



THE MARK

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Real Life: Empty of Self, Full of God

by Tim Cook

Every one of us has axial moments in our lives. These are the moments when our life has been moving in a familiar direction and suddenly makes a profound and dramatic change. One of my axial moments is unforgettably etched in my memory. As I answered a ringing doorbell and opened the door, my girlfriend looked at me, then looked down at my hand and then straight into my eyes. After a very long, pregnant pause she spoke slowly and clearly: “Timmy, you look like you have a glass grafted to your hand.” I suddenly saw myself, as though from outside, through another person’s eyes...and what I saw scared me. I had a glass of scotch in my hand. The scary part of it was that I always had a glass of scotch in that hand. Seeing myself through another’s eyes helped me see through the foggy mist of the seeming normality, of the familiar, mechanical habit of my drinking. Habits, attitudes, ways of seeing and ways of life settle upon us so gradually and invisibly that they just seem normal and unremarkable. Seen through other eyes, they may look strange and even deadly.

Why did I always have a glass of scotch in my hand? It was because my life lacked meaning. I

felt empty inside and was trying to fill the aching void with alcohol. My emptiness, however, was an emptiness of meaning only and not a true emptiness. I was full of myself, thought only of myself and what I thought of as my needs. The fear I felt at the realization of the size of my addiction was sufficient to put me “on the wagon” at once. But I was still full of myself and still empty of meaning. I had no understanding, at the time, of how life worked, so I simply shifted my attempts to fill my inner emptiness to food. I became a compulsive eater. But the emptiness remained; there would never be enough scotch or food to fill it. My desperation grew and my sense of shame at being out of control grew right along with it. I was a desperately unhappy man. And my need to fill the void within me went right on expanding. I had a great credit rating so I added credit card abuse to my list of palliatives, with the same result. The shame, the fear and the desperation grew worse and I still felt empty. I was full of me and my needs but empty of meaning.

That all happened 37 years ago. Today I know, through my training as a minister and in my pastoral experience, that I am not alone.

Addiction is eminently democratic in our republic. Our American culture is starving for meaning. And everything we are consuming in our consumer culture only adds to our starvation, our desperation and our out-of-control lifestyles.

When we sit down to consume a meal it is because we’re hungry and need the nourishment the meal is meant to provide. But when we snack on empty calories to fill an endless void the hunger goes on, the rate of consumption rises and the pain only increases our desperate attempts to fill the emptiness. America has become a nation of voracious consumers, consuming vast and ever increasing amounts of empty calories. We are a nation attempting to fill a vacuum of meaning with more and more of the very thing that causes the loss of that very meaning. We are filled with ourselves and empty of life.

If consuming more, having more, getting more, or keeping more of more and more things would satisfy us, it would surely show there. What it does reveal, though, is the scary truth. Something is wrong in the human condition. Something is very, very wrong. And my own experience tells me what it is. We are empty of meaning and full of

ourselves. But we are not all fated to this vapid and lifeless hypnosis. It is not our destiny. Some of us will find the way to follow Christ to liberation from the psycho-spiritual traps that invite us to ever greater sorrow on every side. Through Christ we are invited to experience the regeneration of our lives, while yet participating in this crazy world.

Stephan Hoeller, in his excellent book, *Jung And The Lost Gospels, Insights Into the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Nag Hamadi Library*, pinpoints it clearly, “*Something is wrong*. Somewhere, somehow, the fabric of being at the existential level of human functioning has lost its integrity. We live in a system that is lacking in essential integrity and thus is defective. Humans live in an absurd world that can be rendered meaningful only by Gnosis, or self-knowledge. This absurdity is the property of the kind of reality we live in. It does not follow that the physical or superphysical constituents of this reality are in and of themselves absurd, but our systematic way of perceiving them is. The word ‘cosmos’ as used by Gnostics does not mean the world (as it is frequently but inaccurately translated) but rather ‘system,’ and can thus be perfectly well applied

to the system created by the human mind concerning reality. Basilides (the early second century Gnostic scholar) called this cosmos one of illusion, thus replicating the views of Hindus and Buddhists... we can all agree that reality to us is what appears to be real, and so our minds lacking in Gnosis present us with a flawed reality replete with absurdity.”

