This is a commentary on the original ‘Morning Star Faith’ document, compiled in 1969 at Wheeler’s/Ahimsa Church Ranch to comply with a request by our attorney, Corbin Houchins, for a written text describing our belief system. The original was composed in the hopes of forestalling Sonoma County’s attempt to close us down via a punitive use of the health and building codes. It was unsuccessful, merely postponing for a few years the arrival of the bulldozers. Morning Star Ranch already was under a permanent injunction forbidding anyone other than the owner and his immediate family to live there. By the time this document was created, Morning Star Ranch’s homegrown structures already had been bulldozed at least twice. This commentary is an attempt to expand in greater detail what the Morning Star Faith original document was attempting to explain. Times change, and more than 40 years have passed, but not necessarily for the better. Commentaries on the original document will be displayed in italics.

Morning Star Faith

Thy Ahimsa Community Church

Original document written October, 1969, Ahimsa Ranch

Revised September 1976, Joy Ridge

With an explanation of the drawn symbol and further commentary by Ramón Sender Barayón

The symbol of the Morning Star originated in the following manner. Joan, one of the first arrivals at the ranch in 1966, discovered documents addressed to ‘Morning Star Press’ in a closet in the lower house. Further research discovered that the ranch had been given that name during the tenure of the previous owner, John Beecher. As a member of the Catholic Lay Order of St. Dominic, he had invited members to meet at the ranch for retreats, and at some point they dedicated the land to the Virgin Mary. Here is a 1974 interview with one of the original lay members from the 24-chapter history that I put together in the 1970s titled “Home Free Home:”

http://www.diggers.org/home_free.htm
Chapter 23
How Morning Star Ranch Was Named and Dedicated

RAMON: “One sunny morning in May, 1971, Lou, Rena, Vishnu, Joanie, Sol Ray, Katy Dog and I were driving back from the ocean through Freestone. We stopped at the Wishing Well Nursery to see our friend Tom Field who was working there, and also to talk to a man named Tom Golden, who told us the following story.

TOM: “In 1959 and ’60, John Beecher was the owner of the ranch. He was the grandson of Harriet Beecher Stowe, the abolitionist author of “Uncle Tom’s Cabin,” and himself a poet and seeker with an abiding concern for humanity. Also he was the Novice Master of The Third Order Of St. Dominic, a Catholic lay order with a house in San Francisco. I also was a member of the Order at that time, and groups of us would go up to the ranch for retreats, or perhaps I should say informal seminars, six or eight people at a time.

“The weekends passed quietly. I’d get up early, feed the chickens and collect the eggs, and then go down to the brook and take my clothes off. There’s a big beautiful rock there near the stream. I used to sit there, surrounded by trees and water. No matter what you might think, it was inspirational.

“John Beecher was thinking about giving the ranch to the Catholic Church. He decided to dedicate the ranch to the Virgin Mary and to name it. All of us were asked what we thought the name should be, and one day we constructed a cross out of redwood and put it up on the hill overlooking the front drive.

“I suggested that if he was going to dedicate the ranch to the Virgin, it should be called the Morning Star. The name comes from the Litany of The Blessed Virgin, from which two other names were suggested. All the names were written down and placed anonymously in a box. The part of the Litany we are talking about runs as follows:

Mystical Rose (suggested)
Tower of David
House of Gold
Ark of the Covenant
Gate of Heaven (suggested)
Morning Star (suggested)

“Although there were never any group mystical experiences, many people found it inspirational. As far as any direct experiences of God, I certainly felt the Divine Mother’s presence and I know many others did also. John Beecher was going to donate the ranch to the Church, and now Lou Gottlieb has deeded it to God.”

RAMON: At the ranch, I became interested in the Morning Star symbol from Native American sources, primarily the Lakota Sioux who drew it as an eight-sided star that later they incorporated in their star quilts. Here is a Beaded Lakota Star Medicine Bag by Phyllis White Bear – “The Morning Star welcomes new beginnings.”

