the forefront while at same time health epidemics make steady news.

7. Simple Service:

There is much volunteerism in the workplace. In business, service is emerging as a trend as a spiritual and a survival necessity. As Napoleon Hill observed 50 years ago after the depression that business had to focus to true service in order to survive. Again through sites like Facebook and Twitter, people are connecting by sharing and serving one another.

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EMERGING SPIRITUAL TRENDS OF 2009

1. Increased Polarization of Fear and Love

*"Fear is a question. Love is the answer.
-- Rain Bojangles*

"We humans have existed in our present form for about a hundred thousand years. I believe that if during this time the human mind had been primarily controlled by anger and hatred, our population would have decreased. But today, despite all our wars, we find that the human population is greater than ever. This clearly indicates to me that while anger and aggression are surely present, love and compassion predominate in the world." --Dalai Lama

Worldwide Decisions. Are Nations Choosing Fear?

When a nation or an individual makes decisions from a base of fear, that nation, or individual suffers from an increased ripple of the Fear Effect. That effect does not seem to stop certain countries from embracing "fear" as a powerful weapon of spiritual control. There are numerous examples of this with the continual bombings in places like Pakistan. As the world shrinks in a communication sense, this "fear" base may be harder to continue. The causes of fear are surely more complex and deep than the effect of fear. But a decision to act by an individual or nation comes down to a decision based on either love and connection, or fear and divisiveness.

One such example of the desire for connection is the huge wave in social media which factors into many of the top trends of 2009.

Social Media and the Spreading of Positive "News"

Just last year Facebook and Myspace were tied with about 115 million unique visitors a year. This year Facebook reached an incredible 350 million users outdistancing Myspace almost 2 to 1. The largest group of new users is women over 55. Mark Zuckerberg, Facebook's creator, addressed this milestone to Facebook users, *"It has been a great year for making the world more open and connected. Thanks to your help, more than 350 million people around the world are using Facebook to share their lives online"*.

Social phenomenon is addressing our need for connection which finally found a big worldwide expression through Facebook. Facebook has become a global sensation. It's the same big hit as when it started at Harvard to connect students with one another. This social connection has ignited a global wildfire of connectivity created from a pent up spiritual demand.

The web analytical provider *Hitwise* reported that social networking traffic is up 62 percent from last year. More than half of the social networking traffic comes from 18 to 34 year-olds. The Social Media outlets have become, among other uses, sources of spiritual encouragement. Like wagon trains emigrating west, people are flocking to the social media sites looking for new frontiers of ways to connect and share experiences, passions, ideas, common interests, and pure friendship.

This first **trend** to gravitate to either the side of fear or the side of love appears to be moving individuals further and further apart. Yet, who knows? Perhaps instead of moving farther and farther apart in a line, these two very different but powerful forces are actually moving in a circle at different paces. When they do meet head there could be a huge head on explosion of consciousness.

2. Renewed Feminism Linked to Spirituality:

“Feminists come in two genders. Feminist spirituality is meant to bridge men and women.”

-- Sister Joan Chittister

Inclusive Spiritual Feminism Spreads

There is a renewed interest in the feminine as a means to the spiritual dimension of our lives. One of the *Top Spiritual Heroes of 2009* Sister Joan Chittister, is addressing this second trend of an empowered feminist spirituality on another level. Sister Joan travels and talks on the topic worldwide, while serving on the boards of many organizations and is Co-Founder of the *Global Peace Initiative of Women*.

Sister Joan realizes that she is sometimes a “token” woman of the boards and committees on which she is asked to serve but she is committed to spread a desperately needed message of creating feminine spiritual equality in societies around the world. She says, *“Patriarchy by its very nature, requires control.”* With shattering statistics and profound wisdom, Sister Joan spotlights the still horrifying plight of women worldwide. Her views are wide enough to encompass every religion though she herself is Executive Director of *Benetvision* in Erie, PA.

Sister Joan is the voice of the forgotten and truly downtrodden women around the globe. She is not afraid to stand up for her oppressed sisters anywhere on the planet. Sister Joan became a “Sister” and the title fits her wonderfully as being a sister not only to women, but also to men.