The world we call real is imaginary. It is merely the sum of all the folly and imagination of all the human experience that has preceded us. Our so-called “reality” is not based on the experience of Reality through personal experimentation and the search for truth, but instead on the pernicious habit of cultural imitation that slides slowly onto the consciousness of each child that enters this false cosmos. This imaginary world has a carrot and stick capacity to entice us to reach for seeming “goods” in the exterior world. Each of these attractive, seeming goods fascinates us for a little while and supplies us with just enough false meaning to keep us from noticing our interior dis-ease. When the charm from one carrot runs out another one magically appears to entice us into reaching for it. This horrific deception


usually continues uninterrupted throughout the entirety of a human life; unless, like mine, the imaginary life falls apart and makes it possible for us to call out to God for help and to discover real Life.

A sincere call for help is always answered. My own experience leaves me no doubt about that at all. But my experience can’t translate to anyone else. Each of us must see through the ancient ruse for ourselves. Each of us must see through the illusion of separation that causes us to feel empty. When we are full of ourselves, we are empty of God, our true and real life and our ultimate meaning. True self-knowledge and knowledge of God are absolutely the same. Jesus pulled no punches when He stated clearly:

Anyone who intends to come with me has to let me lead. You’re not in the driver’s seat; I am. Don’t run from suffering; embrace it. Follow me and I’ll show you how. Self-help is no help at all. Self-sacrifice is the way, my way, to finding yourself, your true self. What kind of deal is it to get everything you want but lose yourself? What could you ever trade your soul for? (Matthew 16:25 The Message)

At The Church of Conscious
continued on page 4

Harmony we teach and practice an ancient way to union with God. It is the Christian version of a way of living that exists within all the great religious traditions of the world. In this way we're not trying to acquire any thing we don't already have or to get God to do something He hasn't already done. It is known as the *via negativa* or the *apophatic* way. In this way we discover our union with God through faith by becoming aware of what He is not and thus what we are not. We learn to discern and then let go of everything that is not God through a practice called *kenosis*, or self-emptying. We discover experientially that God is not found by thought or feeling or sensation. And we learn to experience that we are not a thought or a feeling or sensation; so we can stop and ponder, consider and observe the awesome scope of what that might mean in your personal experience. By grace we learn to release and let go of every sort of thought, every kind of feeling and every type of sensation. What is left is unchanging, eternal Truth.

When we've practiced this self emptying and become skilled at it, our personal emptiness disappears and we discover, for ourselves, the Kingdom of Heaven that is waiting within us all the time. We find that our life and God's life are the same thing. When we are empty of self, we are full of God and overflowing with Divine meaning. 

Nourishment and Growth by Barbara Cook


Recently, as I was preparing for an upcoming one-day Centering Prayer retreat, I felt the rising feeling of anticipation and excitement quickening within me. I became aware that I was going to get to spend a whole day in the company of the Beloved with a group of spiritual companions to share the experience.

I never really understood the idea of Sabbath until I started going on retreats. We take time out of our busy schedules of doing things to simply be. Though being is our most intrinsic identity, it is still something that we must cultivate. Centering Prayer is a way to cultivate that "deeper than doing" identity. It is also a discipline that cultivates an ever deepening relationship with God. It is a method that helps us to let go of our usual restless busyness that tends to get caught in endless pursuits. When we sit still in prayer, quieting our busy minds and relaxing our muscles, our simple intention to be with God carries us into greater intimacy with Him – as He is in Himself. In relaxing who we think we are, we allow ourselves to consent to God's presence and action and we feel ourselves being nurtured by Him. Whether we are sitting in prayer at home for 20 or 30 minutes a day or on a 10-day retreat, we are being nurtured and so is our relationship with God every time we meet Him in Centering Prayer.

I've noticed that the more retreats I do, the more I am aware of this subtle communion that is

the exchange of love with God, and the more I anticipate sitting in that intimate, silent embrace with Him. Abraham Joshua Heschel, in his book *The Sabbath*, describes preparing for the Sabbath like a bridegroom prepares with eager longing to be with his bride. That is increasingly becoming my felt experience in Centering Prayer. Each daily prayer time prepares us for deeper and longer times with our Beloved and that quickens our hunger for more.