By 1967 the ranch folk adopted it as the opposite of a ‘No Trespassing’ sign, indicating non-private land, or a home that welcomed anyone. A card was printed that included a statement by Lou Gottlieb, the owner of the ranch:

Good news! God has revealed the true meaning of Original Sin. Exclusive ownership of land is Original Sin and man commits Original Sin when he slices up his Mother Earth in order to buy and sell the pieces. Exclusive ownership of ‘Trespassing’ signs are signs of marital unhappiness. This revelation can test in your window or on your land access to which what happens. The first person the land Nitjah, bringing heart, homesteading, will say, it’s yours. The life will improve become the healing. Can you live? Can you lose?

(Text of Morning Star postcard, printed and distributed in 1968.)

The symbol was also silk-screened onto armbands and began to be painted in various colors and designs on people’s jackets.

Purposes of The Morning Star Faith

1. The living of a primitive life in harmony with revealed Divine Law.

RAMON: We attempted to embrace the style of the original inhabitants of the Sonoma County coastal ridges as closely as possible, the Coastal Miwok and Pomo, and named our lifestyle ‘Voluntary Primitivism.’ Private ownership of Mother Earth did not exist in the Native Americans’ world view. A later movement, Voluntary Simplicity, hearkened back historically to Ancient Greek philosophers and attempted to cure the disease known as ‘Affluenza,’ which was – and is – running rampant through U.S. consumerist culture. Another, known as Voluntary Poverty, historically evolved as another option through the European monastic communities. See “Voluntary Simplicity: Toward a Way of Life That Is Outwardly Simple, Inwardly Rich” by Duane Elgin.

Coastal Miwok dwellings
2. The teaching by example of the four beliefs, the four missions of planetary purity, the four elemental yogas, the seven Divine Laws (all explained on the upcoming pages.)

Black Elk spoke to the star as follows:

"Morning Star, there at the place where the sun comes up, you who have the wisdom which we seek, help us in cleansing ourselves and all the people that our generations to come will have light as they walk the sacred path. You lead the dawn as it walks forth, and also the day which follows with its light, which is knowledge. This you do for us and for all the people of the world, that they may see clearly in walking the wakan (holy) path, that they may know all that is holy, and that they may increase in a sacred manner."

(Adapted from Ron Zeilinger’s "Lakota Life")

How To Draw A Morning Star, and The Symbol’s Meaning

Thy Four Truths

ONE THY LOVE, OH ETERNAL BEING

NOTE: You wonder, “Why this use of the second-person-singular ‘Thy’?”

I believe that ‘Thou, Thee, Thy,’ evolved from the seed syllable of the panting breath, ‘Tha-tha-tha’ that occurs naturally in very high bliss states, as well as when we overexert ourselves physically. Infants pronounce ‘Da’ as one of their earliest utterances, frequently ‘awarded’ to the father (‘Da-da’) to please him. ‘Da’ in Sanskrit: means “the Giver.”

Personally, I find it unfortunate that ‘Thou’ has disappeared in common usage and found only in sacred utterances and prayers to the One. Since the second-person-singular pronoun exists, why not use it as an intimate form within family groups?

(See the sunset chant ‘Only Thou’ on the final page).

ONE : The Truth is forever one (and displays four basic attributes on the planet:)

naked, nameless, homeless, harmless

Above and beyond all names and symbols for the Truth exists the Nameless One, the Beloved without attributes found buried in the deepest darkness as well as shining from the brightest light. On our planet, incarnations of the One are born, naked and nameless, and these attributes remain sacred in many spiritual traditions. The naked and nameless Hindu sadhus also take the attribute of homeless, as did Jesus, born in a stable. Harmlessness is found buried in the deepest darkness as well as shining from the brightest light. On our planet, incarnations of the One are born, naked and nameless, and these attributes remain sacred in many spiritual traditions. The naked and nameless Hindu sadhus also take the attribute of homeless, as did Jesus, born in a stable. Harmlessness is

Thy Four Missions

OPEN EARTH, OPEN AIR, OPEN FIRE, OPEN WATER

The four elements must be protected by our love and caring.

OPEN MIND / INTELLIGENCE (this fifth mission added 2010)

All data and points of view, positive, negative or neutral are outshone by the light of clarity.

