



ACADEMY OF MANAGEMENT

# MSR NEWSLETTER

Management, Spirituality & Religion

Winter 2007

Editor  
Mario Fernando  
mariof@uow.edu.au

## FROM THE CHAIR'S CORNER

Those who know me well generally say that I like to “tell it like it is.” So it is with great sincerity that I report to you that this is a great time for those of us doing MSR research. The doors of public opinion each day open more and more, providing us with opportunities to do our research and teaching. Wonderful opportunities await us, both inside and outside of the Academy. That’s the good news, and I believe that with a bit of work, we can open up even more avenues of opportunity. The world’s consciousness appears to be changing, and with it, the receptiveness to the kind of work we do will increase.

But the bad news is that to capitalize on these opportunities, we need your help. *Yes, you.* “How can I help? I’m nobody,” some of you are thinking. “I don’t have much time,” others are saying. Undoubtedly, it’s the same thing Moses was thinking when God called. I’d guess that Martin Luther King, Nelson, Mandela, and Gandhi didn’t have much time and when they were called, were trying to figure out how simple people like them could impact the powerful systems in their nations. History tells us that these “nobodys” gave their time and did wonderful things. The common link they shared is that they all had a belief they held deeply.

I think that your belief in what this group stands for can be powerful. We need your help. We hope to embark on many new ventures this next year. We’re calling and we’re asking you to step up and play an important part. We need your input—how can we make this group better? We need your talents and your efforts—we hope to set up task forces to do some creative things that will advance the interests of our members and the world at large. We need people who will roll up their sleeves and help us. We need to hear your voices resonating as a group—active, passionate, and hopeful.

So, on behalf of the the Executive Committee, I’m asking for volunteers who will serve to develop different efforts. Send me an e-mail saying that you are willing to serve...and as the different efforts materialize, the Executive Committee will contact you to see whether our efforts correspond to your interests. I’m also asking for your thoughts—send me and every member of the committee (listed on page 9) your ideas. We want to hear how we can serve you better.

Bob Giacalone  
2007 MSR Chair

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

**News for the Philadelphia meeting**  
Page 2

**An Introduction To Mata Amritanandamayi**  
Page 3

**MSR Publications**  
Page 8

**MSR Other News**  
Page 8

**MSR Officers List**  
Page 9

**Membership Profile**  
Page 9



## News for the Philadelphia meeting

Hello MSR members!

The program for Philadelphia is shaping up nicely and I wanted to thank everyone who submitted a paper or symposium proposal for their efforts. MSR had very limited space on the program and so some very difficult decisions had to be made with respect to which papers and symposia would be included for the meeting. I wanted to reiterate the process by which time is allotted for the main Academy program, both because it is a bit counter-intuitive as well as because I want to encourage MSR folks to use the Philly meeting to plan for Anaheim, 2008.

Unlike journal submissions, where more submissions means more papers will be rejected, the Academy allocates space based on a formula using relative percentage of papers **submitted**. So, **more papers submitted to MSR means more papers can be accepted**, since 3-5 papers may be put into each session. Interactive Paper allotments are also based on number of submitted papers. The Academy formula is relative, meaning, our percentage is determined with respect to the number of papers submitted to other divisions. Since our submission numbers have remained pretty constant for the last several years, our space on the program has actually declined because other divisions have increased submission numbers.

As we strive to deliver an exciting and relevant program each year, please consider sending your manuscripts for presentation consideration. We know that many, many people are researching and publishing terrific MSR work. Be thinking in Philly about next year in Anaheim: who might you collaborate with? Do you see a great idea for a paper or symposium coming out of a session you attended? Symposia that are co-sponsored with another division have a GREATLY increased chance of getting accepted due to the shared time “cost” rather than the full cost of a sole-sponsored symposium.

So, it's not too early to think about Anaheim and that manuscript you've been thinking about submitting! Plus, it's Disneyland!

