

PARKER J. PALMER

*Author of Let Your Life Speak*

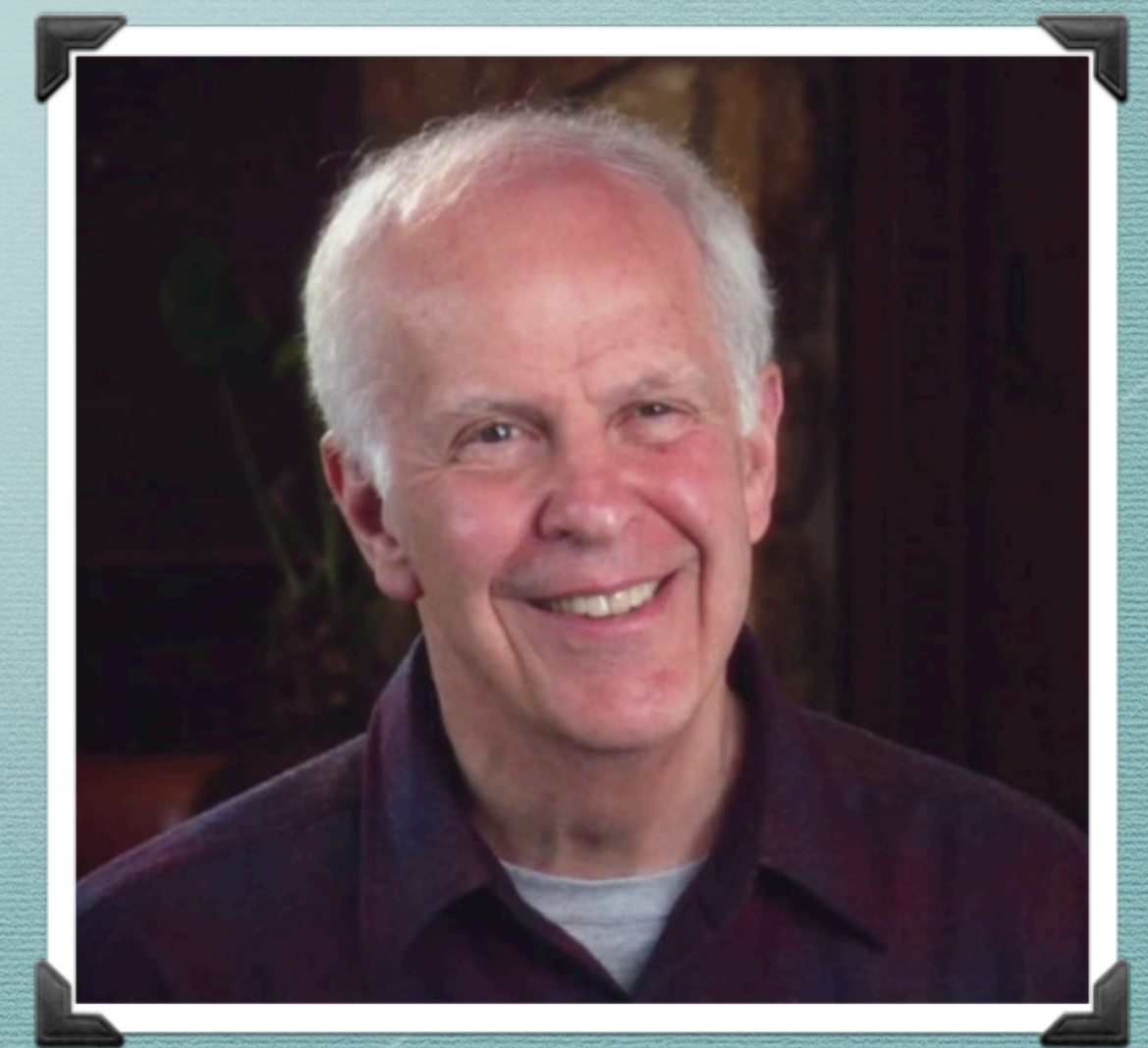
ON the BRINK  
of EVERYTHING

Grace, Gravity & Getting Old

On the Brink of  
Everything: Grace,  
Gravity & Getting Old

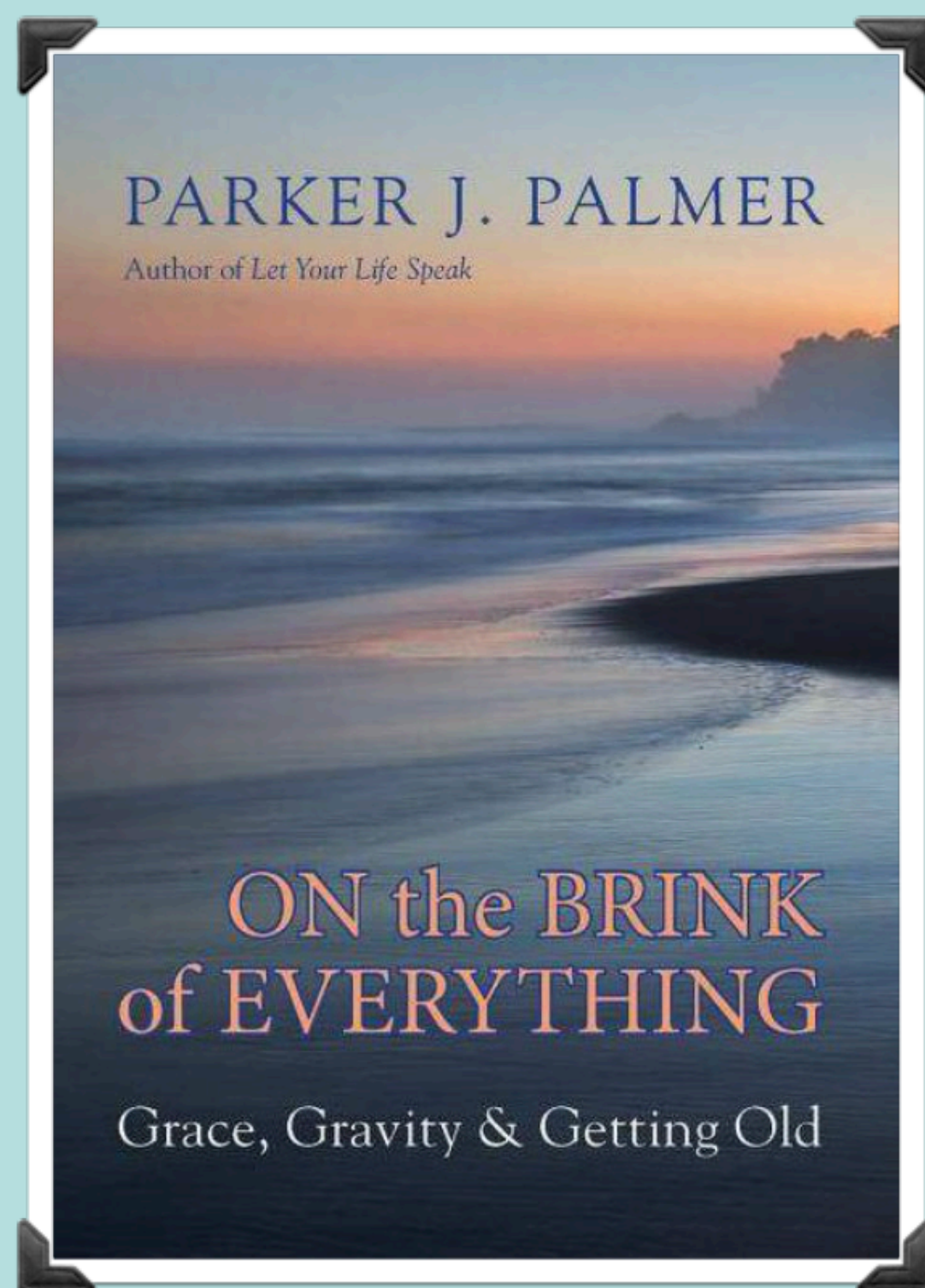
Monday Night Book  
Study at St. David's  
United Church —