Pure Awareness is the underlying source of Eternal Being

OPEN EARTH: “Open Land - Land Access To Which Is Denied No One” – The opening of lands as sanctuaries for the One, naked, nameless, homeless, harmless. Land purification by replenishment of the soil, invisible land use and Voluntary Primitivism. Welcoming the divine nature in our children.

This mission included Morning Star as an open-door ‘Digger Farm’ and as an early Ecology Action group whose center in Berkeley was co-founded by Morningstarian Chuck Herrick in 1968, the architect-zoologist-Mime Troupe technician-Digger, which also involved another Morningstar member, Betty Schwimmer. From these early seedlings blossomed the global emergence of Popular and Radical Environmentalism, Radical Ecology and the search for a livable world. Innovations on the ranch included research into compost privies and the recycling of building materials into eco-friendly living structures.

OPEN AIR: The opening of all communications channels. Open airing of feelings, open airways, airwaves. Air purification by planting trees and gardens. No more air pollution! The wind of the spirit speaks in the treetops. Listen!

We all breathe the same air, so it makes sense to keep our air as pure as possible. Air pollution has been cited for the increase in asthma amongst children, and the list of health issues is both too obvious and too long to list here. The planting of trees in urban areas, the current concern over carbon dioxide levels are included. The
And purified drinking water is becoming a cheap and achievable goal.

produced annually is about six times more water than exists in all the rivers of the world. Compost privies, folks?

pure water available everywhere. The statistics are sobering: the UN estimates that the amount of wastewater

We share water with all living creatures, so it should not be necessary to point out the importance of making

vitamin D levels are being put to rest, and ‘safe’ sunbathing is finally on the upswing.

microwave sunlight down to the planet 24 hours per day. Current phobias about sun exposure leading to low

Solar power and solar energy efficiency continues to improve, as we realize that there is enough sun hitting

balancing of our bodies and hearts to the sun.

Solar power and solar energy efficiency continues to improve, as we realize that there is enough sun hitting

make 10,000. Research on solar collectors in space demonstrate that we can

sparks added (2011)

OPEN FIRE: Access to all energies to all. Fire purification of the spirit in worship. The opening

line added

of our bodies and hearts to the sun.

Solar power and solar energy efficiency continues to improve, as we realize that there is enough sun hitting

our planet to fulfill our energy needs x 10,000. Research on solar collectors in space demonstrate that we can

microwave sunlight down to the planet 24 hours per day. Current phobias about sun exposure leading to low

vitamin D levels are being put to rest, and ‘safe’ sunbathing is finally on the upswing.

fourth diagonal

OPEN WATER: Open seas, oceans, rivers, streams, hot springs. We are water brothers & sisters

line added

with all life. The purification of water. Stop pollution.

We share water with all living creatures, so it should not be necessary to point out the importance of making

pure water available everywhere. The statistics are sobering: the UN estimates that the amount of wastewater

produced annually is about six times more water than exists in all the rivers of the world. Compost privies, folks?

And purified drinking water is becoming a cheap and achievable goal.

sparks added (2011)

OPEN INTELLIGENCE (OPEN MIND): A 2010 addition that we originally overlooked

and that could have played an important role. Developed in depth via Candice O’Denver’s “Great Freedom/

Balanced View” teaching, it can be summed up in her brief sentence: “Short moments of awareness/clarity, repeated

times, become continuous.”

She adds: “What is a short moment of awareness? To know the answer to that question, stop thinking just for

a moment. Anyone can do that just for a moment: to stop thinking, without even the thought ‘I’m not thinking.’

“What remains when you stop thinking? A sense of alertness and clarity, that’s what remains -- alertness and

clarity, the power to know.

“What’s that awareness is, clarity and alertness open like a cloudless sky. If we just look at the sky, it’s pure and

it’s vast and our own clarity is just like that, shining from within everything.”

At Morning Star, we practiced Sri Aurobindo’s ‘Silent Mind’ method under his partner Mother Meera’s overarching

spiritual presence. “When a thought appears, merely throw it away.” However Candice O’Denver’s later teaching

describes how the Silent Mind is always present under the ongoing data stream of all thoughts and feelings which,

like clouds in the blue sky, will pass by and dissolve on their own. “Just let it be as it is!”

