Beginning Right Here and Now, by Bill Dougherty

Having been jolted out of the comfortable inertia of our previous religious and scientific dicta by decades of discoveries into the nature of man and the universe, we are being forced to ask ourselves the age-old questions: Who am I? What am I to do with myself? What is the value and significance of life, and death? Honestly faced, such issues can so assail our self-satisfied preconceptions as to alter the entire course of our thoughts, our feelings, and consequently of our lives. And naturally enough, when a great many people are called to sincere self-questioning, every aspect of human existence feels a corresponding restlessness.

But where to turn for a general view, a perspective of understanding with which to address these ultimate questions and hopefully gain better insights through them?

There is a path of true spiritual development which has been universally recommended by the great teachers of mankind throughout the ages. It is a path which is as wonderful and simple, and as difficult, as each one of us. It tells us to forget entirely our own advancement and instead to begin right here and now to live up to the grand, selfless love within us; without seeking anything in return, but with only the welfare of others fixed firmly in the center of our consciousness. Naturally enough, the radical changes in our thoughts and feelings necessary to fully reorient ourselves along these lines will take a long, long time to accomplish. On the other hand, however far we may have wandered from this path, we can turn toward it at any moment. And with that very first step we instantly begin to move in sympathy with the highest aspects of ourselves and others. In this way we can do more real good in a day than we might achieve in lifetimes of struggling to overcome our particular weaknesses. For in following this path we are actually living the most sublimely beautiful and infinitely powerful mystery in the universe, the heart and root of us -- compassion.

-- Bill Dougherty