

# BERNARD S. BENSON

(28 January 1922 – 15 May 1996)

## AUTHOR'S NOTE

From time to time man has been inspired either of himself or by his ego to great and noble heights, but historically he has been the servant of his ego, subservient to the desire for power and wealth. Those who have emerged at the head of society have, in general, been those with these characteristics in excess.

To this longstanding condition, something new has been added. Technology has provided mankind with the ability to move people, objects and information anywhere at all, often at lightning speed, and the space historically separating peoples has vanished. Furthermore, technology has also yielded the mastery of physical energy, and finally through the vast power of modern computers to search and recall limitless masses of data, those who are given, or seize power can now infiltrate and control the life of the people down to the very finest detail. Thus those in power have now gained absolute power.

With an excess of speed, and no progress in the mastery of the ego, man has neither the wisdom nor the compassion to handle these vast forces. Society has thus become so fragile that its destruction is now easy, its survival in jeopardy, giving rise for the first time in man's history to the pressing need to modify his basic nature. Merely creating a new system will no longer do it. The basic human material must now change. This is a lot to ask.

The transition from a materialistically oriented society towards a philosophic orientation is now clearly under way in the West with a search for enlightened understanding replacing the long-standing dedication to the accumulation of objects. There are, here and there, clear signs that those with this orientation are being propelled by society to the surface to assume the role of leadership.

Frequently referred to as "new age" thought, a term still searching for its meaning, society is once again picking up the thread of the great spiritual Masters who pointed the way, particularly about two and three thousand years ago. This thread, already distorted by the ego of its interpreters, was essentially broken when mankind, like a pack of mad dogs fighting over a bone, invented the religion of materialism, made possible by technology. The new direction of thought is the result of the pressing need, with signs of new leadership emerging.

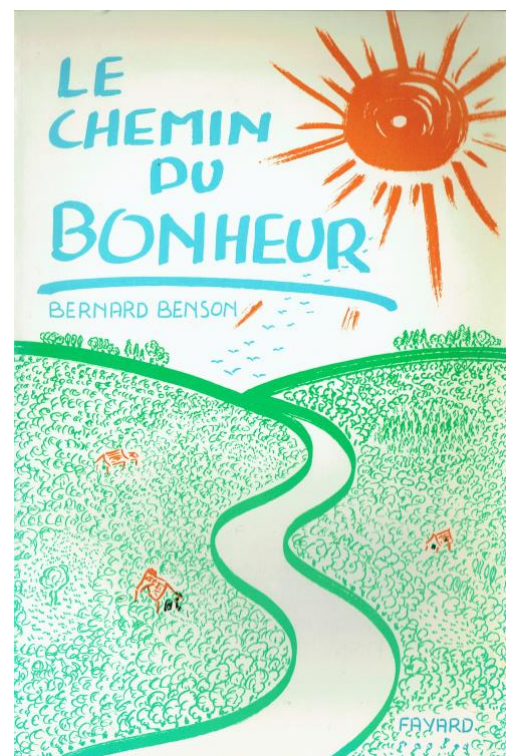
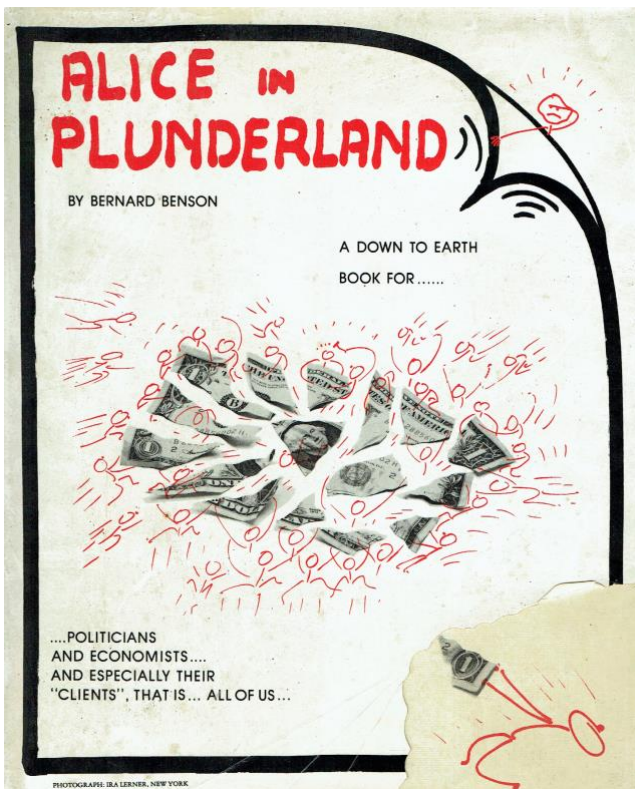
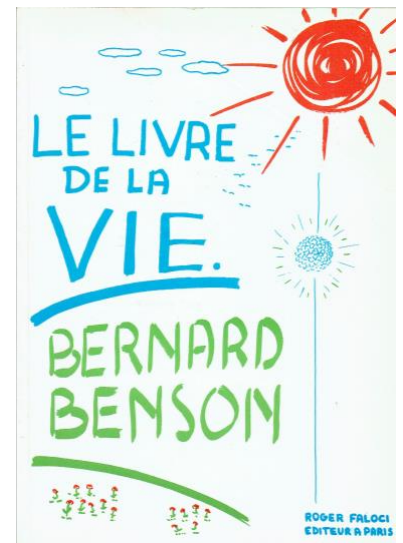
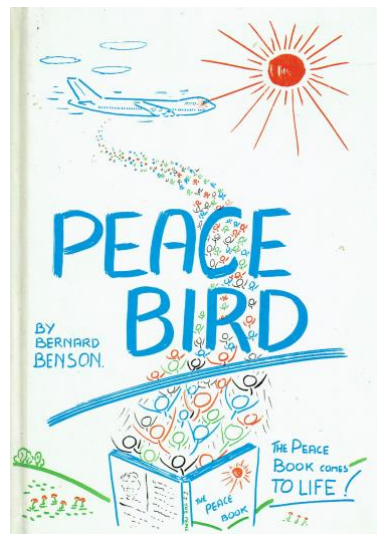
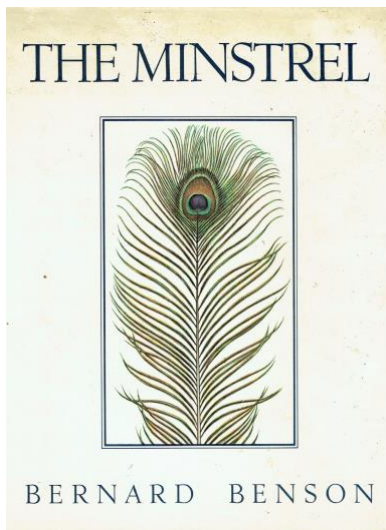
Can this revolution of enlightened understanding spread across the globe in sufficient breadth and depth in time? It would require a miracle . . . but it is just possible . . . if man is willing to come face to face with the reality of the world he has created, and understand that if he fails, the game is up!