Thy Four (Elemental) Prayers

EARTH, AIR, FIRE, WATER

EARTH: Oh Earth, be fruitful
Thou art our own mother’s breast,
I share you with all life.

Everything is conscious. You can talk to Gaia and she will hear you. Happiness begins with a childlike attitude.

Try it and you will be amazed. Approach a lizard nose-to-nose, with your hands behind your face, and you’ll be

surprised how close you can get. Hug a tree!

AIR: Oh Air, scented with early mists,
Thou art our mother’s breath.
Oh wind in the trees,
Only Thou, only Thou.

This prayer refers to a sunset chant we sang at Morning Star, and is included at the end of this article. Also, I
used to tune my autoharp to the pitch of the wind in the trees, and the wind would respond. The key of G, oddly

enough, is a favorite key for Country Music. For an article about conversing with the wind, see:

http://www.raysender.com/wind.html

FIRE: Oh Light, high fire of our being,
Oh Sun, Father-Mother united,
Out of Thy brilliance we flew to a half-lit planet
To find Thy Light buried in the dust-dance of matter.

In my view, the sun is a conscious being and will respond not only to a prayer but to conversation. I once chatted

with a young girl about the sun, and she said “The sun is my friend.” When I asked why, she replied, “Because

he’s always looking over my shoulder to see what I’m doing.” I also pray that most ancient Hindu sun prayer, the

Gayatri, to the sun every morning:

“Om, Bhur, Bhuvaha, Svar,
Tat Savitur Varenyam,
Bhargo Devasya Dheemahee,
Dyo Yo Naha Prachodayat,
Om Tat Sat.”

Or if you prefer it in English, here is a personal translation:

“Aum, oh earth, oh air, oh golden light,
Oh, that brilliance most adored!
We drink the splendor of that One
Who inspires our heartbeats to quicken with love.”

WATER: Oh Water, sparkling from the spring,
Thou art our life-current.
Our brooks race into Thy rivers,
Our efforts merely dam Thy flow.
Ocean, Ocean, womb of life.

Up to 60% of our body consists of water, the brain is composed of 70% water, and the lungs nearly 90%. About

83% of our blood is water, and each day we must replace 2.4 liters of water, some through drinking and the rest

taken in by the body from food. We are basically water poaches with a bunch of organs floating in them. When I listen to my relaxed breathing, it sounds like the surf on the beach. In the ocean, we return to

our source before we climbed up on dry land.

Thy Four Yogas

EARTH YOGA, AIR YOGA, FIRE YOGA, WATER YOGA

EARTH YOGA: Thy Love Feast -- share the Sabbath
The Eternal Mouthful -- hold one mouthful of food
for 100 relaxed breaths. Then chew only with the front teeth.
Shitting -- find a patch of garden or forest, ground that
needs enriching. Open the earth, squat, breathe
deeply, let it happen. Don’t push. Feel the Earth
accept your offering.
Enjoy – play – befriend silence – laugh and smile more!

Just stretching your ‘smile muscles’ is enough to trigger a wave of endorphins, those feel-good hormones. So even if you don’t feel like smiling, put a stick or a pencil sideways in your mouth to stretch them. You’ll be amazed at the results!

The ‘Imperial Patent’ below, created by my clown persona Zero, Emperor of the Realm of Zerocccidental by Popular Acclaim, gives the holder permission to let their inner clown out for a romp.

Waving The Imperial Plunger We Proclaim:

By the authority vested in us, Emperor Zero II, we confer upon The Holder of this Imperial Patent all Rights and Appurtenances of Snigglehood, including hereby & forever the entitlement to walk barefoot, make friends with everyone & do anything else that brings fun, silliness, harmony, happiness, celebration, relaxation, health, love, joy, creativity, pleasure, abundance, grace, courage, balance, spontaneity, passion, beauty, peace, & life energy to thyself & all other beings everywhere. Furthermore, as a loyal subject of the Empire, thou art hereby officially authorized to jump in mud puddles, talk with animals, bugs, birds, trees, rocks, elves & sprites, & channel healing smiles in all six directions, demonstrating all the virtues & characteristics of Our Loyal and Well-Sniggled Subject. Always remember: Just Now is the place to be. Nothing could be more natural!

