

A Letter to Religious Leaders of All Faiths:

Adopting Positive Religion for the Well-Being of Humanity

Dear religious leaders and clergy of all faiths,

Thank you for having a vision of innovative, expansive, and dynamic religious living. Many of us are committed to motivating our communities and our people to achieve great things. Hopefully your people feel loved, supported, and connected to each other and to God. Now is the time for something new: Positive Religion.

We are globally connected in the twenty-first century, and we will rise or fall like ships in the ocean, together. Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel taught, “No religion is an island. We are all connected to each another.” This means that well-being, life satisfaction, and happiness for all humankind, regardless of nation, race, or politics, are all interrelated. If we speak to the issues of raising well-being, we will move humanity and our planet forward in a positive direction.

I want to propose a new Pastor’s Creed for the twenty-first century: The purpose of religious and spiritual leadership shall be to raise the well-being and happiness of the individuals and communities we serve.

We shall do this by applying some, if not all, of the methods described in this book. My contribution is Positive Judaism, and I’m praying for Positive Christianity, Positive Islam, Positive Buddhism, and the like to emerge in the twenty-first century. The Dalai Lama has already promoted happiness as a central pillar in Buddhism. Now it is time to focus on happiness, positivity, and well-being on a global religious scale.

To accomplish this, I envision a White Paper on Positive Religion that

will include all aspects of well-being that we have addressed in this book and more. This platform would be rooted in the science of well-being and human advancement and would be a collaborative effort among the global religious community.

On September 25, 2015, I sat among the largest interreligious gathering of faith leaders in the modern era. We came together at the 9/11 Memorial Museum in New York City during Pope Francis's visit. More than three hundred representatives from over a dozen faith communities shared in the program "A Witness to Peace: A Multi-Religious Gathering with Pope Francis." Not only did the pope speak, but prayers and meditations were offered by Muslim, Christian, Buddhist, Hindu, Sikh, and Jewish leaders. This moment showcased the potential that global faith communities can have when we come together for a common cause.

While we need to continue to honor the past and be witness to history, we should also be motivated to envision a future that is witness to increased happiness and well-being. For what could be more important than happiness and well-being guiding the way to human and social advancement on a global scale?

This is the journey forward. I look forward to linking hands with you and bridging our religious islands together in a new way: through positivity, happiness, and well-being.

May peace be upon you and your people, and may we work together to raise the well-being and happiness of humanity in our time.

Rabbi Darren Levine