### Experimental session design

In Philadelphia, the Board of Governors has suggested that each division experiment with a new session design that was rolled out last year in Atlanta by ONE, CMS and GDO with great success. The goal is to increase session discussion and begin to move away from the “sage on the stage” model toward the “guide on the side” model that is more inclusive and energizing. The roles of session Chairs and Discussants will change from Time Keeper and Commentator, respectively, to Facilitators with minor time-keeping responsibilities. The general session format will be like this:

1. The Chair will start the session by asking session participants to form dyads or small groups, preferably with people they do not know, and spend a couple of minutes introducing themselves.
2. The paper presenter will take 10 minutes to present the highlights of the paper. Although I know authors have concerns about only having 10 minutes, there will be more discussion-based time to talk about the paper with participants.



3. Dyads or small groups have 2-3 minutes to discuss 1 major learning take-away from the paper for each person, and 1 question for each person.
4. The Discussant then opens up the remaining 20 minutes or so devoted to the paper for whole-group discussion and interaction.
5. We repeat this process for each of the papers in the session.

Consistent Academy meeting feedback from the membership has indicated that session participants want much more opportunity for discussion and frankly, do not want to be lectured at by the presenters. This is one of the reasons why the PDW program and the Interactive Papers have grown so explosively—the more interesting session format is very engaging and popular. I will be contacting Chairs and Discussants directly about this change, but please come prepared for livelier MSR (and whole Academy, for that matter) sessions and to meet new people. If you have suggestions and/or comments about the proposed session changes, please email me directly at [lundkath@isu.edu](mailto:lundkath@isu.edu).

#### A special thank you to Philly reviewers

I have received several direct emails from authors commenting on the high quality of reviews they received for their submitted manuscripts. Based on my own reading of the reviews, I was very pleased with the overall commitment to quality and development of the reviews and I want to thank you all for helping out. MSR did not have the level of ‘emergency reviewing’ needs that I know many of the divisions had, which indicates that people who got assignments with few exceptions followed through on them. Your timeliness makes the Program Chair job MUCH easier, believe me!! Thanks again to all that reviewed for the Philadelphia meeting.

I look forward to meeting with everyone in Philadelphia!

Kathy Lund Dean  
2007 Program Chair

---

## FEATURE ARTICLE

### **An Introduction To Mata Amritanandamayi**

Ramnath Narayanswamy\*

Mata Amritanandamayi, or the Divine Mother as she is popularly known, is the biggest and most unique blessing that has been conferred upon humankind in recent history. In fact it would not be incorrect to state that there is no example of a saint in recorded history that has elicited such a huge following and impacted the lives of millions of people in her lifetime. Having realized Her total identity with the Supreme Being from birth, she is no ordinary saint. She is quite simply unparalleled!

The eloquent testimonies from Her devotees about the transformation She has brought to bear upon their lives exceed several million. They are an astonishing reminder in the grim times we live in, of the need to place spirituality at the center of our lives. Amma has to date embraced over 36 million devotees from all over the world. Her accomplishments are extraordinary; the pace of Her daily routine can

intimidate even the most determined of persons and it is hard to find a parallel to the effulgence She radiates to those who come in touch with Her.

Born in 1953 in a small fishing village in Kerala in South India, her childhood was spent in constant remembrance of the Supreme Being. She underwent severe hardships as a child; working long hours completing multiple tasks each day but the search to merge with the Supreme Self was not compromised even in the most demanding circumstances. At the tender age of twenty-two, she began to outwardly manifest Her state of God-realization. This was followed by Her efforts to initiate aspirants from varying backgrounds into spiritual life. Five years later, she established the spiritual headquarters of Her mission in the house of Her birth at Amritapuri which today sports a magnificent spiritual complex housing several thousand aspirants from all over the world.