Signed with the Royal Seal,

For the full Imperial Pronunciamento on Sniggling your Snarfs, required reading for all Subjects in Good Standing, go here: http://www.raysender.com/coronation_speech.html

Create -- fulfill - maintain

Because everybody is a child of our Creator Sun, we all have the talents necessary to create whatever we like! Really! You don’t need an effing be-Phd-llement degree or an ‘okay’ from some guru to put together what pleases you most. Want to build your own home? Go ahead – the nesting instinct is built into your DNA! Want to play music but never took a lesson? Just open your mouth and let out your heart’s song! Or pick up a log and whack it with a stick! It all works – and somebody might just listen! Or join the jam! At our open-door ranches there always was music being made on somewhere on the land.

Witness -- let your light shine

In a tribal council circle, a talking stick is passed around from member to member allowing only the person holding the stick to speak. But don’t wait for a tribal council – or for milking time at the barn, which was our way of letting the cows call the meetings. Get out there and speak your peace! If you speak from your heart, people will listen.

Even if you live in the city, take one sacramental shit in the earth annually.

Invisible Land Use: Live on the land in such a way as to harmonize into invisibility. Leave no tracks?

AIR YOGA: Deep breathing exercises, snoring with a saggy jaw, relaxed throat breathing. Purr along with your cat! Resonate your trachea until your toes and fingers tingle. Talk to the wind! It will answer you.

FIRE YOGA: Sungazing, fire and candle gazing. Person-to-person gazing. Sex: Start sex without moving for a half-hour. As you breathe in, I breathe out.

WATER YOGA: Swimming, bathing, running in the rain naked, steam baths, hot springs. Thumb or uvula-sucking for that oceanic feeling. Can you pee a Morning Star?

Morning Star Faith is hurt by:

1. Hurting for the sake of hurting.
2. Inflicting pain on other beings.
3. Exploitation of others or the elements.
4. Un-invisible (plush) living.
5. Conditioning anything or anyone to your beliefs.
6. Rigid planning ahead. Live in the NOW!
7. Self-poisoning -- eating poisoned food, breathing poisoned air, using poisoned energies, drinking poisoned water.

The Seven Divine Laws, or An Analysis of The Morning Star Symbol

1. Relax – decondition to your true God-nature

The circle is celebrated in Zen Buddhism and Sufism, amongst other traditions. More recently, Candice O’Denver’s teaching (previously mentioned) focuses on ‘resting as it is’ in the ever-on pure awareness/clarity that is our true nature. We are all ‘Restafarians’ if we are alive – and perhaps this continues even beyond our planetary sojourn!

2. Love – belong – express it openly.

“Love, Love, Love,” the Beatles sing, and is there anyone who needs a reminder? We need to give and receive those three minimum hugs a day that we all require. Hug a tree if no human is nearby! Love is light that has been transformed by your heart center into a horizontal wave transmitting in all directions. If you chant ‘OM’ long enough, you will hear your pulse in your voice. When you speak from your heart, your pulse can be heard in what you say - a truly heart-felt expression of your feelings.

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In a tribal council circle, a talking stick is passed around from member to member allowing only the person holding the stick to speak. But don’t wait for a tribal council – or for milking time at the barn, which was our way of letting the cows call the meetings. Get out there and speak your peace! If you speak from your heart, people will listen.
6. Worship -- observe the sabbath.

(Quoting Maestro Lou Gottlieb) “Spend at least one day a week as you would if you were in heaven!”

Most of all, embrace life, in all of its ups and downs. Why? Because the roar of the ocean echoes in your bloodstream, because nature's music beats in your heart, because the touch of another tingles you from head to toe, because the delight of laughing along with your friends, because of your pet's excitement when you come home, because of the sparkling blue sky -- and the golden ball it cradles who gives life and sustenance to all of us. And most of all, because life holds infinite possibilities for you, sacraments included!

7. Harmonize -- get along with music and song.

On Open Land there was always music happening somewhere, day or night. That urge can modulate to anywhere and anytime, so just pick yourself up, go out and find someone to play with.