Being willing to take a committed and dedicated stand for women sets Sister Joan apart from the spiritually timid. Fiercely protective of an individual’s free will and their God given right to exist, Sister Joan tells women worldwide, *“Never*

accept oppression in the name of being humble. God did not create half the human race as a divine mistake,” she says.

The events women (and men) attend signify the spiritual pulse of our country. One such event is author, Marianne Williamson's, *Sister Giant: Rousing the Sleeping Giant of American Womanhood* event scheduled in early 2010. The event is described as speaking “to the role of women at this pivotal moment in history. It's a critically important time to transition from disastrous probabilities to fantastic possibilities, and women can lead the way.” Marianne is also actively working for creating a Department of Peace.

All of the Top Spiritual Heroes of 2009 address this new spiritual feminism in some element of their work. Dr. Joan Borysenko says, *“I think that as men develop their feminine aspect they also begin to recognize that every interaction has within it the potential to be extraordinarily creative and in that way we truly do bring the world into being.”* Even Sri Sri Ravi Shankar's *Rural Development Trust* was founded to empower both women and youth. And his principles certainly speak of the divine feminine qualities of nurturing and caring for others.

A young woman, Megan Watterson, co-founded REVEAL, (Young Women Defining the Divine) a non-profit organization formed to bring together young women from many faiths and spiritual traditions to share their unique ideas on today's new spirituality and religion.

More women are not only feeling more empowered, they are stepping up to the spiritual plate, claiming roles for themselves as spiritual leaders of the future.

Whatever form this second trend takes as it emerges into a force of half of humanity, it is a strong and oncoming wave that is not about to be stopped. Perhaps not only women, but also more and more men today are looking at a true and loving inclusive feminism as an answer to a failing and struggling patriarchal model.

3. Secrecy to Revelation – The Truth is Harder to Hide

“When something important is going on, silence is a lie.”

--A. M. Rosenthal

The cat is out of the bag and won't go back in, is one way to sum up this emerging spiritual trend. As more spiritual light shines it is getting harder, if not impossible, to hide the darkness in individuals, businesses, and nations. The latest victim of an attempt to mask a hidden side is golfer Tiger Woods. Caught by his shadow as the bright lights of truth illuminated his self-admitted transgressions, a nation “mourns” another fallen hero. Cheating is certainly nothing new but case after case still stuns us when the dark side of a hero or public figure shows up in such a radical unexpected manner.

Last year's *Top Spiritual Hero*, Debbie Ford's work in this area is one way out of the mess created when the shadow within us is not addressed. Debbie had this to say, "*As the women continue to come forward for their few minutes of fame and glory in this tabloid-frenzied society that would rather focus on the another person's flaws rather than do anything about their own, we are once again trapped in a conversation that judges another's behavior rather than working diligently to clean up our own. Tiger's life as we have all known it before that fateful car crash is dead, something for the archives. And now a new life can emerge -- hopefully a life where he can live a more authentic expression, where he can experience more intimacy with his family, friends, and peers so that he doesn't have to seek false connections with women he hardly knows and surely can't trust. For all of us who are caught up in the Tiger drama, my hope is that we will take back all that we have projected on to him all these years.*"

This truth trend is not only seen in national or public figures but in individuals as well. The truth appears to be like a seed that has been planted and forgotten but now its time has come to burst through the surface. While it can be seductive to join in the finger pointing, what works on a spiritual level is to look at these issues in our own lives and refrain from spiritual judgment as we evolve to higher levels of spiritual understanding.

*"Most truths are so naked that people feel sorry for them
and cover them up, at least a bit."*

--Edward Morris.

