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Peacemaker

The legend of Deganawida, as related by master story teller Jean Houston in her book, *Peacemaker*, is one of the richest stories to come out of North America, yet for non-native Americans it is one of the least known.

Known as the Man from the North, the Iroquois warrior created a society in which the Native peoples had religious freedom, men and women had equal rights, prosperity, and the liberty to follow their own beliefs and dreams.

Deganawida's allies included Jigonhsasee, remembered as the Mother of Nations, and the great orator Hayenwatha (not the hero made popular by Longfellow). The Iroquois Confederacy thrived as a powerful democracy among the five tribes in the northeastern woodlands that lasted hundreds of years. Previously there had been long years of violence and inter-tribal warfare. Bloody raids of retribution were a way of life.

In Jean Houston's latest book *Jump Time*, she writes about times in history, every 500 years or so, as in the Renaissance, when we find ourselves at a precipice, ready to take a great leap into a new world. She reveals how the "millennial passage portends a new birth for humanity – a "jump time" in both global and individual consciousness."

President Obama spoke of this "time of great consequence," as he gave the commencement speech at Notre Dame University on May 17th this year. He invited the students to consider two vital challenges of our time: finding the path to prosperity, and saving the earth in the changing climate. Obama brought up the opposing viewpoints on abortion, the different lives of the soldier and the citizen and stem-cell research.

"Both those who support and those who oppose embryonic stem-cell research do so on moral grounds," he said. "Those who speak out against stem-cell research may be rooted in admirable conviction about the sacredness of life, but so are the parents of a child with juvenile diabetes who are convinced that their son's or daughter's hardships can be relieved."

Obama followed these remarks (for which he was applauded) with the questions: "How do we work through these conflicts? Is it possible for us to join hands in common effort? How do we learn to live together as one family?"

Dr. Houston's idea is that as a global society, the people of today's earth are experiencing a breakthrough, possibly the biggest "jump phase" in human history, and a dramatic shift in human nature. She advances thought on new ways of being in community through technology that are "re-patterning human consciousness." (Recent evidence of this: social media sights and cell phone reporting on the election unrest in Iran. Social activists in China, journalists and bloggers, are "tweeting" constantly in efforts to protect themselves).

Dr. Houston points to a peace for each citizen of the earth that becomes "feisty and rich." The peace that Deganawida proposed was vigorous and challenging. He reminded his people that the beauty of the world still exists, that balance and beauty can be restored to one's life.

Leading figures of the human-potential movement all seem to be drawing attention to the truth that goes that goes beyond all borders and beliefs – the Golden Rule, a call to treat one another as we wish to be treated, a call to be hero's – to love, to be a contribution to our community and to live our dreams.

Notre Dame's president, Rev. John Jenkins as he introduced President Obama may have spoken the finest words on this hopeful spring day: "Easing the hateful divisions between human beings is the supreme challenge of our time, if we can solve this problem, we have a chance to come together and solve all the others."