Message from the Brothers & Sisters

In Reality, everything is real. All names are what they are: friend, brother, sister, lover, mother, teacher, wisdom, sacred unfolding of deeper and deeper moments. Honesty is what’s really there when you totally relax. All conditioning of your innate nature is an armoring of the self away from the presence of Eternal Being.

Man is born divine, but is forced by society to trade his birthright for an inherited mess of conditioned attitudes and imprints that create a 'dis-eased' life style. Voluntary Primitivism is the (one possible of many) reunions of humans with their greater self – God’s nature, the living in harmony with the four elements. It is the practice of living according to divine law.

This message anticipated Candice O'Denver’s “rest as it is” teaching by several decades. It won't do you any harm, and probably will help you, to check out her Great Freedom/Balanced View websites. They contain a large number of free audio, video and download-able books. If we had had this resource (Open Mind-Open Intelligence) back in the 1970s, it would have helped us define ourselves to ourselves and to the world at large:

http://www.balancedview.org

**PEACE TO US FOLKS AND KIDS!**

"I know for certain that we are all together just ONE. And the most perfect expression of this Unity is unattached LOVE for all and everything, without distinction.”

O.B. Ray, beggar-monk 1927-1990

"Arise, oh resplendent being, thou who art forever pure, thou who knowest neither birth nor death; arise, all-beautiful, and manifest thy nature.”

Mother Mira, Sri Aurobindo’s co-worker

“Open Land – a viable option for the terminally disgruntled.”

Garbage Mike, Ranch Recycling Consultant

**History of the Morning Star Faith**

Once upon a time a piece of land was dedicated to the Mother Nature of all planetary beings. She awakened and gathered her children to herself. As the children came together, they also realized that they could not forbid anyone access to her healing nurturance and love. More and more arrived and became one with her, but the powers of inertia – and those who preferred to suffer more before awakening – gathered to try to stop the pouring down of the light. But the more they tried to scatter the beams, the further the beams traveled, penetrating deeper and deeper into matter until the light from above and the light buried in the lattices of the atoms merged and...

All-of-us awakened, the great conscient life form made up of everyone, everywhere, all the time.

The rest of the story is really quite funny, if you can hear the laughter.

Does that make sense to you?

**Only Thou Chant**

**A Few More Songs**

Sing to the tune

“The Sheik of Araby:”

A piece of peace, apiece.
A piece of peace, apiece.
A piece of peace, apiece.
A piece of peace a preeeeeecceee,.’

(repeat)

For more information about living lightly on the Earth, see:

*Living on the Earth* by Alicia Bay Laurel, and for more ceremonies and chants for the seasons, see the book *

*Being of the Sun* by Alicia Bay Laurel and Ramón Sender

See also a new (2013) music CD of songs and chants:

“Songs From Being of the Sun by Ramon Sender Barayon and Alicia Bay Laurel”
And A Last-of-All Final Comment

Of course the bottom line and never-mentioned reason we terrified county officials: we smoked marijuana and used psychedelics – peyote at church gatherings and other substances elsewhere, whether recreationally or sacredly. The horror, the horror! ‘They’ were afraid that all their children would come up to the ranch, get stoned and join us! So here we are, some forty-four years later, and finally pot has gone mainstream, is becoming legal, and the ghastly ‘War on Drugs’ is beginning to be understood as merely a shuck to keep private prisons afloat.

And what about the hundreds of U.S. military bases abroad?

In a 2010 article in the Asia Times, investigative reporter Nick Turse calls the answer to that question:

‘...the one number no American knows. Not the president. Not the Pentagon. Not the experts. No one. Whether the most accurate total is 900 bases, 1,000 bases or 1,100 posts in foreign lands, what’s undeniable is that the US military maintains... an empire of bases so large and shadowy that no one – not even at the Pentagon – really knows its full size and scope.'

“‘We have met the enemy, and he is us!’” – Pogo

If you need to take time out and away
Where the sun just says, “It’s time to play!”
Take a free trip to a sunny place
Where the world is more than time and space

Just a grassy bower with birds and bees
And an elf or two among the trees
And the rest is up to nature as we
Sail to heaven on the Morning Star Express
How To Make A Morning Star With Sticks, Leaves, Stones, etc.

(Six-pointed center star can be made out of sand or white soil)
Harmonize -- get along with music and song