48 - 05





"We need to reframe aging as a passage of discovery and engagement. Not decline and inaction" (p.8)



## **Monday Night Book Study**

**with**

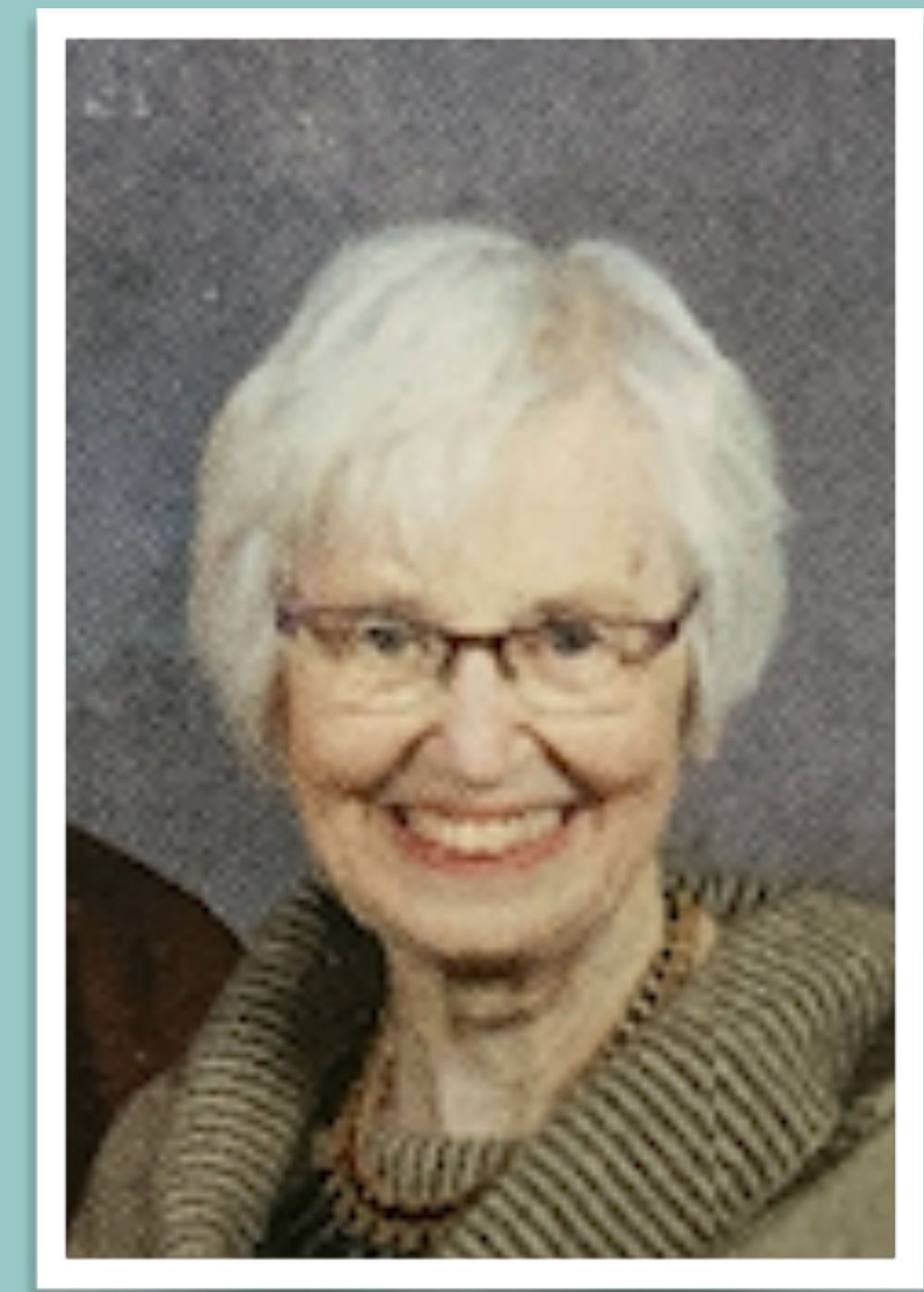
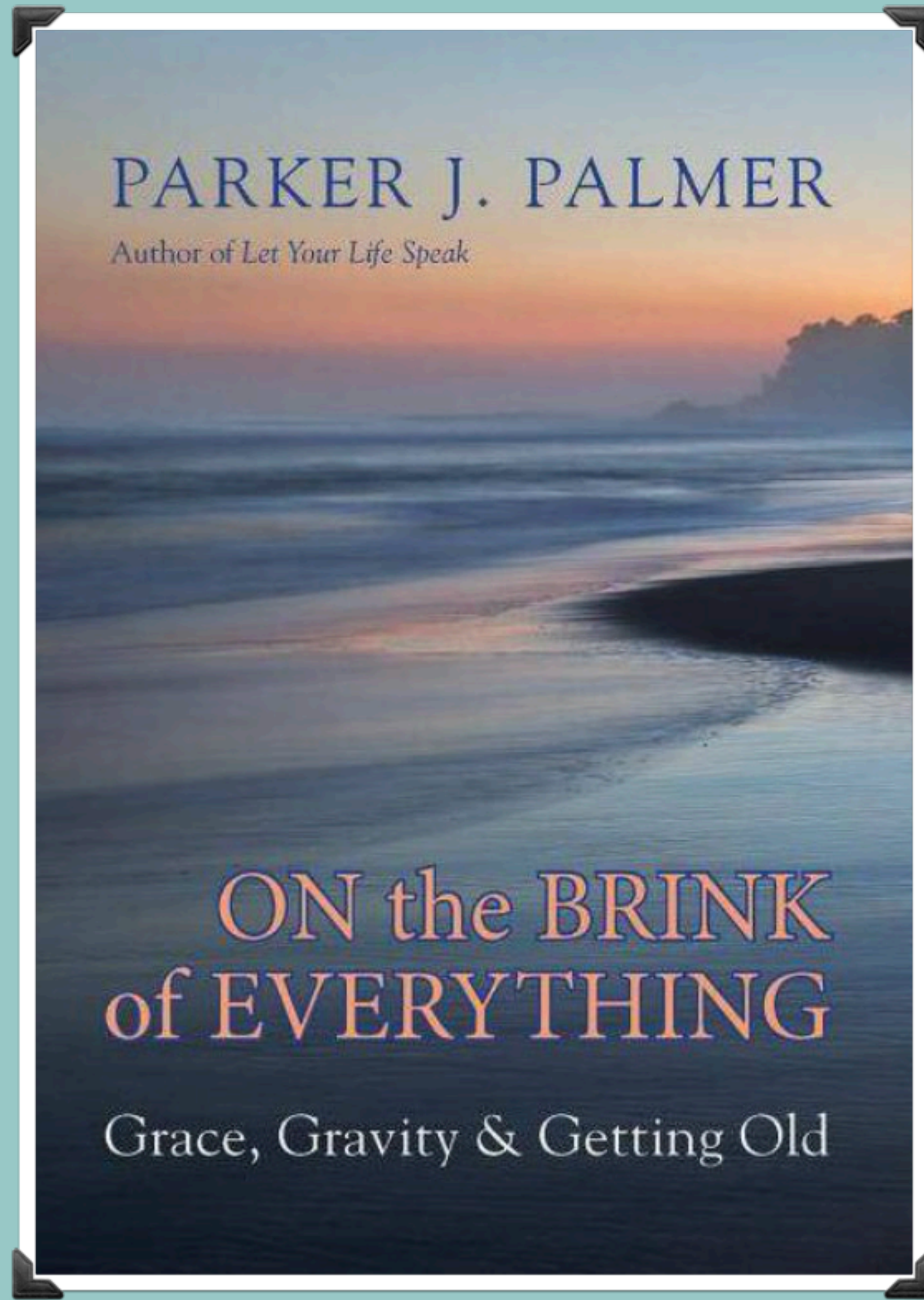
**WAYNE, JOAN & BRENDA**

