

# AFTERWORDS

A COLLECTION OF  
MISCELLANEOUS SHORT PIECES  
MOSTLY WRITTEN SINCE 1998

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AFTERWORDS is an informal collection of short, relatively recent things I've written that bear on the spiritual aspect of teaching languages. I would enjoy hearing about occasions where they have been useful, but the individual papers may be reproduced free of charge as needed. [stevick@rockbridge.net](mailto:stevick@rockbridge.net) ©2002  
by Earl W Stevick

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## PREFACE

A recent e-mail message from a thoughtful friend closed with these words:

I hope your health is allowing pleasurable activities with your family and friends, as well as a satisfactory amount of intellectual stimulation.

I was happy to be able to reply once again, as in previous years, with an affirmative answer. It occurred to me, however, that the kind of intellectual stimulation has been steadily changing. In the first of my ten books for language teachers (1957) my interest was almost entirely on what to do and how to do it. Twenty-plus years later, *What?* and *How?* were joined by a rapidly developing interest in *Why* do it that way? — that is, in searching out what we know about the human brain and about interpersonal relationships that make some activities much more productive than others. Most recently, the focus on *Why?* is spreading to motivation, reflected in the subtitle of my latest and last book for language teachers, which was *What's at Stake?* (1998). Such a focus inevitably and very quickly brings us face-to-face with issues that can only be described as matters of “faith.”

In the months and now years since the last proofs of *What's at Stake?* went off to the editors, I have been in contact with a surprising number of other language teachers who from one point of view or another are interested in the “faith” aspect of their work. These encounters have led from time to time to the writing of short papers. The papers have been published obscurely if at all, and I have no interest in trying to combine them together as a “book.” I would however like to make them available electronically to any who have known me and are interested. Because they were written after my last book, I'm calling this open-ended collection “AFTERWORDS.”<sup>1</sup>

Because of the smallness of the audiences I was addressing, I have not hesitated to lift material from others of my writings — some of which were unpublished, and others of which, though published, have apparently remained unread. For the same reason, certain material appears in more than one of these AFTERWORDS.

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<sup>1</sup> Until recently I have used the term “POSTSCRIPTS.”

I have been distributing the "AFTERWORDS" privately from my own computer for the last couple of years, accompanying each set of eattachments with an invitation for questions or comments. Not everyone has replied, but those who did respond have brightened my life with a wonderful lot of new information, intellectual stimulation, and just general refreshment and enrichment. This has meant a lot to me. As a combination of Parkinson's disease and some less serious geriatric conditions (I was born in 1923) increasingly restricts my travel out of the house, I can foresee that contacts of this kind may become even more precious to me. I must be some kin to the mythological Antaeus, whose strength was restored whenever he came into contact with the ground. My e-mail address is **stevick@rockbridge.net**.

Lexington, VA, October 2002