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Edited by

[Bron Taylor](#)

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Harmonic Convergence

If not one of the largest, as its organizers claimed, the Harmonic Convergence was probably one of the most widely dispersed religious (or spiritual) events of recent decades. Organized primarily through word of mouth and through New Age, holistic-health, art, and alternative media channels, this coordinated day of prayer, meditation, and ritual was instigated by art historian and New Age philosopher José Argüelles. According to his calendrical calculations and idiosyncratic decodings of ancient texts, the dates 16–17 August 1987 marked the synchronous occurrence of several significant events: the beginning of the final 26-year period of the Mayan calendar's 5200-year Great Cycle, the return of Quetzalcoatl, the Mayan god of peace, and the culmination of the Aztec calendar; the "dancing awake" of 144,000 Sun Dance enlightened teachers (according to the Rainbow People of the Intertribal Medicine Societies); the return of the Hopi Indians' lost white brother Poha'na; a Grand Trine in the astrological fire signs and the first time since the early 1940s that the seven planets have been so closely aligned; an anchoring of divine energy into the power points of the planet for their subsequent transmission through the "planetary grid system," and a "calibration point in a galactic and planetary harmonic scale."

To mark this convergence, Argüelles called for 144,000 people to meditate, pray, chant and visualize at sacred sites and power spots throughout the world in order to create a "complete field of trust" by "surrendering to the planet and to the higher galactic intelligences which guide and monitor" it. Humanity would thereby launch the final 25-year transition into a new age of peace, harmony, solar energy, spiritual enlightenment, and galactic convergence with other civilizations, all to begin in the year 2012. Argüelles' vision combines a Gaian ecological sensibility with a cosmic New Age eschatology: humanity's role as planetary stewards – a role we have allegedly abdicated through the misguided application of technology and

inaccurate sciences (to which Argüelles counterposes new ones) – is subsumed within a larger community of benevolent overseeing galactic intelligences.

According to media reports, by 17 August 1987, some 6000 people had gathered at Mount Shasta, California, more than 1500 came together at a site in New York's Central Park, and analogous numbers converged at sites including Chaco Canyon, New Mexico, the Cahokia Mounds outside St. Louis, England's Glastonbury and Stonehenge, Machu Picchu in Peru, the Great Pyramid in Egypt, and Mount Olympus in Greece. New Age celebrities, including Shirley MacLaine, John Denver, and Timothy Leary, were among the convergers, and the mainstream media took note, albeit with a gentle sense of humor. Though total numbers only reached a fraction of Argüelles' projected 144,000, the event was generally proclaimed a success within New Age media. Actual numbers, of course, are impossible to know, since participation could have included simply meditating or linking thoughts in the privacy of one's home or backyard.

A second Harmonic Convergence was organized in August 1992, with minor follow-up attempts since then, but these have only managed to rally much smaller numbers of participants. In recent years Argüelles has been vigorously advocating that global institutions (such as the United Nations) replace the current Gregorian calendar with a 13-moon, 28-day calendar. "The religion of truth is the religion of the Earth," he has argued, and the latter requires, as a moral imperative, to be based on a "natural" and galactically calibrated method of measuring time. Though Argüelles' ideas have not galvanized the mass movement he has hoped for, any final judgment regarding the success of the 1987 convergence remains premature until the 25-year transition period comes to its prophesied end.

Adrian Ivakhiv

Further Reading

- Jose Argüelles. *The Mayan Factor: Path Beyond Technology*. Santa Fe, NM: Bear & Company, 1987.
- See also: *Celestine Prophecy*; *Earth Mysteries*; *Harmonic Convergence and the Spiritualization of the Biosphere*; *Maya Religion (Central America)*; *Maya Spirituality (Guatemala Highlands)*.

P **Harmonic Convergence and the Spiritualization of the Biosphere**

The Harmonic Convergence Global Peace Meditation occurred on the dates 16–17 August 1987. Widely publicized in the world media, especially in the United States, the event called for a massing of a minimum of 144,000 people at dawn of August 16. An emphasis was placed on

gatherings to be held at sacred sites around the world. These sites included the Great Pyramid, Egypt; Lake Baikal, Siberia; Ayres Rock, Australia; Glastonbury, England; Macchu Picchu, Peru, Mt. Haleakala, Hawai'i; and Mt. Shasta, USA. By all reports the event attracted many times the 144,000 called for and made it the most unique global event of its kind. Subsequent events such as the stock market crash of 19 October 1987, and the end of the Cold War, early 1990, were ascribed in part as being due to the effects of the Harmonic Convergence. According to one of its principle organizers, Jim Berenholtz, never before did people from so many different cultures and religious persuasions gather to pray for peace . . . it was the largest pan-spiritual event in history.