**ST. DAVID'S BOOK STUDY TEAM**

**ACTS WINTER 2022**

# **BEFORE WE BEGIN**





# OPENING with SALLY



## Reading Guide for Monday Nights

- \* **Session Six: Chapter IV February 28**
- \* **Session Seven: Chapter V March 7**
- \* **Session Eight: Chapter VI March 14**
- \* **Session Nine: Chapter VII & Postlude March 21**
- \* **Session Ten: Conclusions and Where to from here March 28**

# housekeeping







**Living the Paradoxes of  
my Life — The  
Contradictions in Terms**

# **Reflection on the meaning of “Getting Real: From Illusion to Reality”**



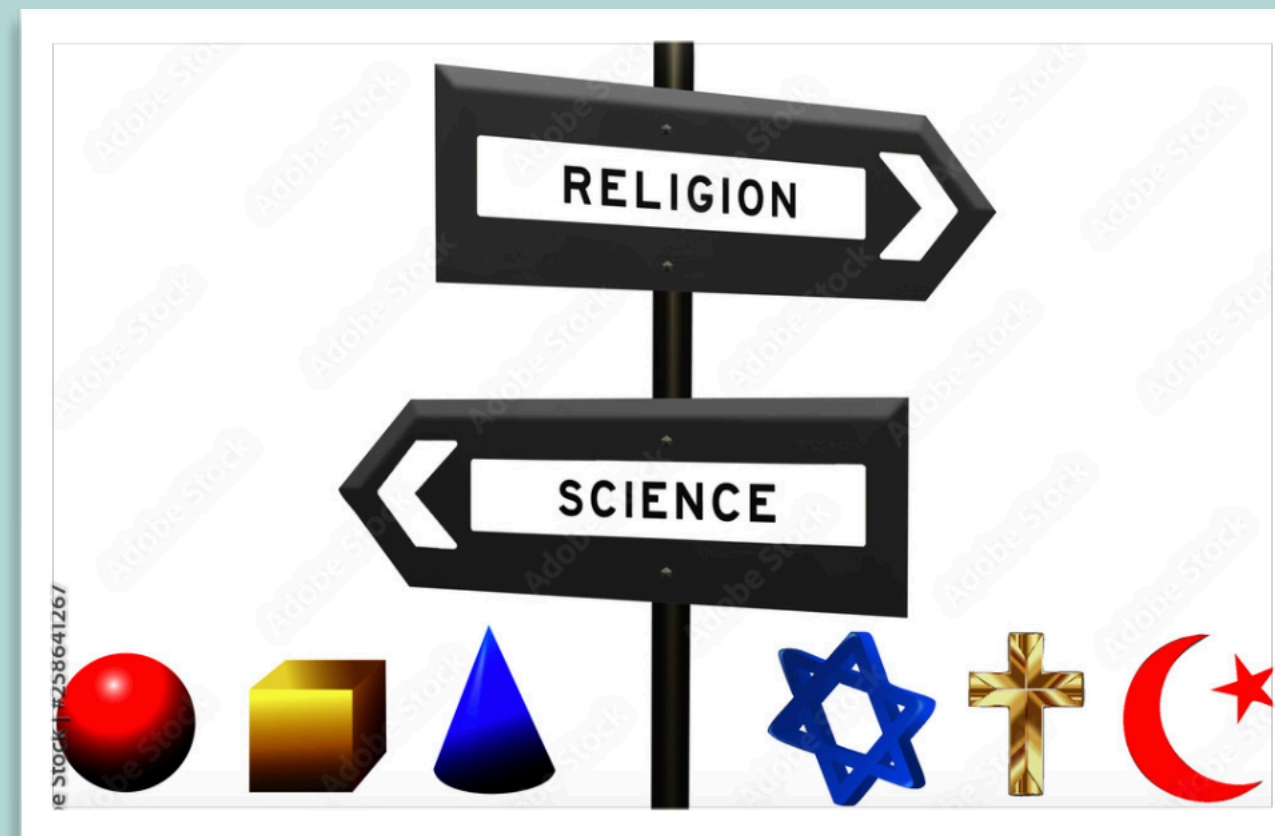
# CHALLENGING IDEAS from CHAPTER THREE







**FAITH AND REASON  
ARE PARTNERS —  
NOT ADVERSARIES**



**STRUGGLES BETWEEN RELIGION AND  
SCIENCE**



**FACING LIFE AS IT IS**  
—  
**THE SPIRITUAL  
JOURNEY**



Stripping away Illusions and Moving toward Reality





**DISCUSS**

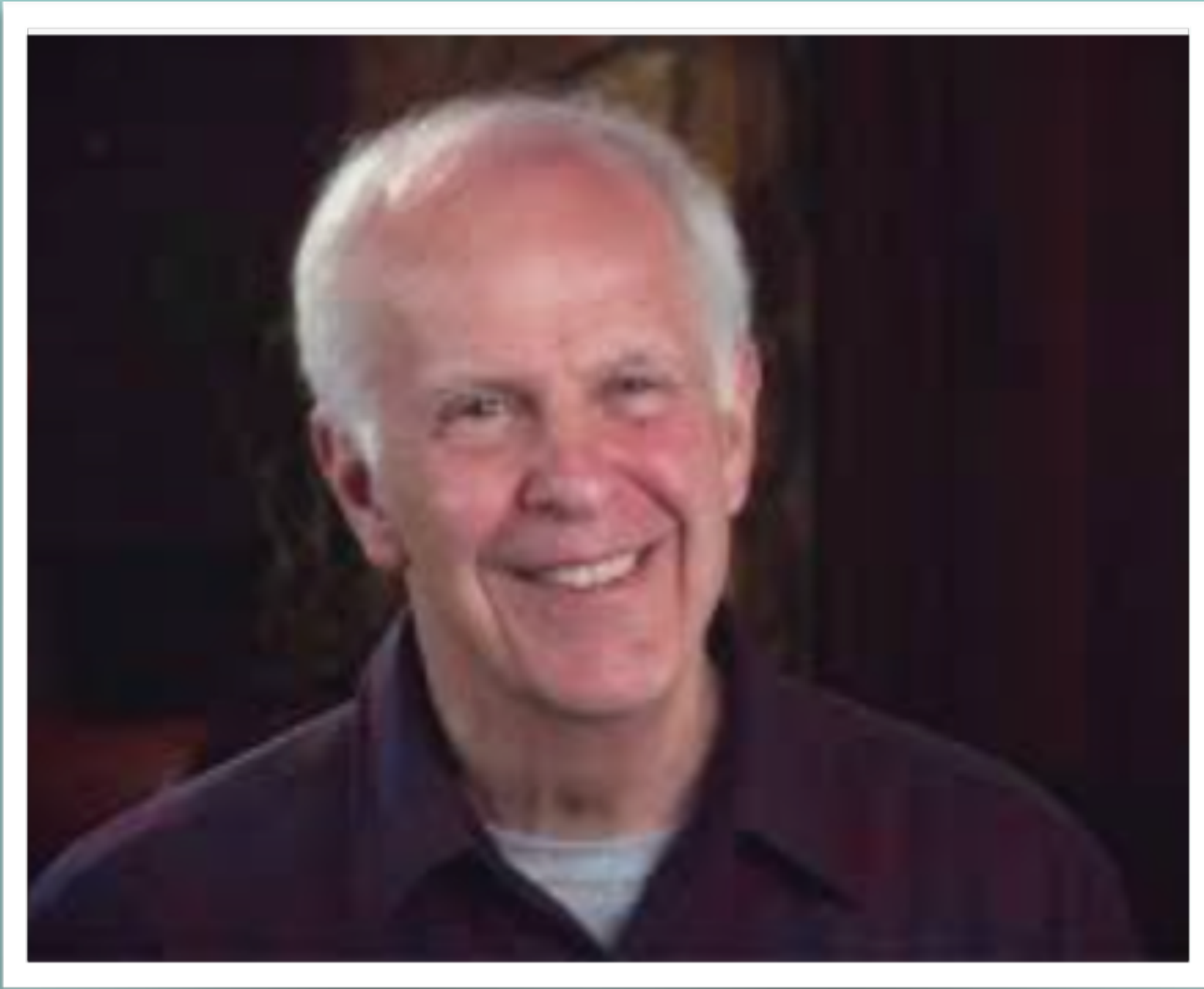
**Facing Hard Truths About  
Myself —  
Opportunities Through  
Failure and Catastrophe:  
working my way to hopeful reality**



