

the New Story

by Reverend Deborah Olive

Imagine two waves meeting, one about to crash into the ocean, the other rising, not yet finding its crest. The waves slam into one another. Imagine this happening over and over, creating constant turbulence. Cape Agulhas, on the southern tip of Africa, is the place where two oceans meet. Here, the warm currents of the Indian Ocean mix with the cold of the Atlantic, creating a turbulent and angry sea. It is no surprise that a disproportionate number of shipwrecks occur there.

Now consider the changes you have observed during your life. The speed with which we communicate, how we travel, how we prepare our food, how we relate to our environment, the structures within our families – in short, we have changed how we see ourselves as a human family. These changes are cataclysmic and seem to propel us into the future with too little time to adjust. Navigating life's twists and turns can seem overwhelming – until we discover a new way to view change.

We live in an age where two "waves" are meeting: the wave of How It Has Been and the wave of What Is Yet to Come. One represents our Old Story, the other our New Story. Rather than gracefully entering into this emergent New Story, we hang onto the old with white knuckles. Trying to match the changes to something familiar, we inadvertently keep the Old Story alive. When we do find a match, we feel at



ease and we move forward with confidence. When there is no match, we become anxious and fearful.

Uneasy with the changes, we may distort our experience, no longer able to see it for what it really is. We may declare the new to be inferior, inadequate, too difficult, or just "not for me". We may ignore information that is right in front of us. Trying to put new information into an Old Story where it does not belong builds stress. Listen to the stream of messages we hear everyday – from the news media to the way we share our stories among ourselves – you will find that we live in an age between the Old Story and the New Story. Like the waves that meet at Cape Agulhas, these are turbulent times.

Now is our time to embrace our New Story! It will not be an incremental step – it will require a quantum leap forward. It is a global story, bigger than any we humans have ever lived. It is your story and mine, blended with 6.6 billion others. Technology will of course play a huge role. However, our New Story will also require that we develop and hone our spiritual practices, including collaboration, awareness,

mutual respect and spiritual inquiry. We must blend the wisdom of the mind with the compassion of the heart.

What if we were to enter the New Year with the simple intention of living life with more grace and less stress? What if we pay our attention to the parts we can do something about, rather than to those we cannot change? What if we look at our role and ask, "What part of the Old Story do I need to release? What is my New Story?" What if we look at the other areas where we have influence – our families, businesses, schools, and churches, our neighborhoods and networks, and ask, What is our New Story? As we focus on what we can do rather than on what we cannot, we learn to navigate the waves of change. We discover that we are each the captain of our ship, the creator of our New Story, and we leave behind the turbulent and angry waters of Cape Agulhas.

Rev. Deborah Olive is Senior Minister of Unity Church of Raleigh, 9225 Leesville Road. She can be reached at 919-870-7364 or on the web at www.unitychurchofraleigh.org.