Widely known as the “hugging saint” in the West and affectionately known as “Amma” in India, Amma’s embrace is no ordinary hug. When she embraces a devotee, a portion of Her divine energy is transmitted and blossoms into an outpouring of devotion at the appropriate time in the receiver: “Amma’s hugs and kisses should not be considered ordinary. When Amma embraces or kisses someone, it is a process of purification and inner healing. Amma is transmitting a part of her pure vital energy into her children. It allows them to experience true unconditional love and awakens the dormant spiritual energy within.”

She is the living Christ, the pure cosmic intelligence and the living personification of love in action. Adi Shankara once said that there are three things that are precious in human life. The first is to be born a human being, the second is having a desire for moksha or liberation and the third is to come under the guidance of a Living Master. In Amma, we are fortunate to secure the grace of a Self Realized Master.

There is no gift that is more precious in human life than coming under the guidance of a Living Master. A lot of us mistakenly believe that it is our individual wills that draw us to the Satguru. This is not true. It is affirmed and reaffirmed in our traditions that it is the Satguru who pulls us. As Amma tirelessly emphasizes, if our hearts are open, it is inevitable that Grace will flow.

Amma made her first world tour in 1987 in response to pressing invitations from Her children in Europe and the United States. Twenty years later, her children now number in several hundreds and thousands and reside in virtually every corner of the earth. While Amma’s reach is universal and cuts across all boundaries drawn by language, nationality, race, sex, color and ethnicity, her attention is individual. She meets every single person who seeks Her blessings by giving an intimate motherly hug.

While born in the Hindu tradition, the Divine Mother does not espouse or differentiate between the multiple religions that characterize the modern world. Her message is direct, straightforward and unambiguous: to love and serve others selflessly by seeing ourselves in them. Indeed, Her life is a powerful embodiment of Her message. Every single moment of Her life is devoted to the welfare of Her children. Testimonies of her miracles and the transformation She has effected in Her children are quite simply legion. Nobody who approaches Her leaves disappointed. She welcomes every visitor with open arms and words of comfort. It is hard not to be deeply moved by the experience of being in the presence of pure love: “Love,” says Amma, “just happens. Nobody thinks about how to love, or when and where to love. Love is a sudden uprising in the heart. There is no logic in this. It is beyond logic.”

Amma is a living master. The mere presence of such a Mahatma is beneficial to the universe. But Amma's presence is dynamic and Her pace is staggering! In the space of thirty years, She has established a wide variety of educational and charitable institutions including schools, super-specialty hospitals, orphanages, old-age homes, homes for the poor, monthly pensions, free food, tribal welfare, free legal cells, rehabilitation programs for sex workers, free clothing, cancer and AIDS hospices, colleges in engineering and the arts and sciences, institutes of management, not to speak of the establishment of an international university, known as the Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham in Coimbatore which is today growing at an exponential pace.

Amma is a stunning personification of jnana (enlightenment), bhakti (devotion), karma (selfless service) and raja yoga (contemplative union with the Supreme). All the paths are in effect the same. This is because the life of the Satguru personifies the merging of all paths into one: all is one and one is all. Amma explains: "Bhakti and jnana, though seemingly different, are not two. Bhakti is the means and jnana the end. Bhakti without jnana and jnana without bhakti are both harmful."

Her children regard Her as a Satguru or World Preceptor. It may be asked: Who is the Guru? In Her own words: "The Guru is like the sun. The Guru cannot be otherwise, The Guru just shines. Whoever keeps the doors of their heart open receives the light." Elsewhere: "Mother does what she does because she cannot do otherwise. To love is her nature, to serve is her nature."

In the tradition of sanatana dharma, the Satguru is none other than the Supreme Self: "The Inner Mother manifests visibly through this body so that her children can have a glimpse of the Mother who is deep within. This body is powerful; it has the power to express the infinite inner power. The reason the External Mother exists is to help you reach the Inner Mother. The Inner Mother has none of the external qualities. Silence is the language of this Inner Mother."

