**A Way to Thrive?**

By choosing with joy and compassion to embrace a wider living-world that extends beyond physical death. Our life on earth is an opportunity to add to the compassion and beauty that are among the purposes of our conscious cosmos.

Human life on earth is finite, for each person, but also for our species. The end of the sun as we know it will also end all life on earth, except perhaps for some of the micro-organisms deep beneath the earth’s surface. Certainly, human life on earth will not be viable.

Human life on earth may end much earlier due to climate changes raising the earth’s temperature and causing floods, drought, and chaotic weather conditions leading to a shortage of food, widespread famine, and violent conflict among those confronted by starvation.

Facing death, not only as individuals but as cultures and as a species, would seem to undermine any notion of thriving on earth. Unless we have a personal experience of life continuing after physical death or are persuaded by post-material scientific evidence that consciousness is fundamental. We need not fear death. Near-death experiences and other evidence of life after death have long been affirmed in almost every human culture and more recently confirmed by consciousness research.

These scientific explorers defend a post-materialist science recognizing the reality of subjective experience and the objective verification of extraordinary experiences in spiritual traditions.

The apostle Paul writing in the first century CE to followers of Christ in Corinth affirms that “love bears all things” and "never ends.” (1 Cor. 13:7-8) In the nineteenth century John Newton, a former slave trader who after his conversion served an Anglican church, wrote the words to *Amazing Grace* and this verse: “Through many dangers, toils, and snares, I have already come. ’Tis grace has brought me safe thus far, and grace will lead me home.”

Biophysicist Joyce Whiteley Hawkes explains her extraordinary experience thirty years ago that: “established a connection between me and something much, much bigger than myself. If it is a part of God, the Source of creation, the bond has never failed.” She writes: “Before my near-death experience, I thought there was no afterlife and consequently, no continuation of consciousness. In my view, death was total, complete, and utterly final. Much to my surprise and joy, after my near-death experience the notion of continuation of consciousness became an unshakable reality.”

After a decade of training with an indigenous healer, Hawkes developed a practice she explains in *Cell-Level Healing* that includes assisting the dying as they cross a bridge “between the physical and spiritual realms.” She affirms on the basis of her personal experience: “When we face and overcome our fear of death, we can live in a new dimension of ease, clarity, and vitality.”

This is how we can thrive, as we struggle to save biodiversity and the best of human culture but are unable to prevent species extinctions and dreadful human suffering. We can choose to live with faith, hope, and love.