Writing Liquid Light has been a multiyear, multi-individual, and (dare I say) multidimensional process. Not surprisingly, therefore, I’m grateful for the opportunity to thank everyone who helped to make this book possible.

First and foremost, I want to thank my beloved wife Sandra for her steady and ever-present love over the years. It can be challenging when your husband disappears into the rain forest for several months at a pop, but throughout it all she was unfailingly supportive. I especially want to thank her for the enormous time and energy that she selflessly offered while reading a later draft of this text. Her keen and insightful editorial suggestions came right when I needed them most.

Thanks as well to Jonathan Goldman who, along with his wife Jane Seligson, introduced me to the Santo Daime and nurtured my development during the early days of my involvement with this path. Here’s hoping that my depiction of our first retreat together is at least somewhat close to how they remember it.

I am also grateful to Taran Rosenthal for his ongoing and heartwarming friendship. His encouraging words after reading an early draft of Liquid Light meant the world to me.

This book was radically transformed, for the better, as a result of the loving yet insightful editorial suggestions offered by C.C., one of my dearest friends in the Santo Daime. Few people (if any) gave the book more time than he did. Only he knows how much he helped me through that one really rough patch. He (and his wife S.C.) truly light up my life.

Aurah has also always had my back during many of the years I spent researching and writing Liquid Light. And the website simply wouldn’t have happened.
without her. Thank you so much, Aurah. Your selfless dedication and hard work have been a priceless gift to me. And thank you as well to all of the people of Céu da Luz do Amor Divino—you all have a special place in my heart.

I also want to thank Marc Blainey, a fellow scholar of the Santo Daime, for his insightful editorial comments. Marc embodies engaged, careful, and tuned-in scholarship at its best.

And Jeff Kripal, dear friend and gifted scholar of the humanities, was willing to give me a careful, arriving just at the right-moment, reading of a later version of this text, even in the middle of his crazy-busy schedule. His detailed and helpful comments were invaluable.

And thanks as well to Jeff for introducing me to Mike Murphy and Esalen. Those week-long seminars with smart people talking about intriguing topics in that beautiful place were a true godsend and offered a context for me to think through some of the central topics of this text. Thanks, Mike—you are an ongoing inspiration to me.

And Rachel Harris, God bless her, read a really early (and really long!) draft of Liquid Light and was always so positive and supportive in her feedback. Her heartfelt words of encouragement meant so much to me.

And Bill Richards’s words of wisdom came true, even if I never believed that I could do it (amazingly, I actually was able to cut one-third of the book). Thanks so much, Bill, for being the shining person you are.

And thanks as well to that Santo Daime scholar par excellence, Edward MacRae, not only for welcoming me so warmly into his home in Salvador and for sharing with me some hard-to-locate books in Portuguese, but also for supporting my dogged attempts to get funding for the research that undergirds this text.

I am also deeply grateful for the encouraging words and courageous example of Chris Bache. He has blazed a path that I follow with profound appreciation.

And I am thankful for the time given by the collection of daimistas who graciously volunteered to read a draft of Liquid Light. Thanks so much to N.S. who shepherded this process with good-natured grace; to D.L.D. for his astute editorial suggestions; to P.S. for his legal insights; to J.M. for letting me know how much he loved the book; and finally to J.B. for the gift of his supportive encouragement.

And Liquid Light would never have been published if not for the kindly yet dogged persistence of my editor at Columbia University Press, Wendy Lochner. Thanks so much for believing in me, Wendy (and for all of your patience with me
as well!). And thanks also to Lowell Frye, an associate editor at Columbia University Press, for all his help in the production phase of the book.

I was also blessed to have the deeply attuned and deeply skilled assistance of the brother/sister dynamic duo, R.C. and J.C. They are both astonishingly gifted human beings. R.C. played and produced all of the music for the recordings of my hymns, and J.C. received, and then artistically expressed, the mandala that is featured on the cover of Liquid Light and on the book’s website.

And this book could never have been written without the sparkly eyed, down-to-earth, flat-out fun conversations that I have had (for over ten years!) with Cristina B., my gift from God Portuguese tutor. Thank you so much, Cristina, for sharing the delights of this beautiful language with me.

Cristina’s congenial and hardworking daughter, Caroline B. was also a big help to me—she transcribed and helped to translate a series of recorded interviews I had made during my first visit to Brazil.

Thanks as well to Southern Methodist University for providing the research funds that made that transcription/translation possible. And a special thanks to my colleagues in the Religious Studies Department for fondly putting up with their more or less mystical colleague.

And I am grateful to the American Academy of Religion for the individual research grant that was so generously given to me in 2011—those funds helped make an early three-week trip to Brazil possible.

I was also blessed to have received the disciplined and good-natured hard work of a number of research assistants: Marne Erasmus, Meghan Beddingfield, and Gabriel Garza somehow managed to appear just when I needed them. Their hours spent typing up journals from my fieldwork and organizing hundreds of pages of notes about the historical development of the Santo Daime into a coherent whole helped make this book (and the website) possible.

My heartfelt thanks as well to all of the daimistas in all of the Santo Daime centers that I visited in Brazil who welcomed this North American researcher with open arms. My thanks as well to Luciano and Maurén M., who made me feel so at home in their apartment in Rio after my stint in Céu do Mapiá (and then a couple of years later accompanied me to a Daime-bioenergetic retreat in the mountains outside Rio).

I also want to express my profound gratitude to Mestre Irineu and all of the elders of the Santo Daime who have served as beacons of the Light of the Santo Daime. And my heartfelt prayer of thanks as well to all the divine Beings who have guided and continue to guide me on this magical path of spiritual awakening and transformation.
And finally, this book is dedicated to all of the courageous and dedicated people who have led and continue to lead Santo Daime churches throughout the world, especially T.H. and his wife H.H. who have been and continue to be an inspiration to me with their love, humility, and steadfast commitment to this wondrous, if at times challenging, spiritual path.
Liquid Light