# MY EXPERIENCE AT L'ARCHE CALGARY: LIVING AUTHENTICALLY, WITHOUT A MASK







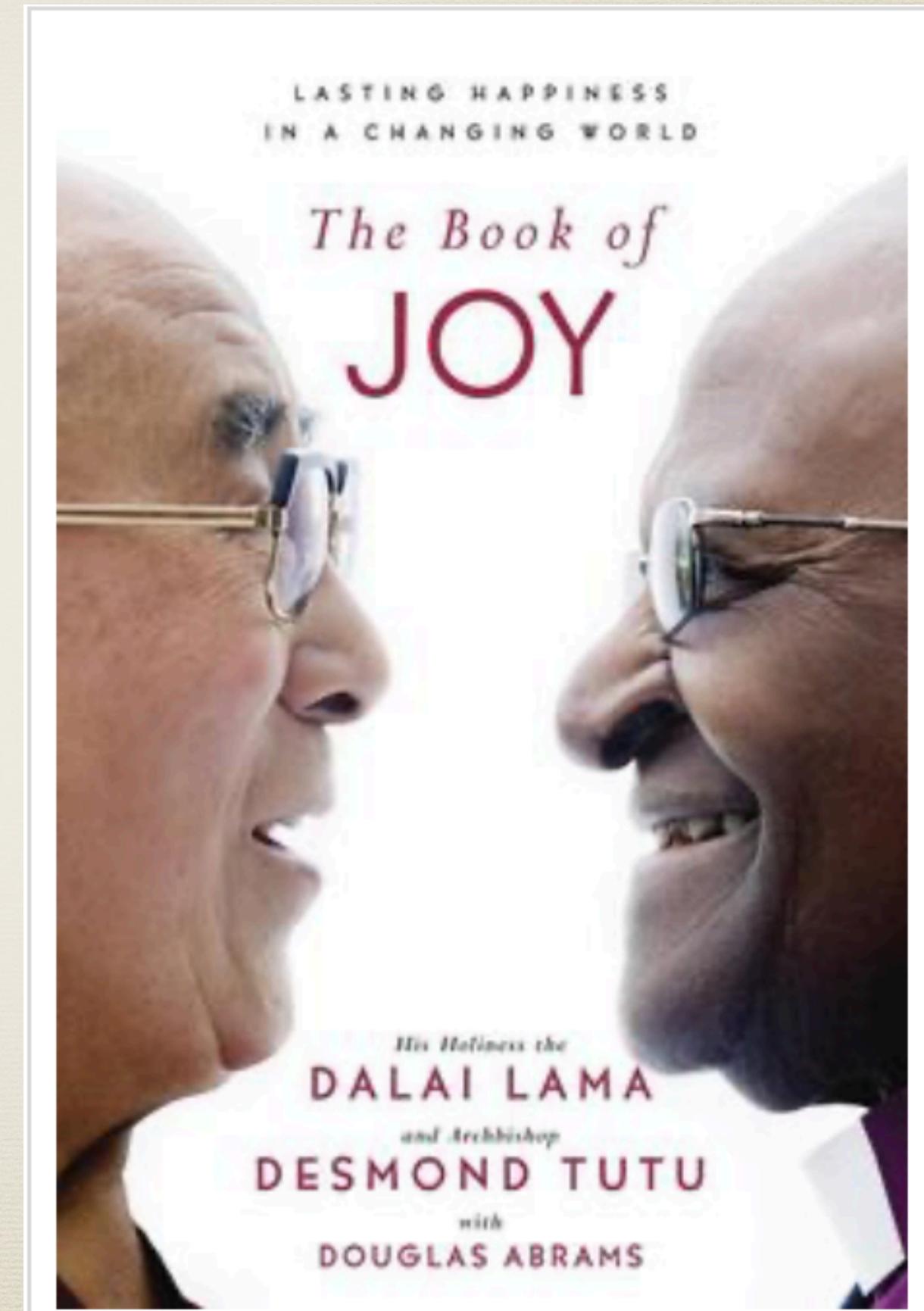
**PARKER'S VOCATION —  
COMMUNITY OVER THE CLASSROOM**





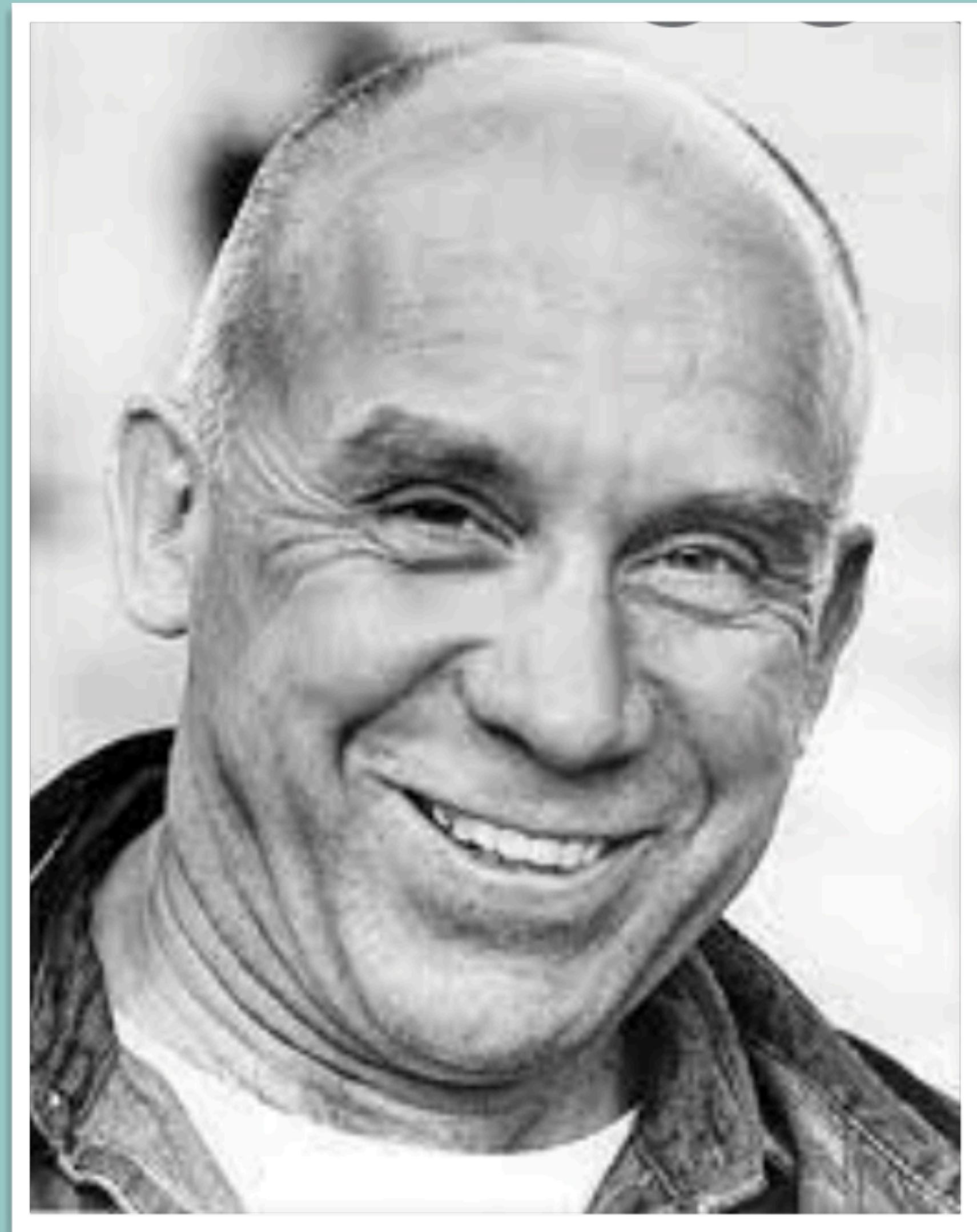
# INTERFAITH MYSTICS — THE KEY ECUMENICAL CONNECTION

- \*Our class experience with Tutu and the Dalai Lama
- \*Discussion re: “The Book of Joy”





# Thomas Merton's Idea of Paradox



\*Central to Merton's spiritual and intellectual life.

