

July 21, 2012

On July 21st, 2012 our program is entitled: **Down From the Mountain**, *spiritual engagement within the heart, the community, and the world*. It is presented by Bret Byfield a social worker, mental health and chemical dependency counselor familiar to many Qigong Connection members for his work with **From Love Grows Here**, the Wellness Center at First Lutheran Church on the East Side of St. Paul in the historic Swede Hollow area.

We are all in it together. We sometimes forget that profound truth and focus on our personal spiritual journey as if it could be separated from the world around us. Bret Byfield will challenge us with a more inclusive vision, where our deep, personal spiritual journey is tightly interwoven with the people in our community and, in fact, with our entire species and all the species that comprise our global community. It is a journey not just in the abstract, but in intimate one-on-one encounters with individuals from every dimension of our social structure in equal and proportionate measure. It is a journey that acknowledges our individual mark on our community and our planet and calls on us to be active agents, fully aware of the tracks we leave and how they influence those around us and those that follow us. Expect to be a little uncomfortable – a necessary side-effect if one is to lose complacency and become an active force in the global community.

Bret Byfield is a social worker who has spent the past twenty-five years working one-on-one with people suffering from mental illness and/or chemical dependency in Ramsey and Hennepin County. He has offices in the Dorothy Day Center in downtown St. Paul, but he is rarely there, spending his time at the area's mental health facilities, detox centers, homeless shelters and other similar places, helping individuals deal with the transition from in-patient treatment to life in a society that has little or no place for them. Bret helps them find shelter, public assistance, on-going mental health care, and other services from government and nongovernment agencies that can help them survive and hopefully regain some level of independence.

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