4. Spirituality as Big Business:

Whenever a force as strong as spirituality emerges with its truth blaring over humanity's loudspeakers, there will be some who see the light and others who see the dollar signs that the light can bring. Nothing is wrong with money. It is a spiritual energetic force that can do a lot of good in the world and in our individual lives. But some people and some businesses are finding that by saying the "spiritual truths" their business does better, even when the core of that business is anything but spiritually focused. So the spiritual seeker looking only for statements that sound spiritually good can be misled or swayed by those very spiritual truths. Discernment is becoming stunningly necessary

The James Arthur Ray sweat lodge tragedy brought back memories of Comet Hale Bopp and the Heaven's Gate cult. While Ray most likely had intentions of spiritual "enlightenment" and growth, the signs were not heeded when common sense would have suggested some immediate interventions. The Native American Spiritual Leader we talked with was mainly concerned that the public

know that this ceremony which Native Americans consider sacred and voluntary would not have been done the way it had been in this event.

Businesses on an increasingly vaster scale are looking to spiritual trends as a way to increase business not necessarily the spiritual health of the consumer.

As in all business transactions, discretion is needed more than ever. Spiritual transactions involving money, health, or beliefs, are no different. A clear look into the actual functioning of a company and its products and services should reveal a fairly cohesive spirituality, if it is at all truly spiritually based. And the good old fashioned values of honesty, integrity, and respect will hold up through the ages.

5. A Positive Contagion Builds

Look at the posts on Facebook and you will find people passing around quotes they like, recipes they like, or Youtube videos that inspire them. These sites offer a new “like and love” media – not a doom, gloom, hate, sensationalism media. Social media overall (certainly not entirely) is much more civil than the news. That’s why people are flocking to it to share things they like or enjoy. Inspiring videos continue to pour into Youtube.

This social media phenomenon is causing a plethora of mostly good news with the occasional bemoaning of normal life, weather etc. Good news is what good friends like to share most. Content can be uploaded and delivered almost instantaneously.

In a Yahoo News Blog called, “*You power: The decade’s new media revolution*” Laura E. Davis said, “*Developments like Facebook, YouTube, Wikipedia and Twitter have allowed audiences to participate in producing content that can easily be distributed to others. Before, that kind of power was reserved mainly for big companies.*” And a lot of that content is positive.

The Changing of the Guard: The Information Age Grows into the Connection Age

As information continues to deluge our lives, many are turning to simpler forms of connecting directly with others and they want those connections to be more personal. Facebook calls this the “Wisdom of Friends.” Sheryl Sandberg who spoke at the Web 2.0 Summit earlier this year said the reason Facebook is growing so rapidly is because “Facebook is where *you are yourself, your authentic self on the web. Facebook is where you discover and share. There is a very fundamental shift going on from what we think of as the information economy to what is more the social economy...so the question is how do you get the information you want to get?...We believe in the wisdom of friends*”.

She continues, *“We think the world is moving toward more sharing, more real time sharing, and more connection. We do 45 million status updates a day from 30 million unique individuals. That shows people want to share.”*

It's not just the social media sites revealing this emerging trend but many people around the planet are sensing something new and good approaching. Last year's *Top Spiritual Hero*, John Harricharan said, *“I think this coming decade we are going to see a kind of “evolution” of humanity. By “evolution” I mean an internal growth as if the world, especially the western world and humanity, are going to be realizing faster than the previous 10 decades, that there is something magical and mystical and marvelous going on. Maybe they will figure out that the journey did not start here and will not end here. We are going to find a calmness in little pockets, uncommon in ordinary times. Maybe we will find out how to create a learning-ful experience that will contribute tremendously to a re-awakening of who we really are.”*

Social media brings to us the ability to connect in the area of our interests and share information quickly. This sharing has caused a huge wave of good-will throughout the world as friends share information and their spiritual paths with each others.

6. Raising Energy Levels Needed:

Higher energy is being sought not just for spiritual aspects but also for the physical elements that allow us to do more spiritual work. With mainstream foods depleted of more energy, alternate sources of food are being chosen by those on the spiritual path and by those seeking more health. This often leads to a spiritual quickening.

More stores including mainstream grocery stores are carrying organic brands and more people are searching them out. That includes restaurants that serve organically raised foods and meats.

On another level, congress in the United States is actively deliberating on how to address and implement a new form of health care.