\*Discuss





**\*COMBINING INNER  
JOURNEY WITH SOCIAL  
CONCERN**

**The Quaker Tradition**



# “WHOLENESS...”

— can be found hidden beneath the broken surface of things.” Parker Palmer

— Discuss





**“Do not depend on the hope of  
results.”**

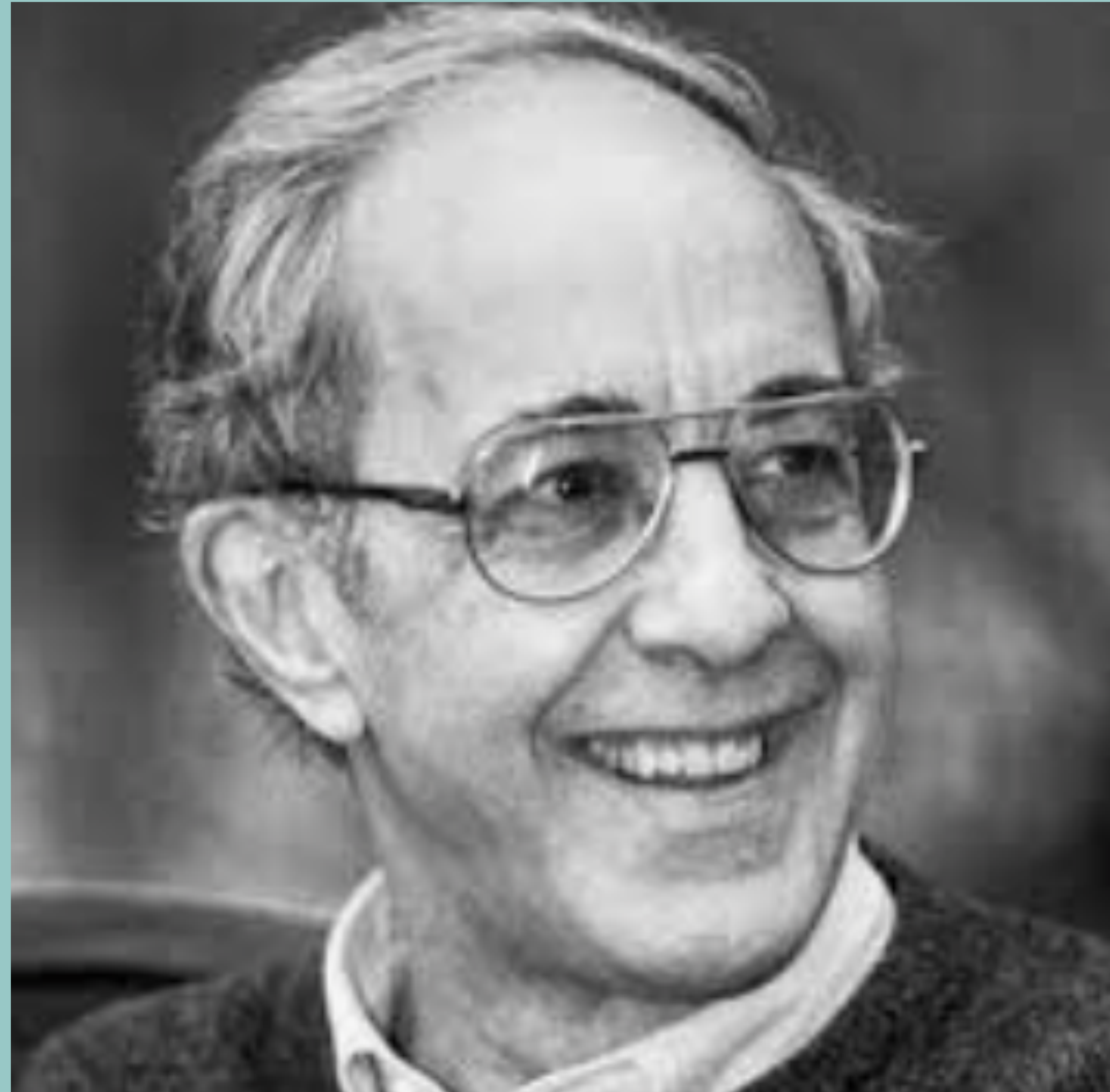
**WAYNE'S PERSONAL  
JOURNEY**



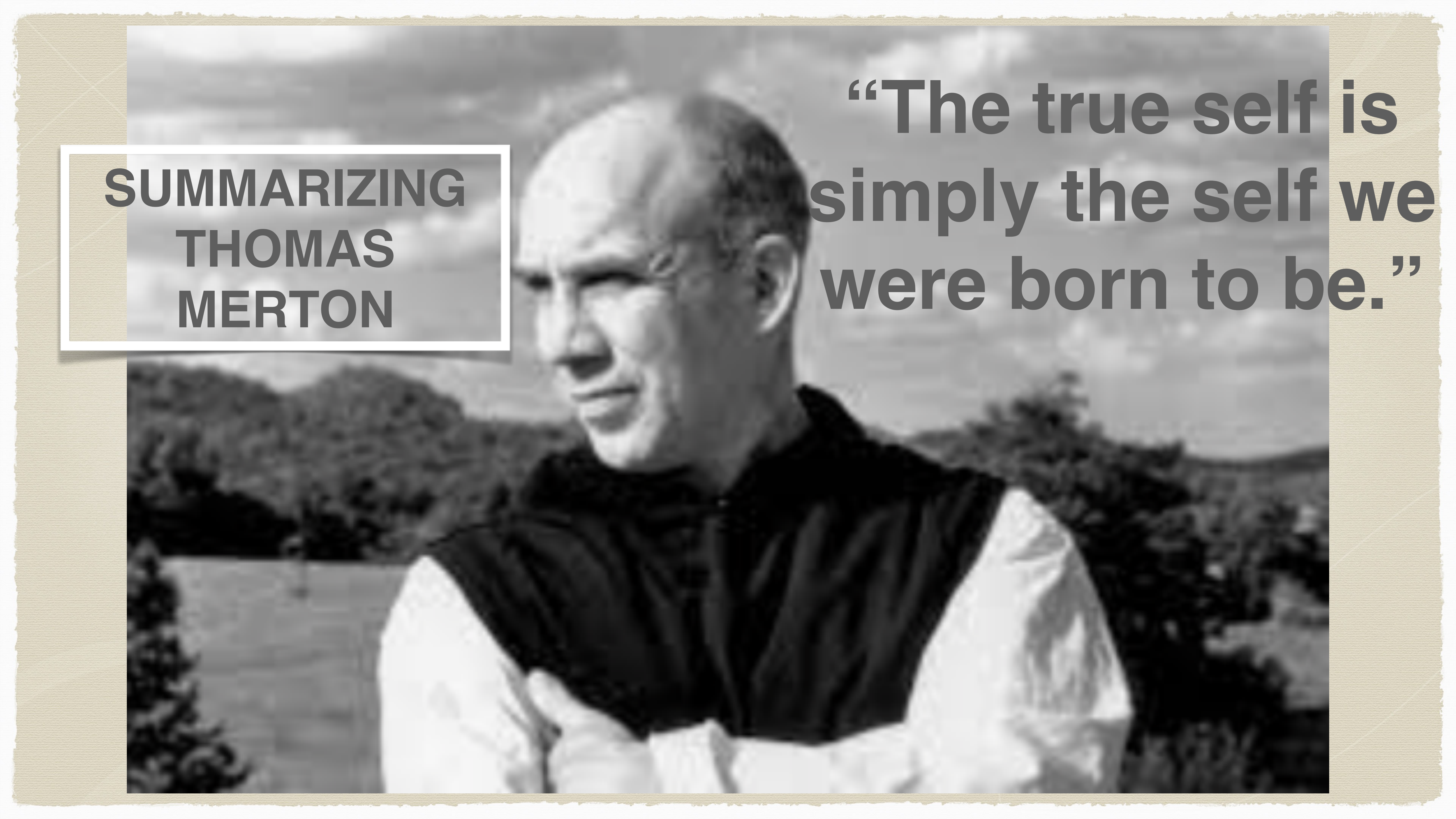


# LEARNING FROM HENRI NOUWEN

\* “DOWN IS  
THE WAY TO  
WELL-BEING.”  
(73)





A black and white photograph of Thomas Merton, a man with a shaved head, wearing a dark habit over a white shirt. He is looking slightly to the left with a gentle expression. The background shows a landscape with trees and a body of water under a cloudy sky. The entire image is framed with a light beige, textured border.

