

Deep Ecumenism is a phrase coined by Father Matthew Fox and adopted by Zalman Schachter-Shalomi. Ecumenism (Greek, *oikoumenikos*, ‘from the whole world’), originally referring to cooperative efforts between different parts of the Christian Church, is generally considered the same as inter-faith dialogue today. However, while inter-faith dialogue can be seen as an attempt to achieve a measure of understanding between religious traditions by discerning similarities and differences by dialogue and close observation, Deep Ecumenism is actually an opportunity to learn about oneself through full engagement with another tradition. One might even choose to participate in the practices of another religious tradition, to engage in experiential learning or “participatory epistemology,” as Schachter-Shalomi likes to say. Such “knowledge,” he suggests, can open one up to an understanding of the deep structures, the basic technology beneath the religions exterior of both traditions.



“I do not believe that anyone has the exclusive franchise on the Truth. What we have is a good approximation, for Jews, of how to get there. Ultimately, each person creates a way that fits his own situation. While there are differences between Jewish and non-Jewish approaches to mysticism in specific methods, observances, and rituals, there are no differences in the impact of the experiences themselves. When it comes to what I call the ‘heart stuff,’ all approaches overlap.”