*Alice in Plunderland* is offered in the hope that it may bring some light where there is now predominantly only heat.

Bernard Benson  
Chateau de Chaban,  
France  
May, 1978

Bernard fell in love with David Gordon's songs – particularly *Child for a Day*, sung by David's brother, Cat Stevens – now Yusuf Islam, which means 'Peace' in Arabic. He arranged for David to have the exclusive rights to create a musical adaptation of *The Peace Book* and invited David Gordon and David Woollcombe + their respective families to come to Chaban to write the adaptation. While there, the families met the Tibetan Buddhist monks whom Bernard was shielding from their Chinese oppressors. They became early spiritual and financial supporters of the Peace Child project.

While staying with Bernard at Chaban, David Gordon completed three Peace Child songs: [Mr President](#), [Peace Day](#) and [I want to live](#), drawing on the teachings of the Tibetan monks – and the peace generated by their prayers and chanting. These have infused the Peace Child project ever since.



*A Selection of Bernard's Books – [The Minstrel](#), inspired by the Life of Elvis Presley; [Peace Bird](#) – bringing the Peace Child story to life; [The Book of Life](#) and [The Path to Happiness](#) – both distillation's of Bernard's philosophy, and [Alice in Plunderland](#) – a stinging rebuke to the insanity of capitalism and the unregulated market economy.*

Bernard's books remain in print in many languages – and are an inspiration to Peace Child in every show we do. The central idea of [The Peace Book](#) – to imagine the future as you want it to be, and then flash-back to the present and tell the story of what you are going to do with your life to bring that future about – remains the defining characteristic of all [Peace Child](#) shows. Though Bernard is sadly no longer with us, his books, his ideas, and his drawings continue to inform the Peace Child activities all over the world. We urge any one who seriously wants to capture the spirit and meaning of Peace Child, take the time to read Bernard's [Peace Book](#): it's ideas are woven into most of our work even today – years after his death.