While many people believed that the Harmonic Convergence heralded the New Age and it certainly helped create the New Age as a popular cultural phenomenon, the roots of the Harmonic Convergence lay in an ancient Mexican prophecy, that of the Thirteen Heavens and Nine Hells. This prophecy was first popularized in a book by Tony Shearer (1926–2002), *Lord of the Dawn* (1971). It was directly from Tony Shearer in 1969 that the originator of the Harmonic Convergence, José Argüelles, learned of the prophecy and of the prophetic dates, 16–17 August 1987. The Thirteen Heavens and Nine Hells refer specifically to 22, 52-year cycles based on the Mayan calendar. The first of the Thirteen 52-year Heaven cycles of decreasing choice began in 843, and ended in 1519, with the arrival of the conquistador, Hernan Cortes on Mexican soil. The Nine Hell cycles of increasing doom spanned the time between Good Friday, 1519 and 16 August 1987, with the final cycle beginning in 1935. The prophecy itself was associated with the Toltec sage and prophet Ce Acatl Topiltzin Quetzalcoatl, Our Lord One Reed, Quetzalcoatl (947–999).

Late in 1983, Argüelles had a vision of the end-date of this prophecy in which he saw circles of people gathered at sacred sites around the world, reestablishing a connection with the natural order of reality. Then in 1984, Argüelles coined the term for the event, the Harmonic Convergence. As he began to announce the event, he encountered several others who were also aware of the prophetic nature of the 1987 dates, including musician Jim Berenholtz and Native American medicine man, Harley Swiftdeer. By late spring 1987, with the publication of Argüelles' book *The Mayan Factor*, the Harmonic Convergence attracted major media attention, including the breaking story on the front page of the *Wall Street Journal*, 23 June 1987. As such, the Harmonic Convergence exemplified a popular participatory eschatology where one's very actions make a difference to the planet's future.

Through all of the mass media attention, the actual meaning of the event was generally overlooked. While signaling the end of the Thirteen Heaven and Nine Hell prophecy cycle, the Harmonic Convergence actually initi-

ated the final 25-year countdown to the conclusion of the Mayan calendar Great Cycle. This defines a cycle of 5125 years between 13 August 3113 B.C.E. and 21 December 2012. Consisting of thirteen sub-cycles called baktuns, of 144,000 days each, the entire cycle spans the history of civilization from Uruk and the First Dynasty of Egypt, ca. 3100 B.C.E., to the present moment. For this reason, what the ending of the Great Cycle portends is the ending of history itself and the beginning of a genuine post-history. To successfully conclude the cycle in 2012, according to the Harmonic Convergence prophecy, the human race must return to living again in the natural cycles of the universe, and abandon the materialist civilization that dominates the present era. If the human race cannot transcend or go beyond the materialism of the present world order by 2012, then it can only expect the worst – the collapse of civilization or even worse, the collapse of the biosphere.

At the heart of this prophecy is a recognition of the human deviation from nature and its effects on the environment, or properly speaking, the biosphere. In this regard the Harmonic Convergence prophecy coincides with the theory of the biosphere-noosphere transition. The biosphere is defined as the region on the surface of the Earth for the transformation of cosmic energies. By definition, the biosphere includes all of life as a single unity inclusive of its support system, solar and cosmic energy, the soil, hydrospheric cycles, and the convection currents of the atmosphere. As a fragile membrane encompassing the Earth's surface, the biosphere is dependent upon the pressure that the different species exert upon each other to maintain the balance of its laws, principles and cycles that govern. As Vladimir Vernadsky (1864–1945) saw it, humanity, through its extension, the machine, was upsetting the balance of the biosphere. Vernadsky himself was uncertain as to whether humans were crippling or destroying the biosphere.

