

Guest Editorial

Peter Fenwick

A very big thank-you to every member of the Network and all those friends of the Network who have contributed to the Appeal. You will be very pleased to hear that we have raised around £57,000 and thus are well on target to match the funding of £61,000 which we have been offered.

The Network now has nearly 2,000 members in over fifty countries. We are thus an international organization. We now have local groups in Switzerland, Germany, Holland, New Zealand and several in the UK. We hope to inaugurate our first American group in Boston in June. Over 650 members of the Network have e-mail addresses and can thus communicate electronically with other members. As the Network is so widespread, the Council has from the outset encouraged networking through the Internet. I would like to express my thanks to KEVIN ASHBRIDGE and his team who have designed and made possible the network website, and to PAUL FILMORE and his team for their help. The website allows many more people to hear of the Network and if sympathetic to our aims, to join.

Now that the Network has a higher and more public profile, we need to think seriously about how we present ourselves to the world, and so whom we attract. It is clear from experience that the human condition has physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual dimensions. Between these dimensions is a continuity of experience; at different times each of us may be found at a different place in this spectrum. The Network was founded to explore these dimensions, particularly towards the spiritual and away from the simple materialistic end of the spectrum. It is the diversity of approach which Network members can offer that is so valuable in this exploration.

When the Network was founded, these wider views were not generally held in the scientific community, and to be associated with an organization that held them could have been prejudicial to a member's career development. Nowadays there is a wider understanding of the assumptions underpinning Western science and the epistemology that flows from it. It is becoming recognized that Western science is a science of the objective and that we have yet to develop a Western science of the subjective. Until this science is fully formulated, the Western description of the universe is clearly seen to be limited so far as subjective features such as meaning, ethics, morals, spirituality and consciousness are concerned. It is now important that there is a move to integrate science so that the subjective and the objective aspects of the world are both considered; Network members are well placed to help with this process.

In these circumstances it would seem reasonable to include in our literature the word 'spiritual', so as to attract to the Network those people who are not trapped in a totally materialistic belief. We need to attract potential members who are interested in self-development and are seeking to gain a broader and wider understanding of themselves and of the universe. The difficulty here is that 'spiritual' carries too much baggage, and is often associated with narrow religious beliefs. However, it is a good word, and the only one we have which comes near to expressing the wider nature of humankind.

So the problem is: should we now be saying in our literature in a quite straightforward way that we do encourage people with a spiritual interest to join? Or is there a risk that if we do this, we might embarrass some of our honorary members who have a high standing within

the scientific community, or compromise our members in the eyes of their colleagues, or risk being seen as too flakey an organization to be taken seriously by those people whom we would like to attract because they are serious seekers after truth?

We need your views. *Network* is starting a 'Points of View' section so that anybody who has comments or opinions or criticisms or plaudits concerning the Network can air them. Points of View, we hope, will be a real forum for change. Please open it by helping us all with your views on this topic.