**SUMMARIZING  
THOMAS  
MERTON**

**“The true self is  
simply the self we  
were born to be.”**



**“The contradictions of life  
and the prospect of death are  
engines of creativity.”** <sup>79,82</sup>





## **10. Key theme of this study -**

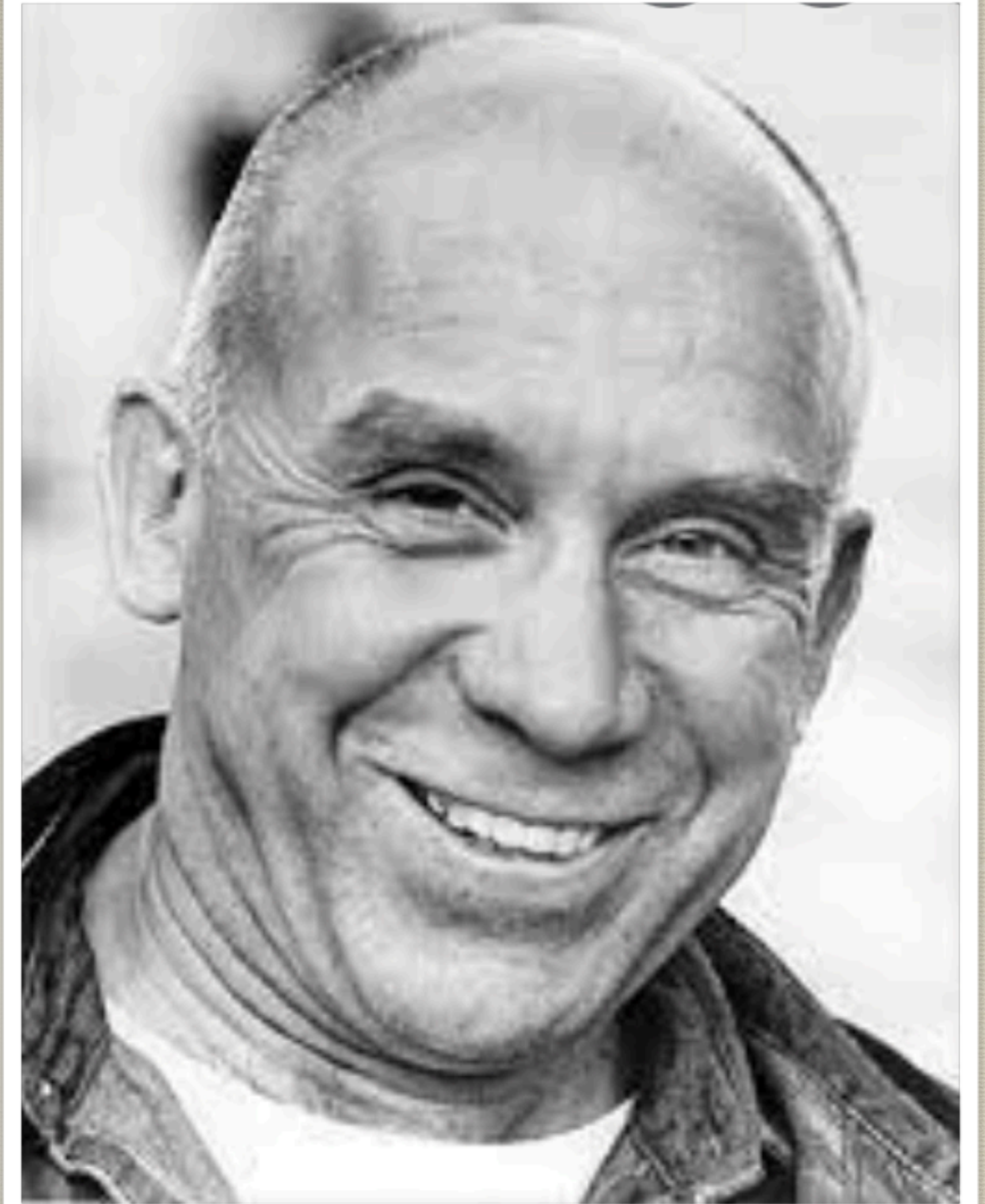
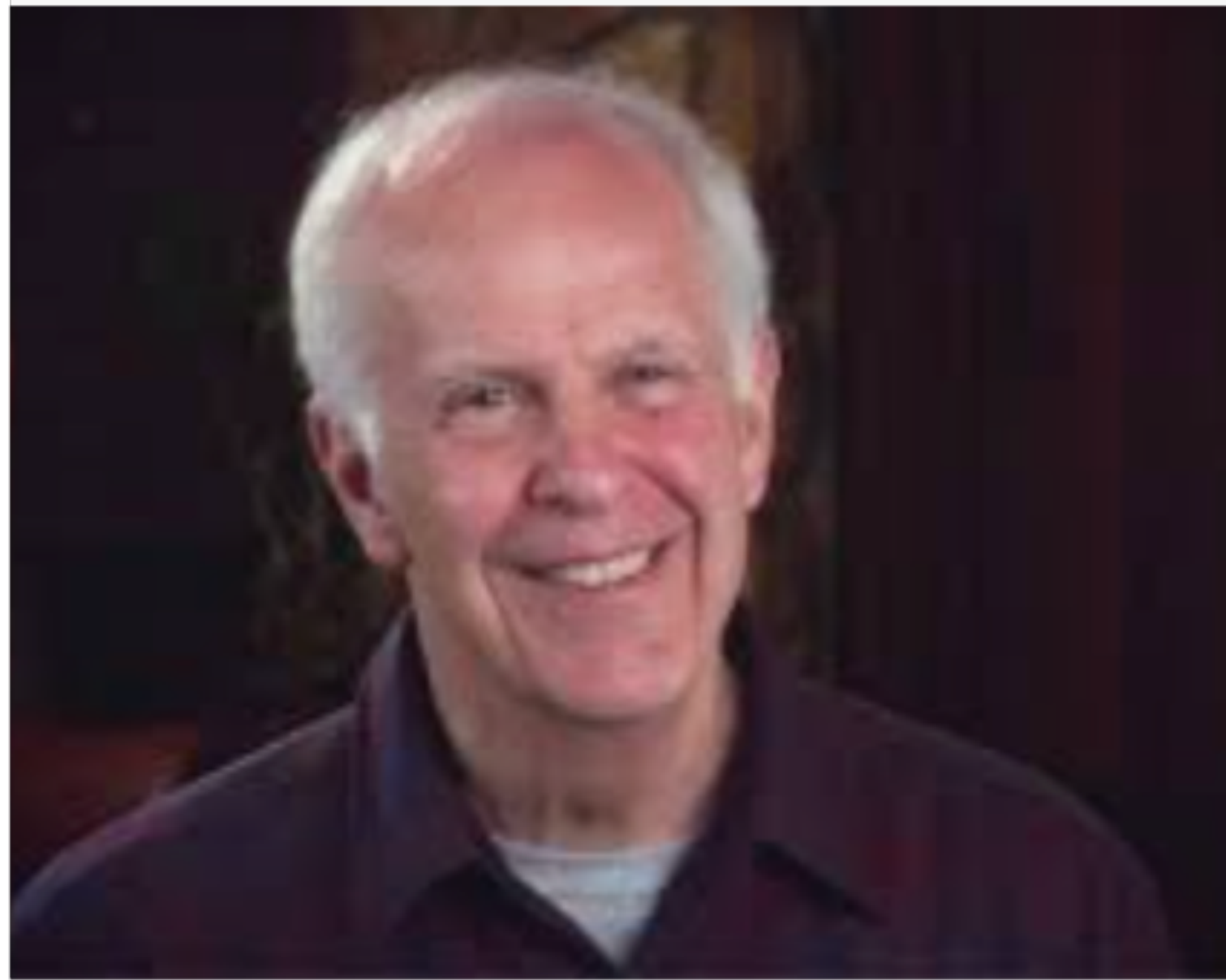
**“We need to reframe aging as a passage of discovery and engagement, not decline and inaction.”**





**Thomas Merton  
1915-1968**

- **The Seven Story Mountain**
- **The Inner Experience**
- **The Sign of Jonas**
- **To Each His Darkness**
- **Asian Journal**
- **A Thomas Merton Reader**
- **The Hidden Ground of Love**



Parker Palmer Ph.D.