In the theory of the biosphere as presented by Vernadsky and Pierre Teilhard de Chardin (1881–1955), the biosphere is an evolutive whole which is tending toward a major culminating transmutation known as the noosphere, Earth's mental envelope, discontinuous with and above the biosphere, a planetary thinking network of consciousness and information. For Teilhard de Chardin the noosphere is like a new organ of consciousness, analogous on a planetary level to the evolution of the cerebral cortex in humans. Teilhard de Chardin spoke of the moment of noospheric mutation as the Omega point, and of the convergence of the person with the Omega point as defining a new hyper-spiritualized state not only of the human but of the Earth itself. Similarly, Vernadsky (with whom Teilhard de Chardin coined the term noosphere in 1925) saw that following a peak crisis of the biosphere heralding the biosphere-noosphere transition, a new geological era would appear, the *psychozoic* era. This new era dominated by the

noosphere would represent a spiritualization of life, the meaning of the word, psychozoic.

What neither Teilhard de Chardin nor Vernadsky foresaw was the intermediate stage between the biosphere and the noosphere, and that is the technosphere. The present stage of human civilization is defined as the technosphere: the sum of technology and the civilization which maintains it as an artificial envelope coextensive but discontinuous with the biosphere, affecting all of its aspects and functions. In this regard, the technosphere represents a singular but necessary deviation from the natural order. As the agent effecting the disruption of the biosphere while alienating the human species from nature, the technosphere is the mechanism allowing both for the global communication system to hook up the species as a single organism, and for the release of free energy into the biosphere accounting for global warming, ozone depletion, species extinction and the general crisis of the biosphere as a whole. Seen from the perspective of the biosphere–noosphere transition, the technosphere is like the cocoon of the new emergent evolutionary stage, the noosphere. Since the technosphere is dependent on the very biosphere which it is disrupting, it must inevitably either destroy itself and the biosphere or transform into its opposite condition, the noosphere, a purely non-technological spiritual state.

As the fulfillment of the prophecy of the Thirteen Heavens and the Nine Hells, Harmonic Convergence actually defines and describes the entire 25-year period between 1987 and 2012. From the Harmonic Convergence viewpoint, the great Cycle end-point, winter solstice 2012 corresponds to Teilhard de Chardin's Omega point, while the entire 25-year period defines the biosphere–noosphere transition. The crisis of the biosphere is seen as the direct result of the technospheric civilization, while the technosphere itself is defined as a function of operating on timing cycles that are artificial and mechanistic. The call of the Harmonic Convergence to return to living in the natural cycles of the universe represents an evolutionary signal to the species that its dependence on artificial civilization and mechanistic time must be abandoned if it is to survive. The real meaning of the Harmonic Convergence is the capacity of the human species to respond to this signal and to harmoniously synchronize itself with the natural order by 2012, thus attaining to Teilhard de Chardin's Omega point.

As the focal event of the *Mayan Factor*, the Harmonic Convergence must be understood within the context of the meaning of the Mayan calendar system. The *Mayan Factor* is the overlooked factor in any analysis or consideration of human history. What is overlooked is the Mayan contribution to human thought and culture, and that is the correct understanding of time. The complex and rich system of thought embodied in the Mayan calendar system is based on a radical perception of time that is not a linear

construct as the Western paradigm has it, but is a frequency. As a frequency, time is the universal factor of synchronization which, in turn, defines a whole other domain of reality, the synchronic order. The nature and purpose of time is to synchronize, and therefore, the purpose of human timekeeping should be evaluated on the degree to which it promotes synchronization with the universe. The Harmonic Convergence prophecy worked because the Mayan prophecies are synchronized to the universal timing frequency. Since the Harmonic Convergence prophecy proved to be so effective, then one must anticipate that there is something to the prophecy regarding the end of the cycle in 2012. If history is meant to be concluded by that point in time, how can the transition of the human race from mechanistic to natural synchronic time be attained? That is the question left open by the Harmonic Convergence.

Obviously, if the technosphere is a function of artificial and mechanistic time, then the release from the technosphere must be by a replacement of artificial and mechanistic timing standards with naturally synchronic timing standards. The fulfillment of the Harmonic Convergence prophecy can then be realized as the change in the time of civilization. The technosphere, the final stage of civilization, is governed by two timing standards, the Gregorian calendar and the mechanical clock. The irregular measure of the Gregorian calendar combined with the mechanization of time produced by the clock are the direct causes of the alienated and fast-paced mental condition of modern humans. To change the time by replacing the current calendar with one that is genuinely synchronic would be an apocalyptic act, for it would portend the removal of the macro-organizing basis of the present world order, thus altering the operating basis of society altogether.