It is said that all resistance crumbles before love. Amma pulls people from all walks of life, all religions, all incomes and all ages. People meeting Her for the first time are struck by the enchanting and intimate way She holds them in Her embrace. Her love is unconditional, absolute and total. It does not judge, evaluate or condemn. Her words as much as Her gestures are heartbreakingly tender because they speak directly to our hearts. Her actions are childlike, innocent and spontaneous.

"When we are in Mother's presence and look into her eyes, we are given a glimpse of our real Self. Mother's eyes reflect infinity. In Mother, we behold our own purity, the purity of taintless love, the purity of the Self."

But what is love? According to Amma: "When one really loves, one's intellect becomes empty and we stop thinking. No thoughts, no mind, nothing, only love remains. This forgetting-all-else kind of love culminates in innocence." The reader cannot but be struck by the breathtaking simplicity and beauty of the words of the Divine Mother! This is because when we are in front of Amma, we are in the presence of absolute truth, consciousness and bliss! There is no force in this universe that can be mightier than the power to love, the power to give and the power to be of service to others. This is the essence of Amma's teaching. For Her, it is a cardinal article of faith.

The Master is none other than God in human form. According to Amma: "Emptying the mind becomes easier in the presence of a Master. A Satguru's mere thought, look or touch can bring about tremendous transformation". Her practice of unconditional love does not fail to astonish anybody who meets Her. Consider for example, Her emphasis on the quality of forgiveness: "Children, do not harbor anger or jealousy toward anyone. See good in everyone. See all as children of the same

mother and love them as sisters and brothers. Then you will be able to forgive them. Our attitude of forgiveness will make our thoughts, words and actions good and will bring us God's Grace".

But She goes further: "Selfless service, even-mindedness, seeing good even in the mistakes of others, these are things which Mother likes." These are the utterances of a Mahatma who has transgressed all boundaries of duality. This perhaps explains the immense power of Amma's teachings. They resonate with us because they address ourselves. Her conversations stem from the heart to the heart!

Time and space are no barriers to a Self Realized Master. Amma constantly reiterates the fact that She is not outside but is present in the innermost recesses of our hearts: "Though the sun is thousands of miles away, still the lotus blooms. Distance is no barrier. Amma is with you always." Her assurances and reassurances on this score never fail to move Her devotees. If you take one step toward Her, She will take ten steps for you. Such is Her infinite love and compassion!

A careful understanding of Amma's life, her teachings and Her actions will reveal the astonishing manner in which She validates the lives of all Masters who have blessed this sacred land whether they be Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Swami Vivekananda, Shirdi Sai Baba, Swami Yogananda Paramahansa, Sathya Sai Baba or Sri Ramana Maharishi and an entire host of other saints who have illumined our hoary traditions.

She once said: "Remember that all those who are associated with Mother in this lifetime were also with Her in their previous births. There is a predestined time for each one to come to Mother. Some come earlier, some come later. You can see only this lifetime and therefore you think that you did not know Mother before. But you have been with Mother before."

Ironically, it is sorrow that brings us to God. While this need not necessarily be the case, the fact remains that this is often the case. It is human nature to forget God in times of joy but remember Him in times of despair: "Experiences indeed, are the guru for each person. Sorrow, my children, is the guru that brings you closer to God." The discerning reader will recall Kunti, the Mother of the Pandavas in the Mahabharatha, praying to Sri Krishna to give her sorrow because it will make her think incessantly of Him!

Amma pithily explains: "It is the awakening of the disciple within you that brings the master to you. Your intense thirst to know the truth gives birth to the disciple within you. When the lover within you awakens, the beloved appears. Without the lover, there is no beloved. Similarly, without the disciple, there is no master. The master still exists, but not in your life."

