

Contact: Megan Entecott
Email: publicity@greenbooks.co.uk
Phone: +44 (0) 1223 302 041

Press Release



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Spiritual Activism

The most accessible book on spiritual activism you'll ever read

Published 24th September 2015 | £19.99 | hardcover | 228pp | 234mm x 156mm

"This is truly a book for our age, challenging the preconceptions of most activists, let alone those who still see spirituality solely as 'an inner journey'." – Sir Jonathan Porritt, first chair of the UK government's Sustainable Development Commission and past director of Friends of the Earth.

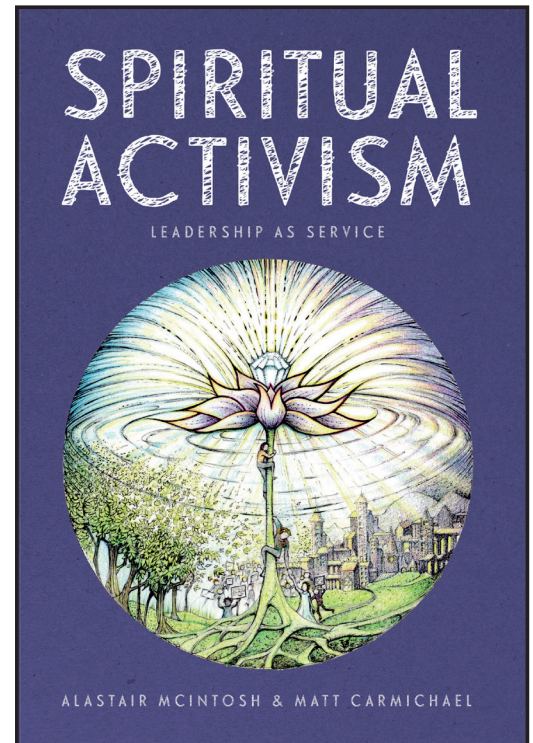
Over the past half century the issues facing activists have changed, as has our understanding and awareness of spirituality. For activists, spiritual philosophy is rising up the agenda because it offers distinct, tried and tested approaches to deep questions: Where did it all go wrong? What does it mean to be human? What is the place of leadership? What is the nature of power?

The book begins by defining spirituality for a modern audience of all faiths and beliefs - and is not afraid to acknowledge that it can mean different things to each person. McIntosh and Carmichael have created a remarkably inclusive and welcoming book that can provide inspiration to anyone, as evidenced by praise from a diverse group that includes activists, philosophers, Christians, Muslims, atheists, and pagans.

The authors then consider what it means to be an activist, ranging from the Occupy movement, to Pussy Riot, to local communities protesting against fracking. The text is enriched with tales from the authors' own experiences as well as the examples of prominent activists from around the world, proving that the best leadership has service to the cause at its heart. It contains case studies of inspirational spiritual activists, including Mama Efua, Desmond Tutu, Gerrard Winstanley, Sojourner Truth and Julia Butterfly Hill, which demonstrate the transformative power of spiritual principles in action.

Finally, the book charts a way forward, guiding you through many of the difficulties and triumphs that spiritual activists can face. With chapters on psychology as well as religion and the spiritual, this is a book that challenges preconceptions of what it means to be spiritual and what it means to be an activist. Drawing on a rich history of spirituality and activism, from The Bhagavad Gita, to the Hebrew prophets, to Carl Jung, it is both guide and inspiration for people involved in activism for social or environmental justice.

Alastair McIntosh is an independent scholar, activist, writer, speaker and broadcaster. His other books include *Rekindling Community*; *Soil and Soul: People versus Corporate Power* (which Thom Yorke of Radiohead called "truly mental"); and *Hell and High Water: Climate Change, Hope and the Human Condition*. He regularly presents the Scottish Thought for the Day and other reflections on BBC radio and television. Matt Carmichael is a climate activist, English teacher and writer. He was a founder board member of Schumacher North and is the creator of the Delta course in Spirituality.



To obtain a review copy, for more information, or to arrange an author interview contact:
Megan Entecott | Green Books | +44 (0) 1223 302 041 | publicity@greenbooks.co.uk



Praise for *Spiritual Activism*

“With its clarion call that spirituality is central to activism, this is truly a book for our age, challenging the preconceptions of most activists, let alone those who still see spirituality solely as ‘an inner journey’.”

Sir Jonathan Porritt, first chair of the UK government’s Sustainable Development Commission and past director of Friends of the Earth

“This book itself is a spiritual journey, with a grounding in psychology, history and theology. It helps us to explore how we can bring our deepest values into action at this crucial time for the world!”