In this way the Harmonic Convergence is a supreme eschatology representing a grand convergence of prophecy. For to replace the standard by which civilization has governed itself for over 2000 years with a perpetual and harmonic standard in which there is no irregularity whatsoever would be to remove the very foundation of history and the technosphere as a deviation from nature. The most harmonic standard conceivable is a solar-lunar calendar of 13 months of 28 days each, 52 perfect weeks a year, with one extra day for the forgiveness of debts. In history as it has devolved there is no harmony. In harmony there is no history. Accepting a perfectly harmonic standard, therefore, would be to enter into post-history.

According to the Harmonic Convergence prophecy, the biosphere can only be spiritualized if man is synchronized with the cycles of nature. The only way to achieve this goal is through the rejection of the irregular timing standard and the adoption of a harmonic one. Only by operating in a harmonic timing standard will the human species be able to return to living in the natural cycles of the universe.

This would augur the fulfillment of the Harmonic Convergence. But to attain to this condition by 2012 means that a calendar change must be enacted. This is the purpose of the Great Calendar Change of 2004, the natural sequel to the Harmonic Convergence Global Peace Meditation of 1987. Should such an eventuality succeed, it would also signal the successful conclusion of the biosphere–noosphere transition and the imminent advent of the psychozoic era, the era of the spiritualization of the biosphere.

Jose Argüelles

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- See also: Celestine Prophecy; Earth Mysteries; Maya Religion (Central America); Maya Spirituality (Guatemala Highlands); New Age; Teilhard de Chardin, Pierre.

SP Harmony in Native North American Spiritual Traditions

Few who witnessed the first Earth Day in 1971 have forgotten its most memorable symbolic moment: a television commercial in which an American Indian warrior paddled his canoe to the bank of a river and walked to a nearby highway, congested with traffic. As he watched this desecration, a single tear rolled down his cheek and the voice-over narration intoned: "People start pollution; people can stop it." While this public service ad – recently named one of the top fifty commercials of all time – communicated an admirable message, it also disseminated a stereotype of American Indians as romantic ecologists or, according to some scholars, "ecologically noble savages" (Redford 1991: 46–8). This positive stereotype has generated endless discussion about whether indigen-

ous peoples have actually lived in *harmony* with nature or whether they, too, have irresponsibly destroyed their own environments. Framing the debate in these terms perpetuates an insidiously false dichotomy, however: either American Indians must embrace "harmony," which connotes a mystical bond with nature and the absence of conflict, or they fall prey to an extractive colonialism similar to that practiced by Euro-Americans. What this binary opposition erases is how American Indians themselves have perceived their relationship to the land, and how it has been articulated in native intellectual and spiritual traditions.

Many stories in these traditions suggest that the complex act of treaty-making more accurately portrays the connection of American Indians to the Earth. Legally, a treaty conjures such synonyms as "covenant," "contract," as well as "commitment." It denotes an agreement that two or more parties enter into entailing mutual responsibilities and obligations. A construct for understanding the relationship between American Indians and the land, the treaty describes a process undertaken by native peoples to understand our ethical and ceremonial commitments to the world in which we live. Precisely what these commitments are and how they have been broken will become clearer in the light of oral traditions about them. If, as Tlingit scholar Nora Marks Dauenhauer has observed, origin stories are by nature theoretical, then stories about the origins of covenant provide a starting point for elucidating this concept.

An old Cherokee story, for example, tells of the time when animals, fishes, insects, plants and humans lived with each other in peace and friendship. The human population increased beyond sustainable numbers, however, and they began to crowd and crush their other-than-human partners out of carelessness and contempt. Even worse, humans invented weapons such as the blowgun and the spear that allowed them to kill animals indiscriminately. In response, every species of animal called a council of their own kind and each decided that they would invent a disease inflicting pain and death upon their victimizers. The deer sent rheumatism to every hunter who killed one of them unless he respectfully asked forgiveness for this offense. The fish sent nightmares about eating decayed food. Eventually, the animals and insects devised so many new afflictions that if their inventiveness had not faltered, not one human would have survived. When the plants, who were friendly to humans, heard what had happened they determined to help by furnishing a cure for each human disease. Although this story concerns the origins of Cherokee medicine, it also thematizes the struggle to achieve a precarious balance (one might even say "harmony") among many forms of life with diverse needs. It addresses the responsibilities that we all must assume toward each other, and presents the complicated negotiations of covenant as a model for