She tirelessly affirms the value of faith and surrender in a Higher Power. In the absence of such surrender, Grace is hard to come by. Amma once said: "Surrender will come if you develop love and faith. If we lead our lives with this attitude of surrender, we will be free from sorrow. God will always guard and protect us." Her promise on this matter, as in other matters, is absolute: "You are God's own child. God will never close all the doors around you. They may look as if they are closed, but they have in fact, been left slightly ajar. Just a mild knock and they'll give way. My child, never lose courage, never lose faith in God."

Why is surrender essential? This is because it is not possible for us to totally alter our conditions: "It is impossible to change life's circumstances completely. Instead of changing our external circumstances, we need to change our 'mental-stances', that is our mental attitudes. Only then can we truly become happy. The way to do this is through spirituality."

The Divine Mother often describes God as love, innocence or selflessness. “There is”, She explains, “a child within everyone. The desire to search for this child is felt by all living beings. Children, when you go deeper and deeper in to your spiritual practices, you will discover the child within you. You will experience the innocence, the joy and wonder inside of you. You will realize that they were always there but you had merely forgotten for some time. This childlike innocence deep within you is God.”

Her spiritual discourses to Her devotees are precise, succinct and practical. The past, she insists, should be treated like a cancelled check: “Never look back and grieve. Look forward and smile”. They deal with problems that we confront on a daily basis. Amma has often said that if Her life and teachings alone are contemplated, there is no need to study a single scripture. Consider for example, Her utterances on bringing up children: “The parents are the two Gurus that the children see from birth until they come into contact with the world. If the seed of love is not sown at home, how can it sprout or blossom?”

She further adds: “Parents should try to inculcate the value of leading a spiritual life in their children’s minds. This is the most valuable wealth that parents can give to their children. Material wealth will perish, but spiritual wealth is imperishable.” Or again: “Turn children’s attention to positive activities when they are very young.”

For Amma, spirituality consists in understanding the nature of the mind: “The mind has two powers, the veiling power and the power of projection. First, the mind veils the true nature of a phenomenon. Then it misinterprets. It covers the Truth and makes us mistake the Truth for something else. To befriend the mind is to befriend a fool.”

Both Grace and human effort are needed in the spiritual journey. According to Amma: “Human effort is limited and can take you only so far. God’s Grace is unlimited and divine. The sincerity of our effort, however, is what draws God’s Grace. So do your sadhana sincerely with an attitude of self-surrender and love, then the Grace will surely come.” In other words, the seeker is encouraged to make a transition from the head to the heart: “Real love exists in the heart. This love cannot be spoken and cannot be put into words. Words are in the intellect. In words, there is no love, only ego. Go beyond words and language, to the heart.”

The secret behind the performing of our worldly duties is shraddha. “While doing one thing,” Amma explains, “your full attention should be in it. Only then will shraddha or loving awareness come. Actions done with shraddha will lead us to God.”

Amma also emphasizes the value of humility: “Life is a mystery. You cannot understand it, unless you surrender, for your intellect cannot grasp its expansive and infinite nature, its real meaning and fullness. Bow down low and be humble, then you will know life’s meaning”.

If life is a mystery, then spiritual awakening is no different: “Spiritual life is something that happens spontaneously. Nobody can force spirituality onto someone else. It happens out of an urgency. In this state of urgency, a person cannot do anything but choose spirituality. There is no explanation for this; it just happens.”

And finally, the devotee is reminded of the Divine Mother’s omniscience; Her assurance is categorical and unqualified: “Do not think you are physically away from Amma. This is a doubt raised by your mind. Stop listening to your mind and you will feel Amma right there in your heart. Then you will know that Amma has never ever forgotten you and never will”.

Aum Amrieshwarayai Namah!

\* *The author is a Professor of Indian Institute of Management, Bangalore.*

## MSR PUBLICATIONS

### Books

Jue, Arthur L. (2007). *Leadership Moments: Turning Points That Changed Lives and Organizations*.

Miller, David W. (2007). *God at Work: The History and Promise of the Faith at Work Movement*, Oxford University Press.