Amma, Sri Karunamayi in her workshop here in Sedona, AZ, gave very practical advice for increasing health in addition to the spiritual aspects of her teaching sand meditations. Several yoga poses were demonstrated by volunteers as Amma described the benefits of each posture. Without giving medical advice, Amma discussed the foods that could benefit the participants - what she ate and why. She also discussed the sacred tones and what each sound could do. Amma even discussed what she does to keep her brain healthful.

Sri Sri Ravi Shankar's main element of *The Art of Living Course* is focused on breathing – what Sri Sri considers a most powerful (and of course, necessary)

essence of life. Sri Sri's guidance helps millions throughout the world achieve a more balanced stress free life. Joan Borysenko, an MD, who integrates the spiritual aspects into her work, discusses energy in such necessary elements of day-to-day life as getting enough sleep.

If these foundations of physical life and energy are critically important to the masters, perhaps we too, should pay attention. These spiritual heroes know that if the body is healthful and taken care of, life, including spiritual life can be enhanced.

7. Simple Service

A study from the *Volunteering in America 2009 Report* shows that a third of the volunteers in America do so through a religious organization. America can boast over 61.8 million volunteers. 35% of them serve through a religious organization. That is the largest segment of any of the groups surveyed.

Even Facebook is now promoting service through the site itself, giving recognition to groups and individuals that serve and a place to these share good deed. Mark Zuckerberg announced a new profile page *Facebook for Good* in a quest to gather stories from Facebook users "about how Facebook has helped them give back to their communities, effect change or connect with a distant relative."

Here is facebook's own description: "*Share your stories about how Facebook has helped you give back to your communities, effect change or connect with someone important to you.*" Facebook for Good is at www.facebook.com/facebookforgood

As of December 16th 2009 there were 14,074 fans of the *Facebook for Good* site. The last post was Nov 23, 2009.

Sedona's Good Deeds

Here in Sedona an annual event is held called "Mitzvah" or "Good Deed" Day. Held at St John Vianney's, the event involves all the churches in the community. They gather volunteers to do good deeds around the community. Last year there were 400 volunteers. This year there were over 500.

"Our prime purpose in this life is to help others. And if you can't help them, at least don't hurt them."

-- Dalai Lama

"I believe that to meet the challenges of our times, human beings will have to develop a greater sense of universal responsibility. Each of us must learn to work not just for oneself, one's own family or nation, but for the benefit of all

humankind. Universal responsibility is the key to human survival. It is the best foundation for world peace.”

-- Dalai Lama

In Conclusion:

While we can find measurements of increases in spiritual attendance, retreats, and sources of spiritual help, it is difficult to measure what is actually taking place in individual's hearts and souls. Only by the outward effects of such a deeply personal change, can we glean some measurement of the rate of spiritual growth. But it is a start and we are seeing some of harvest of that welcome unfolding already.

Whatever 2010 may bring, the spiritual force is ignited and ablaze. How fast the spiritual fire spreads is up to us.

In Peace,

Terri Marie

White Wing Entertainment

*For the Best Spiritual FILMS, BOOKS, AND WEBSITES of 2009 see the Appendix.

The White Wing Report is prepared annually by
White Wing Entertainment, LLC, to enlighten and inspire.
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APPENDIX

BEST SPIRITUAL FILMS of 2009

The Damah Spiritual Film Festival held in Seattle, WA is one of the oldest spiritual film festivals but still a very young eight years of age. It is held in October each year. The award for the **Best Spiritual Film** went to Marc Havener for ***And What Remains***, a film about a father and son reconciliation. Second place went to ***Old Man and the Ceiling***, by Taylor Rae, a film dealing with the life of a widower alone for the first time in 50 years. Both films focus on family bonds. www.damah.com

You can preview *The Old Man & The Ceiling* at www.vimeo.com/3979828

The European Spiritual Film Festival started in 2007 held its third year. “The European Spiritual Film Festival showcases films (feature films and short films : fictions, documentaries and animation films) that explore spiritual traditions from around the world and their different practices. By spirituality, we mean all things that touch upon the life of our minds.”

