

HISTORY OF 2ND TIER CIRCLE

by Steve Marcom

Second Tier began in 2003, one year before Janice and I first came to Unity. It was a discussion workgroup first led by Rev. EJ Niles and husband Harv Morrow. The focus was on understanding the attitudes and beliefs of the ancient writers of the Bible using the **Spiral Dynamics** model of consciousness. The purpose was to give each of us a deeper understanding of the Bible; in particular, verses that might seem to be in contradiction with each other.

For example, RED and BLUE are Spiral Dynamic shorthand for two of the nine levels of consciousness - the human mindset which evolves over time as life conditions change. In 2nd Tier, we identified one of the bible writers as having a RED consciousness. He emphasizes the rural values of a pastoral society, autonomy and personal power. The group characterized a later bible writer as having a BLUE consciousness. He values order and obedience, attributes of an urban society with an established priesthood. Early in the Christian era when the bible was redacted and standardized, the words of the RED and BLUE writers were occasionally intermixed, sometimes in the same verse. This adds a measure of complexity and challenge to get to the underlying meaning.

We can also apply the Spiral Dynamics model of consciousness to current society. For example, we could not “Google” or “Tweet” twenty years ago. Now, we can uncover knowledge effortlessly on the web. Now, we can connect with others all around the world thanks to the internet. In this respect, Spiral Dynamics proposes that we have ORANGE consciousness. ORANGE came with the advent of modern technology and science. Some of the ORANGE values are learning, creativity and self-expression. Of course, we still value freedom, justice and order just as much as those biblical writers over two to three thousand years ago.

Why the name 2nd Tier? Levels of consciousness that respond to life conditions are called 1st Tier levels. 2nd Tier consciousness responds to a deeper spiritual wisdom that anyone in any epoch can access. Jesus and Buddha were at this level; so too, perhaps, Gandhi. And now, the Dalai Lama. These individuals are well known. But we too can move into this 2nd Tier Circle of consciousness. As we place our attention on our physical and spiritual evolution, we grow step by step.

Today, Rev. E.J. is an instructor emeritus at the Unity Institute. She taught Spiral Dynamics to the ministerial students as an aid to interpret the Bible. I hear that she was a popular teacher at the Institute. She retired recently, and I have heard she is very much missed. Missed ever so much more is Harv Morrow, E.J.'s dear husband who passed on during January, 2012.

Since the time I first came to Unity, 2nd Tier Circle has met between services, originally in the Mildred Park Center, and now in classroom #5. There is usually a PowerPoint presentation. We share questions and spiritual insights together. The most valuable insights often come from personal sharing. Our purpose has evolved over the years and now includes other disciplines: we study not only Spiral Dynamics but also venerable works such as the **Tao Te Ching**. We practice the spiritual techniques of **Creative Visualization**. We learn **BePeace** to deal with negative feelings and give empathy to others. The summer and fall of 2011 we discussed Don Miguel Ruiz ' s book, ***The Four Agreements***. Classes are ongoing and you may attend at any time; there are no start and end dates.

While 2nd Tier has expanded its scope beyond Spiral Dynamics, the overall purpose remains the same: to help us move more and more into 2nd Tier consciousness, where we can grow spiritually and connect with our inner peace.