<https://www.newcomerpalmer.com/home>

<https://onbeing.org>

The Growing Edge Podcasts



## Prayer of Thomas Merton

My Lord God, I have no idea where I am going. I do not see the road ahead of me. I cannot know for certain where it will end nor do I really know myself, and the fact that I think I am following your will does not mean that I am actually doing so. But I believe that the desire to please you does in fact please you. And I hope I have that desire in all that I am doing. I hope that I will never do anything apart from that desire. And I know that if I do this you will lead me by the right road, though I may know nothing about it. Therefore will I trust you always though I may seem to be lost and in the shadow of death. I will not fear, for you are ever with me, and you will never leave me to face my perils alone. Amen



Thomas Merton: 31 January 1915 – 10 December 1968



## QUOTES TO CONSIDER

**“I’ve always understood faith and reason to be partners, not enemies.”**

**Parker J. Palmer**

**“... our illusions ... will always fail us and at no point is that more true than in old age.”**

**“...contemplation is any way one has of penetrating illusion and touching reality.”** Thomas Merton

**“...the deepest level of communication is ... communion.”** Thomas Merton



- \* “ ‘... there is that of God in every person.’ (Thomas Merton) “The quest for true self and the quest for God ... not only salvaged my spiritual life but took me deeper into it.”
- \* “Embrace one’s self-contradictions.”



*Welcome Home*

Alone in the alien, snow-blown woods,  
moving hard to stay warm in zero weather,  
I stop on a rise to catch my breath as the  
sun, setting through bare-boned trees,  
falls upon my face, fierce and full of life.

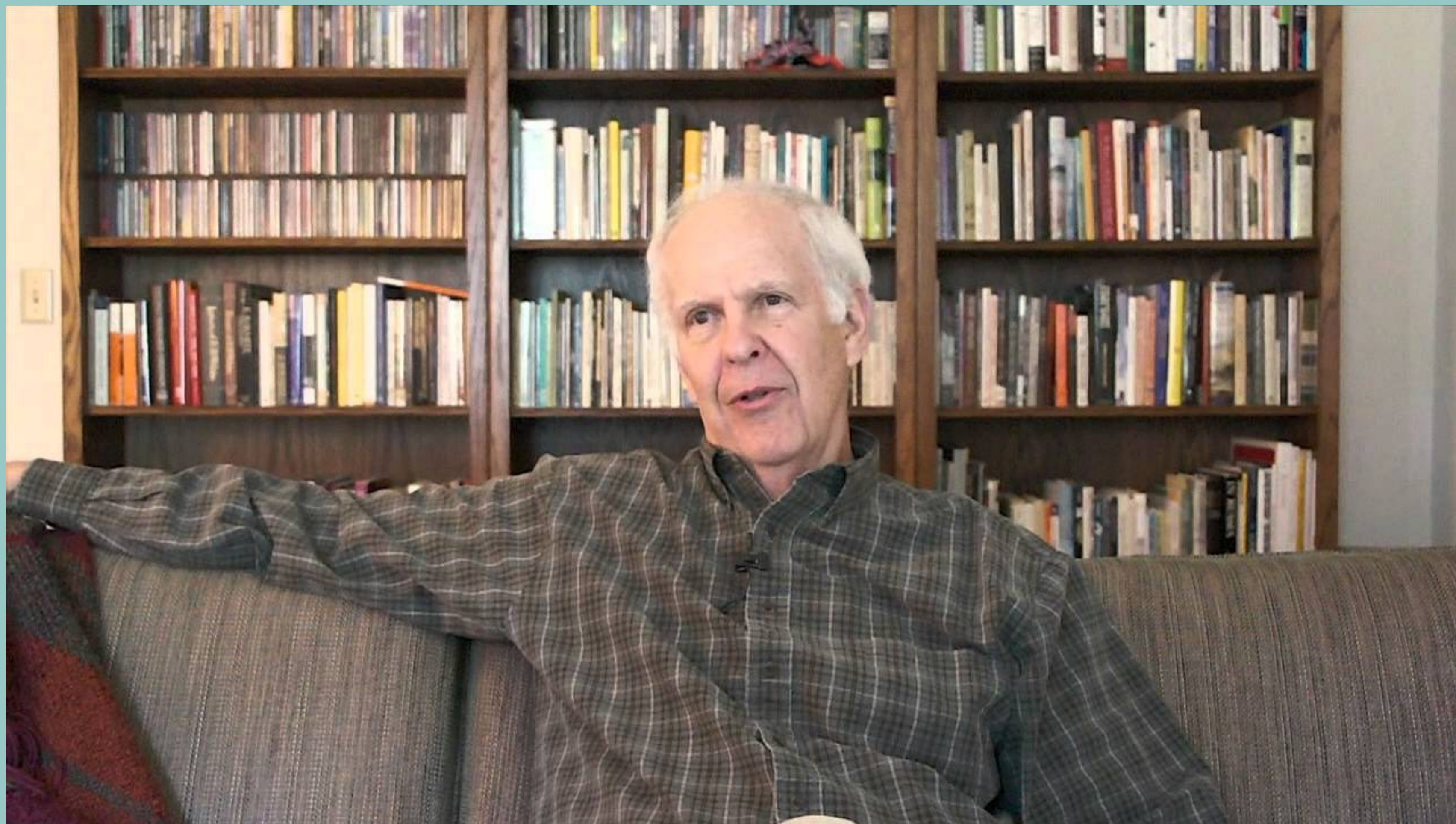
Breathing easy now, breathing with the earth,  
I suddenly feel accepted—feel myself stand  
my own ground, strong, deep-rooted as a tree—  
while time and all these troubles disappear.

And when (who knows how long?) I move  
on down the trail and find my ancient burdens  
returning, I stop once more to say *No* to them—  
*Not here, Not now, Not ever again*—reclaiming  
the welcome home the woods have given me.

—Parker J. Palmer



## PORTRAITS OF FAITH WITH PARKER PALMER



**2014: SPIRITUAL INSIGHT— The Medium I Swim in  
(14:22 to 17:49)**



**PARKER PALMER in conversation with SONDRA SAMUELS**  
**at Westminster Presbyterian Church in Washington, DC**  
**We the People: A Time to Act — COURAGE**

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**11/16/19**  
**beginning at 52:49-56:20**



# **Grace, Gravity & Getting Old**

## **Break out Rooms**

### **2022: Some things to discuss**

- \* Illusion and Reality?**
- \* Courage?**
- \* Retreats?**
- \* Spiritual Insight? How did I get to where I am today?**
- \* Grace in my journey?**
- \* Healing the Heart of Democracy — Parker's Growing Edge**



# **Feedback and Summary**

**Great ideas and  
stories that need to  
be shared**



**TWO WEEKS FROM NOW:**  
**Session VI — February 28 , 2022**  
**Read Chapter Four:**  
**Work and Vocation**  
**— Writing a Life**  
**Check out ‘Pause to Consider’**  
**VOLUNTEER FOR OPENING**  
**AND/OR CLOSING Next Week**





# CLOSING WITH CARRIE NEWCOMER



Carry on.



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