Winner of the **Best Spiritual Film** in the **Fiction** category was Eloi Pires Ferreira of Brazil’s ***O Sal Da Terra***, (Salt of the Earth) a film about a priest’s journey across Brazil.

The documentary, “***Buddha’s Lost Children***” by Mark Verkerk of the Netherlands, Thailand, and France won best Spiritual Documentary. The film is about an ex-boxer turned Buddhist monk who devotes himself to the welfare of the regions children as he travels about Thailand. Filmed in the Thailand’s Golden Triangle it is called “a true story of compassion and tough love.”

Two sample reviews:

“A warm reminder that compassion is not lost in this world. “ Reed World.

“Richly affecting on many levels.” Louise Keeler, Urban Cinefile

And the **People’s Choice Award** went to ***Fertilize***, Senne Dehandschutter of Belgium a film about a girl in a futuristic environment, a blend of beautiful dance and choreography.

The Santa Fe Metaphysical Film Festival started in 2008 shows films that “promote higher consciousness and cross cultural understanding with themes of spirituality, supernatural, inspirational, and science fiction.” The festival was dark this year. The Santa Fe Metaphysical Film Festival will hold its next festival in 2010.

The Sun Valley Spiritual Film Festival started by Mary Gervase and Claudio Ruben celebrated its 5th year. Stephen Simon of *Spiritual Cinema Circle*, an online site which distributes spiritual films through a monthly subscription, attended the Sun Valley festival. Simon said, "Hollywood is dead. *So what's next? There is going to have to be a new way for filmmakers to get their work out into the world.*" www.svspiritualfilmfestival.org.

The Sedona Film Festival in a community known for its spiritual orientation. Director of the Sedona Film Festival, Patrick Schweiss said, he looks for a balance of films for the Sedona community "Films that affect change, that inspire you and move you to action in some way. *Buddha's Lost Children*" was beautiful and breathtaking."

There are also several Native American and Indigenous Film festivals including the following held in 2009.

Here is a list of the 2009 INDIGENOUS FILM FESTIVALS

- Anchorage, Alaska, U.S.A., Indigenous World Film Festival
- Duncan, British Columbia, Canada, Cowichan International Aboriginal Film Festival
- Eugene, Oregon, U.S.A., The Archaeology Channel International Film and Video Festival
- Fargo, North Dakota, U.S.A., Fargo Film Festival Native American Voices
- Palm Springs, California, U.S.A., Eighth Annual Festival of Native Film & Culture
- Papeete, Tahiti, 5th Annual International Oceania Documentary Film Festival
- Paris, France, Alliance Cine International Human Rights Film Festival
- Stuttgart, Germany, Indianer & Inuit, The North American Native Film Festival 2009

TOP SPIRITUAL SITES ON ALEXA.com FOR 2009

Alexa, the top website ranking source on the internet is one indicator of the growth and trends in the spiritual area.

Tops Sites Overall on Alexa

1. The search engine, **Google** is the #1 site
2. The social media site **Facebook** is #2

A search for the word “**spirituality**” on Alexa brings up 540 sites (Spirituality is in the “Society, “Religion and Spirituality” category on Alexa)

There are 101,680 sites in the “Religion and Spirituality” category
Last year’s number one site continues to hold its position.

1. The top site is **Biblegateway.com**, a Christian site which has 12,779 sites linking to it.
2. **Islamway.com** is second
3. **Lds.org** is third
4. **Astrology.com** – a metaphysical site is 4th.
5. **Experiencefestival.com** is number five. This site started as an Indian festival to help spiritual awakening through ancient teachings and traditions, it focuses on Global oneness. Amazingly, even though experiencefestival.com is number 5 on Alexa, its latest article and news was last updated 12-26-2007
6. **Beliefnet.com** is #6.

Christianity Sites up Just Slightly

Last year there were 76,512 sites listed under **Christianity**, This year there are 76,589 sites - up very slightly.