A few weeks ago as I was going down to morning prayer in Theosis Chapel, I passed the two rosemary bushes that are planted on either side of the stairs that go into the church. I noticed that the one on the right is huge and that the one on the left is much smaller. I remembered that when our dear Kate Davenport planted those bushes 10 years ago, the one on the right was planted close to a water source and that the one on the left was more distant from it. That little noticing spoke to me about how real Life in every dimension has to have daily nurture and nutrition. Like the bush on the left, our basic human existence can squeak by with very little attention; but to flourish like the bush on the right, our true Life needs the Living Water of daily prayer.

I look forward to resting in God with you; joining you in nurturing and nourishing our true Selves and our relationship with Christ, our source of Living Water. 

Guidelines for Christian Life, Growth and Transformation

Fr. Thomas Keating, in his seminal work *Open Mind, Open Heart*, lists 42 principles underlying the Christian spiritual journey. Fr. Keating asks that these principles be read according to the method of Lectio Divina. One principle will appear in these pages each month

30th Guideline



Regular periods of silence and solitude quiet the psyche, foster interior silence, and initiate the dynamic of self-knowledge.

SEEDS

The Gift of Understanding

Contemplation, by which we know and love God as He is in Himself, apprehending Him in a deep and vital experience which is beyond the reach of any natural understanding, is the reason for our creation by God.

And although it is absolutely above our nature, St. Thomas teaches that it is our proper element because it is the fulfillment of deep capacities in us that God has willed should never be fulfilled in any other way.

All those who reach the end for which they were created will therefore be contemplatives in heaven: but many are also destined to enter this supernatural element and breathe this new atmosphere while they are still on earth.

Since contemplation has been planned for us by God as our true and proper element, the first taste of it strikes us at once as utterly new and yet strangely familiar.

Although you had an entirely different notion of what it would be like (since no book can give an adequate idea of contemplation except to those who have experienced it), it turns out to be just what you seem to have known all along that it ought to be.

The utter simplicity and obviousness of the infused light which contemplation pours into our soul suddenly awakens us to a new level of awareness.

We enter a region which we had never even suspected, and yet it is this new world which seems familiar and obvious. The old world of our senses is now the one that seems to us strange, remote and unbelievable—

until the intense light of contemplation leaves us and we fall back to our own level.

Thomas Merton, *New Seeds of Contemplation*, pages 225-226.



The Church of Conscious Harmony
A Contemplative Christian Community

7406 Newhall Lane
Austin, Texas 78746
512.347.9673
512.347.9675 fax
www.consciousharmony.org

MINISTERS

Tim and Barbara Cook

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Michael Begeman
Pamela Begeman
Mary Anne Best
Eric DeJernett
Donald Genung
Wally Huck
Lauri Raymond

MUSIC

Susan Boulden, Director
musicdir@consciousharmony.org
Sue Young

YOUTH EDUCATION SERVICES

Deborah Hale, Children's Director
childmin@consciousharmony.org
Jacque Botto, Assistant to the Children's Director
Don Hale, Youth Director
youthdir@consciousharmony.org
David Jenkins, Assistant to the Youth Director

OFFICE

Mon-Fri 8:30 am-4:30 pm
Donald Genung, Business Mgr
bizmgr@consciousharmony.org
Lisa Genung, Office Mgr
officemgr@consciousharmony.org

BOOKSTORE

Sun 9-9:50 am & 11:30 am-12:30 pm
Mon-Fri 8:30 am-3:30 pm
Thom Temperli, Manager
bookmgr@consciousharmony.org

NEWSLETTER

Sandra Ely, Editor
garzaely@swbell.net
Carol Hagar, Design
lifesart@austin.rr.com



I give thanks to my God at every remembrance of you ... Philippians 1:3

Annual Aim: Gratitude Celebrating 25 Years of Grace

Grounds and Facilities

by Donald Genung

Throughout the years,
we have made small additions to the nucleus.
... And all the added construction
was done in a style
of rustic simplicity—both Old World and
New World tradition.
The church is a true house of prayer.
Built on the summit of a high hill,
this church stands visibly
as a pointer to God
and a sign of hope
for all who come here to pray
... making us realize deeply
that this simple place
is a space for God,
a space where the living God
lays down His tent among His people.