Starhawk, author of *The Spiral Dance* and *The Empowerment Manual*

“The word brilliant is overused, but it genuinely applies to *Spiritual Activism*. No other book brings together social change theory with insights from psychology and spirituality like this book does.”

Brian D. McLaren, speaker, activist and author of *We Make the Road by Walking*

“This is a refreshing and heartening book. It inspires positive action with a rich and skilful integration of spiritual philosophies, psychology and case studies of great activists.”

Katrina Shields, author of the Australian empowerment guide *In the Tiger’s Mouth*

“Can we somehow manage to act both rightly and effectively? McIntosh and Carmichael have carefully studied the obstacles that have always made this look so hard. Their careful, sober reasoning and their case studies, reveal a map that leads the right way.”

Dr Mary Midgley, philosopher

“The great unspoken in Western political life is the loss of our culture’s sense of the sacred. Many people who work to change our politics or economics come to realise the deeper, spiritual underpinnings of their work, yet don’t know how to articulate it, even to themselves. This book offers a brave, bold and very timely guide to doing just that. If you think you want to change the world, you need to read it.”

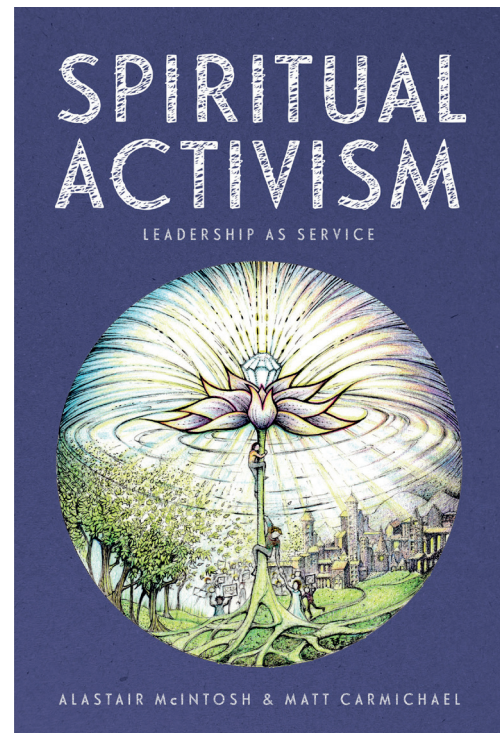
Paul Kingsnorth of The Dark Mountain Project, author of *One No, Many Yeses: A Journey to the Heart of the Global Resistance Movement*

“For any of us who find that the spiritual moment flows from the practical, that prayer (or song, or silence) refreshes on the knife-edge of activism, this book will be an invaluable resource and inspiration. It addresses questions of power, leadership and accountability with honesty, insight and wisdom, and speaks with humanity and humour on the importance of community in human development.”

Rev Kathy Galloway, first female Leader of the Iona Community

“Ever since the first Gulf War in 1991, Alastair McIntosh has stood in solidarity with our community to strengthen interfaith relationships. I warmly welcome the recognition in *Spiritual Activism* that true Islam can contribute to human rights, justice and peace for all in today’s world.”

Dr Bashir Maan, first elected Muslim politician in the UK and past-President of Glasgow Central Mosque



“Nuclear disarmament, as this thoughtful book suggests, is more than a matter of dismantling the weapons. We must also dismantle our minds and hearts to change our current ideas of true security.”

Bruce Kent, Vice President of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament

“We’ve tried to heal what ails us and our world with smartness, money, technology, economic growth, policy, and politics--all necessary and all insufficient. Having tried everything else, it is now time to add spirit exercised with discipline, going to the heart of the matter where wholeness, healing, and Holy converge. Highly recommended.”

Professor David W. Orr of Oberlin College, author of *Down to the Wire*

“The perilous path we tread is littered with burnt out, sold out, freaked out activists. If we wish to engage effectively and for the long run in this world full of wounds, for our efforts for Earth and Justice to be truly sustainable, it behoves us to take great care of our psychological and spiritual wellbeing. This book provides us with an important tool for the journey.”

John Seed, Australian deep ecologist and founder of the Rainforest Information Centre

“There is so so much that we activists can learn from religious faiths: about how to mobilise people, earn their commitment, and speak to their sacred values. From the spiritual traditions we can learn how to sustain ourselves in the long struggle. So, to my fellow activists, even the most sceptical, I insist read this excellent book and learn some vital lessons from the most successful and longest lasting social movements in history.”

George Marshall, founder of the Climate Outreach Information Network

Spiritual Activism: Leadership as Service, Alastair McIntosh and Matt Carmichael

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Green Books, PO Box 145, Cambridge, CB4 1GQ