Buddhism has 2719 sites listed on Alexa, down slightly from last years, 2790.

Esoteric and occult sites list 2339 sites. Also down from 2008.

In **Buddhism**

Last year the number one Buddhist site was **www.tibetan-buddhism.com**. That site moved to number two in 2009, outranked by **www.buddhanet.net**.

In the **Enlightenment** category

Number 1 is **www.eckhartolle.com** site of spiritual teacher, Eckhart Tolle.

In the **Spirituality** category

Last year Sylvia Brown’s site **www.sylvia.org** was the number one Alexa site in “spirituality” with a rating of 306,845. This year she is number 3.

The top site for 2009 in “spirituality” is **www.arthurfindlaycollege.org** yet it has only 45 sites linking to it.

James Van Praagh's site is second. **www.vanpraagh.com**

It may be hard to tell if these sites are ranked higher because of growing spiritual interest or if they are due to the marketing and internet savvy of the owners or designers. Either way, people are seeing, reading, and continuing to come to these sites and find more information to their spiritual questions and searches.

Facebook

(As of Nov. 2009)

A search for "**spirituality groups**" yielded 6600 results.

"Common interest" – Spirituality lists 452 as of Dec 2009

Most of the groups were small and not entirely spiritual in focus.

The largest group on that date above had 471 members

"**Spiritual groups**" has 2000 results with the largest group containing 282 members.

"**Spiritual growth**" yielded 4000 results.

Youtube Spiritual Videos/Movies List

As of November 2009 a search for the following terms yields these results.

Word	Results	Top result
<i>Spirituality</i>	200,000 videos Top video	Rev. Michael Beckwith
<i>Spiritual</i>	145,000 videos Top video	Johnny Cash
Spirit	457,000 videos Top -	'009 Soundsystem
<i>Spiritual music</i>	78,500 videos	
<i>Spiritual movies</i>	25,700 videos This includes an erotic sexy yoga video with over 1.3 M views.	
<i>Spiritual masters</i>	21,600 videos	

Selfgrowth.com

This is a top self-growth site that lists experts in 7 categories. One of these is “Spirituality” which consists of the following numbers of experts as of November 2009. Dave Ricklan, founder, says that in setting up the concept for selfgrowth.com he asked *“What are three main areas people are looking for? People are looking for health, financial and relationship. What is health? Physical, mental, spiritual. The “Spiritual” category is a cross with health and relationships. The main way is we reach out to these experts who provide articles, books, downloads, and websites for people to read, learn, watch, and listen. There’s also a lot of interest in success skills.”*

Top experts group in *Spirituality* November 2009 in selfgrowth.com

- Spiritual Growth 1st 451 experts
- Energy Healing 2nd 282 experts
- Psychic Readings 3rd 144 experts
- Spiritual Healing 4th 124 experts

There are 33 total groups including one “human design” with no experts. The “Imagination” expert category has 7 experts including the famous J.K. Rowling of *Harry Potter* fame.

BEST SELLING
SPIRITUAL BOOKS OF 2009

The White Wing Entertainment pick for the **Top Spiritual Book of the Year** goes to a little girl who was only here on earth for six short years. Elena Desserich was six years old when she passed away, but not after leaving hundreds of notes hidden all around her home to comfort her parents and sister before she died of brain cancer. Her parents compiled her precious notes into a book. **Notes Left Behind** by the six-year-old unintentional author.
www.notesleftbehind.com

AMAZON – “Religion and Spirituality” Category Best-Sellers

4

Have a Little Faith: A True Story by Mitch Albom

A book from the author of Tuesdays with Morrie about an 82 year-old rabbi who asks the author to deliver his eulogy. A story about the beliefs and spiritual searches of a Jew and a Christian and how each uses faith in the mystery of life's purpose.

#5

The Prayers of Agnes Sparrow by Joyce Magnin

A novel about a woman who can no longer leave home when she weighs 600 pounds. Instead she dedicates her life to prayer. These prayers seem to result in miracles and she becomes well-known enough to attract a stranger who asks for his own miracle.