### Articles

Radha, Sharma R. (2006). Role of Spiritual Intervention in Executive Burnout, *Asia Pacific Review*, Vol.II, No.2, pp.25-36.

Lips-Wiersma, M.S. & McMorland, J. (2006). Finding Meaning and Purpose in Boundaryless Careers: A Framework for Study and Practice. *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, 46 (2), pp.147-167.

Lips-Wiersma, M.S. (2006). The role of spiritual retreats in higher education: the necessity for, and difficulties with, reflection on lasting values in a new public management context. *Public Administration and Development*, 26 (2), pp.123-133.

Lips-Wiersma, M.S. (2006). *Purpose beyond Profit: Towards a spiritual foundation for corporate responsibility*. Published by the European Bahai Business Forum: Paris [www.ebbf.org/publications](http://www.ebbf.org/publications), ISBN 2-911423-26-7.

---

## MSR OTHER NEWS

### Book Reviews to JMSR:

The Journal of Management, Spirituality and Religion is vital to advancing our field of study. In reviewing books that are central to this field you can significantly aid our collective development. Therefore, if you have read any books relating to this field that you would like to bring to our attention, please contact me with the book title and expected date of review submission.

Book reviews can encompass both scholarly and popular/practical books. Reviews of scholarly books need to represent conceptual advancements, empirical research, critiques of the field and/or links between our field and other disciplines. Reviews of practical books need to critically evaluate straightforwardness of application and possible contributions and pitfalls of such application.

Marjo Lips-Wiersma  
University of Canterbury  
[marjo.lips-wiersma@canterbury.ac.nz](mailto:marjo.lips-wiersma@canterbury.ac.nz)



## MSR 2006-2007 Officer List

### Division Chair

Robert A Giacalone  
 Temple University  
 HRM Dept-Fox School of Business  
 and Mgmt  
 1810 n. 13th st.  
 Philadelphia, PA 19122  
 Work phone: (215) 204-7038  
 Fax: (215) 204-8362  
 Email: [ragiacal@temple.edu](mailto:ragiacal@temple.edu)

### Division Chair-Elect

Margaret Benefiel  
 Andover Newton Theological School  
 68 Bailey St.  
 Dorchester, MA 02124  
 Work phone: (617) 436-8341  
 Fax: (617) 929-0431  
 Email: [mbenefiel@executivesoul.com](mailto:mbenefiel@executivesoul.com)

**Treasurer:** Mathew Sheep - Illinois  
 State University

### Division Program Chair

Kathy Lund Dean  
 Idaho State University  
 College of Business  
 921 S. 8th Avenue, Stop 8020  
 Pocatello, ID 83209-8020  
 Work phone: (208) 282-3461  
 Fax: (208) 282-4367  
 Email: [lundkath@cob.isu.edu](mailto:lundkath@cob.isu.edu)

### Division Program Chair-Elect

Keiko Krahnke  
 University of Northern Colorado  
 Campus Box 128  
 Monfort College of Business  
 Greeley, CO 80639  
 Work phone: (970) 351-2349  
 Fax: (970) 351-1097  
 Email: [keiko.krahnke@unco.edu](mailto:keiko.krahnke@unco.edu)

**Secretary:** Lee Robbins - Golden Gate  
 University

## Domain statement: Management, Spirituality and Religion Group

The study of the relationship and relevance of spirituality and religion in management and organizations. Major topics include: theoretical advances or empirical evidence about the effectiveness of spiritual or religious principles and practices in management, from approaches represented in the literature including religious ethics, spirituality and work, and spiritual leadership, as well as applications of particular religions, and secular spiritualities to work, management/leadership, organization, and the business system; and evaluation studies of the effectiveness of management approaches that nurture the human spirit in private, non-public or public institutions.

Total number of members: 686

### By Member Type

Academic: 420  
 Emeritus: 10  
 Executive: 94  
 Student: 162