

An Ian Stevenson Remembrance

RAY WESTPHAL

Devon, PA

A dozen or so years ago, I decided to “get serious” about the many psi experiences that I have had during my life. So I documented the most memorable ones, included a resume, and sent these materials to many individuals whom I had identified through my research of the paranormal.

Two responses were all that I received: One of these was from Dr. Ian Stevenson. His letter was specific to my particular experiences, and his advice was practical and unassuming. He identified an organization within an hour-and-a-half drive from my home which he felt might be helpful to me. I followed up on his recommendation and made several visits to this organization, which I found informative and interesting, further stoking the fire in me to learn more about what others were doing to unravel these mysteries.

Dr. Stevenson closed his initial response to me with an invitation to meet with him should my travels take me to the Charlottesville area. A year or two later I called him, reminded him of his invitation, and set up a meeting. He was very hospitable and warm in making the arrangements. We met, and I met his very learned and erudite staff as well, a most enjoyable experience.

In the years that followed, we met several times, and my respect for Ian grew more and more, and not only for Ian the scientist, but also for Ian the man: his dignified yet totally gracious manner, his good-humoredness and wit, and his youthful approach to life—tennis, anyone?—and trips to remote areas of India!

In time, I thought of Ian as a friend and hoped he felt the same toward me. This led me to asking him a question which long since had been on my mind, and as I sat in his office on one of my visits, I simply blurted out: “Ian, do you believe in reincarnation?”

After a significant pause, he turned to me and in very measured words said: “The physical marks present strong evidence.”

Then silence.