#6

The Shack by William Paul Young

The story of a man who believes his daughter has been murdered and receives a note supposedly from God inviting him back to a “shack” in the Oregon woods.

Review:

"The Shack" ... opened the veil that too often separated me from God and from myself. --Patrick M. Roddy, ABC News Emmy Award winning producer

#8

Grace Notes by Philip Yancy

Inspirational writings and meditations from inspirational author Yancy

#10 **The Book of Genesis** Illustrated by R. Crumb (author)

A master cartoonist's rendition of biblical stories with all the actual words of the Book of Genesis included.

Note: The other top ten were mainly thrillers involving some religious elements. In November '09 listed a legal thriller, **By Reason of Insanity** by Randy Singer as their number one book in the **Religion and Spirituality** category, possibly because of references to spiritual visions and bible quotes.

AMAZON "Spirituality" Category

#1

Have a Little Faith: A True Story by Mitch Albom

A book from the author of Tuesdays with Morrie about an 82 year-old rabbi who asks the author to deliver his eulogy. A story about the beliefs and spiritual searches of a Jew and a Christian and how each uses faith in the mystery of life's purpose.

#2

It's Your Time: Activate Your Faith, Achieve Your Dreams, and Increase in God's Favor by Joel Osteen

Best-selling author's latest book..

#3

Eat, Pray, Love by Elizabeth Gilbert

This story of Gilbert's spiritual journey continues on the best-seller list from last year.

#4

Same Kind of Different as Me by Ron Hall and Denver Moore

A true story about betrayal, love, and friendship

#5

The Secret by Rhonda Byrne

The well-publicized book about the law of attraction continues on the best-selling charts

THE OVERALL BESTSELLER LIST ON AMAZON

Following are those containing some spiritual theme
December 17, 2009

Two of the top ten on Amazon could be categorized in the Spiritual Category, perhaps stretching “spirituality” a bit with Dan Brown’s huge hit.

#2

Dan Brown latest novel, *The Lost Symbol* as of Nov 12, was Number 6 on top bestsellers but number 1 in Customer Picks.

A book like Best Seller “*The Lost Symbol*” Dan Brown’s follow-up to “the Da Vinci Code” would not have soared to the top of the charts unless it hit a nerve within the populace regarding its symbolism. The spiritual holds mystery and has always symbolized a hunt for true treasure of the soul. Brown uses symbols and their meanings as markers along a spiritual evolution and journey.

10

Have a Little Faith: A True Story by Mitch Albom

A book from the author of Tuesdays with Morrie about an 82 year-old rabbi who asks the author to deliver his eulogy. A story about the beliefs and spiritual searches of a Jew and a Christian and how each uses faith in the mystery of life’s purpose.

Non-fiction – December 17th 2009

#4 Stones into Schools: Promoting Peace with Books, Not Bombs, in Afghanistan and Pakistan by Greg Mortenson

The author who also wrote best-selling *Three Cups of Tea* below wrote this book as a follow up to his last. In this book he details his vision for peace using literacy and education for this war-torn region.

#6 Three Cups of Tea: One Man's Mission to Promote Peace . . . One School at a Time by Greg Mortenson

Description:

"The first time you share tea with a Balti, you are a stranger," a villager tells Greg Mortenson. "The second time, you are an honored guest. The third time you become family." An inspirational story of one man's efforts to address poverty, educate girls, and overcome cultural divides, Three Cups, which won the 2007 Kiriya Prize for nonfiction, reveals the enormous obstacles inherent in becoming such "family."

(Many lists that appear on Amazon under the “spiritual” category are compiled by readers who list their own favorite books. Many of these lists are not updated.)

SPECIAL NOTE*

One of the **Top Spiritual Heroes of 2009**, Reverend Michael Beckwith, had a New York Times Best Seller this year, ***Spiritual Liberation***.

