

Advance Praise for
Overcoming Spiritual Myopia:
A View Toward Peace Among the Religions

- St. Paul worries about us seeing the world through a dark and distorting lens. Margaret Placentra Johnston offers you a clear lens, a corrected lens, that invites you to see what is without distortion and illusion. Hers is a perspective much needed and rarely offered. **Read this book if you want to see; put it aside if you prefer to be blind.**
 - Rabbi Rami Shapiro, *Holy Rascals: Advice for Spiritual Revolutionaries*

- "Spirituality is often described as a sense of oneness and that everything is connected and interdependent. Sadly many people cannot handle that level of openness and inclusivity. Instead they get lost inside their own limited beliefs. *Overcoming Spiritual Myopia* is an intelligent and inspiring analysis of this lack of vision. Margaret Placentra Johnston carefully and clearly explains this myopia and also the ways to deconstruct, heal and transcend it. **This is a very useful conceptual and practical book for any serious contemporary spiritual seeker.**"
 - Dr. William Bloom, leading British spiritual educator, founder and director of the Spiritual Companions Trust (<http://www.spiritualcompanions.org>) and author of many books, including *The Endorphin Effect* and *The Power of Modern Spirituality*. (<http://williambloom.com>)

- If you don't know what 'spiritual myopia' is, you could be suffering from it... But, don't worry! Understanding and remedy are at hand in Margaret Placentra Johnston's comforting new book. A wise and warm-hearted Doctor of Optometry, Margaret is a wizard concerning not only conventional sight, but also inner vision, in-sight. She is a person who wants everyone to see clearly and so contribute to a better, safer, happier world. **So, without hesitation, let me commend *Overcoming Spiritual Myopia* to you.**
 - (Dr.) Larry Culliford, former psychiatrist, the author of *Seeking Wisdom - A Spiritual Manifesto*, and a regular blogger with *Psychology Today* (see www ldc52.co.uk).

- *Overcoming Spiritual Myopia* is a meaty inspiring highly readable sequel to *Faith Beyond Belief*. Margaret Placentra Johnston offers us a path to spiritual health and well-being that can affect not only the individual but have global impact. **Her work is deeply scholarly yet accessible to any thinking person.**

Overcoming Spiritual Myopia offers three gifts

- the concept of spiritual myopia,
- how spiritual myopia affects us and the global community, and
- a new consciousness as a "cure."

Margaret gently pulls us into a way of understanding spiritual thought as it has evolved beyond religion. *Overcoming Spiritual Myopia* is both an excellent literature survey and a support for the position that spiritual myopia can be cured. Margaret presents a positive hopeful message for anyone willing to consider personal/spiritual growth as a path to a better life and world."

- Reverend Margaret J Shepherd, MBA, MDiv., author of *The Visionbuilders' Manual: 9 Steps to Visionary Success for your Company, Career or Cause*.

- Margaret Placentra Johnston, both a practicing optometrist and spiritual teacher, uses the very apt metaphor of myopia, more commonly known as nearsightedness, to describe particular deficiencies of spiritual perception that keep our vision of a more inclusive and loving view of the universe out of focus.

In *Overcoming Spiritual Myopia*, Johnston visits both past and future as she casts a discerning eye on the vast sweep of human religious development. Using the lens of spiritual development theory from her first book, *Faith Beyond Belief*, Johnston looks back at history and how the focus on narrow and provincial understandings that are too near to us has distorted our vision and caused us to lose sight of the original intention of religion's wisdom teachings. According to this theory, individuals pass through four levels of spiritual development - lawless, faithful, rational, and unitive - on their way to maturity. Distortions of spiritual vision (personification, literalism, fundamentalism, triumphalism, binary logic, and need for certainty,) each of which Johnston elaborates upon, prevent us from reaching the more mature, inclusive, "unitive," level where one can "connect in a beneficent way to everyone and everything in the universe." Her spiritual development theory is eminently useful in understanding and dealing with these distortions of spiritual vision so prevalent in our contemporary world.

Johnston's work not only describes but prescribes. She has culled from the literal mountains of contemporary books on new age spirituality rare gems of insight and

wisdom from such authors as Don Cupitt, Wayne Teasdale, and Harvey Cox. Readers benefit from both her extensive research into the subject as well as key insights from the author's personal journey. These insights are then applied methodically and effectively to the problem of spiritual myopia with a clarity and conciseness made possible by her painstaking research and competent thoughtfulness. There are no shortcuts to spiritual growth, but having a good guide is certainly expedient. I heartily recommend Johnston as one. Here she offers humanity better vision of a more promising world.

***Overcoming Spiritual Myopia* is a tour de force in spiritual development literature.**

- (Dr.) Fred Howard, author of *Transforming Faith: Stories of Change from a Lifelong Spiritual Seeker*, minister, Valdosta Unitarian Church.
- In *Overcoming Spiritual Myopia*, Margaret Placentra Johnston presents an insightful view of the evolution of human spiritual development, not just individually, but also of humanity as a whole. She offers helpful perspectives on religion, the Bible, how and why humans perceive the Bible the way we have and how we can perceive it more clearly. Issuing a call to interspirituality, **Johnston inspires a commitment to spiritual advancement which may help save humanity and the earth.**
 - Rev. Carol E. Richardson, author of *Truth and Illusion: The Politics of Spirituality*
- **"I feel so good reading this book. It gives me hope!"**
 - Sharron Dorr, editor