New York Times Best-Seller List

*Those books with some kind of spiritual connection

Hardcover Fiction

#2

The Lost Symbol by Dan Brown

Hardcover- Nonfiction

#2

Stones into Schools: Promoting Peace with Books, Not Bombs, in Afghanistan and Pakistan by Greg Mortenson

#3

Have a Little Faith: A True Story by Mitch Albom

#9

Half the Sky: Turning Oppression Into Opportunity for Women Worldwide by Sheryl WuDunn

Trade Paperback Fiction

#2

The Shack by William Paul Young

Trade Paperback Nonfiction

#1 The Blindside

By Michael Lewis

#2

Three Cups of Tea: One Man's Mission to Promote Peace . . . One School at a Time by Greg Mortenson

#9

90 Minutes in Heaven: A True Story of Death and Life by Don Piper

Hardcover How to (advice)

#3

It's Your Time: Activate Your Faith, Achieve Your Dreams, and Increase in God's Favor by Joel Osteen

#4

Divine Soul Mind Body Healing and Transmission System Zhi Gang Sha

#6

The Last Lecture by Randy Pausch

9

Reinventing the Body, Resurrecting the Soul: How to Create a New You, by Deepak Chopra

Chopra's latest book talks about the need and the power of reconnecting with the soul.

OTHER BESTSELLER LISTS

Latest Indie Trade American Booksellers Association

As of Nov 23 2009

Nonfiction – trade paperback (spiritual books)

1. *Three Cups of Tea* by Greg Mortenson
10. *Letter to my Daughter* by Maya Angelou

This years top spiritual seller from The Well Red Coyote in Sedona, AZ, owner Joe Neri, is the same as last year, “**Jesus, Buddha, Krishna, Lao Tzu, The Parallel Sayings (The Common Teachings of the Four World Religions)**” by local author Richard Hooper.

From LA California, the Green Spiritual Book winner: *The Garden of Earth – Living Remedies and Earth-Honoring Practices* by Laura Lamun

The winner of the San Francisco Book Festival; 2009 in the SPIRITUAL Category was *You're Not Who You Think You Are* – by Albert Clayton Gauden of Sedona. The runner-up was *Seeing True*, by Ronald Chapman.

Spiritual Retreat Centers

Spiritual and religious retreat growth has continued during 2009 as people continue to seek places of solitude to connect with their Divine Essence. Throughout North America there are over 1,500 monasteries, abbeys and spiritual retreat centers where one can refocus oneself from the hectic life to a place of spiritual, mental, and physical refreshment. Some offer places of solitude and quiet, while others offer workshops, events and activities with specific themes.

Phil Stone of finfthedivine.com and www.seekaretreat.com, a resource for retreats in the USA and Canada which lists events and more than 1,400 locations said, *"In 2009 the activity seems to be about the same as 2008. A few retreat centers have been sold, while others have thrived during this uncertain period. The need for spiritual stability is present; however, economic instability has had an impact on attendance at many retreat centers. In summary, I would say that the desire to attend retreats is up while attendance might be slightly down this year. I expect 2010 to be a turnaround year as retreat centers are learning to cope and adjust with this economic climate. The use of Internet Technology and new tools will help get the word out about these sacred places and events. There is more information already on blogs, YouTube, Facebook and Twitter about spiritual retreats."*

Updates from Sedona

The **Sedona Creative Life Center** offers the Sedona community access to the top spiritual leaders and thinkers in the world. Director Nancy Spheeris, said, *"We were very fortunate this year to only have six fewer programs than last year. There are many people out there wanting to share their spiritual knowledge with the Sedona Community."*

"In this economy," Nancy continued. "David Hawkins and the Sedona Method seem to retain their market share but some of the one-time programs are losing attendees or even canceling."

"Movies we show are priced very reasonably, such as "Dying to Live" by Sharon Lund," said Nancy, *"yet only 30 people attended."* Another film, *Home Grown* about a family in CA who produces massive quantities of food had attendance of only 50. *"It's hard to tell anymore what's going to draw," Nancy Spheeris stated.* *"We are very fortunate in the diversity of spiritual programs that come here like Drun Valo Melchezadek. He walks the talk."*

***** END WHITE WING REPORT 2009 *****
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