Brother Victor-Antoine d'Avila-Latourrette, *A Monastic Year,
Reflections from a Monastery*

We wish to manifest stillness and sanctuary,
holiness and beauty,
for the sacred space we've been given.

The Church of Conscious Harmony,
2012-2014 Two-Year Plan

*The mountain of the Lord's house
shall be established as the highest mountain
and raised above the hills.
... Many peoples shall come and say:
'Come, let us go up to the Lord's mountain,
to the house of the God of Jacob,
that He may instruct us in His ways,
and we may walk in His paths.'*

Isaiah 2:2-3

In celebrating our 25 years as a church, it is good to enjoy a look back at the history of our grounds and facilities, recognize the ways we have grown as a community and grown as God-loving beings, appreciate the extraordinary graces we have been provided in support of our spiritual journey and give praise to God for always meeting our needs.

Chronology of Church Homes

The CCH community has grown through several grounds and building locations since the church's inception in 1988. I've heard Tim and Barbara talk about the first home being located in a house on Jousting Place (only 1.5 miles from our current location) that served as a sanctuary and parsonage. Within months the church leased and converted a former bank building in Westlake off Loop 360. The next site, in 1994, was in an office park on Steck Ave. This was the place of my first visit to the church. Somehow it worked. In the midst of professional business offices, the church facilities offered a peaceful and holy sanctuary for

worship and study.

As the office park lease end date neared and the community was outgrowing that site, it became a prudent time to consider building a permanent home. And so a plan was developed by the Board of Directors to build a new church. The church leadership purchased the Newhall Lane land from the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod, who had originally planned to build a church on this land but later opted to sell it. An architectural firm (Lake | Flato from San Antonio) was then selected based on their design vision and plan proposal.

During the construction stage, the church moved from Steck Ave and rented out the Sri Atmananda campus off Red River and 41st Street. There, a house was converted to a bookstore, counseling and administration offices. Each Sunday, the worship hall and school were set up for church use by the CCH community, including A/V equipment, stage, chairs and Sunday school supplies. After the service, all was taken down and stored for the

week. The community involvement and effort necessary for making that scenario work was labor intensive and simultaneously prepared us for what was to come during construction. We were at Sri Atmananda for nearly two years and had our first Sunday service at our new home on Newhall Lane in September 1999.

Community Building

One of the first community events to launch the building project was a special blessing service of the Newhall Lane land. We gathered on site for prayer and chanting. I vividly recall the prayer flag procession across the hillside while singing, "This is Holy Ground." We remembered the wildlife that would be displaced along with the ground and our neighbors. We considered the plants that would be affected. We prayerfully made an aim to treat the land with the utmost respect and consideration and disturb as little as was reasonable. We prayed to be conscious stewards as a church community. It was so reverent to begin our time on this land in such a way.

A consistent theme of all site conversions for the church has been the practice of community participation in the build outs and construction. A primary aim in this has been community building. Indeed, there is a unifying experience that can come from selfless giving of ourselves as volunteers with a common bond. With each project, we come to know and experience each other in Christ, in more profound ways.

Through this we are given an

opportunity to observe the ways our personalities interact with others while under unusual conditions. In other words, if you want to see your Christianity in practice (or absence thereof), volunteer with each other in projects where someone becomes the boss, someone needs to follow directions, and where predetermined outcomes and standards must be met.

In one phase of installing all of the brick paver walkways, we were working in groups in several locations simultaneously. One area along the classrooms had an uneven wave of bricks that needed to be removed, the base leveled, and bricks reset. Installing the pavers was hard, tiring work that our bodies were not accustomed to. It was confronting for the person to direct that the area needed to be redone. It was confronting as volunteers to receive the word. But we all knew what needed to be done. It took three attempts for the area to be installed level. From fury to hugs, in the end we lamented with laughter that our 80 year old bodies will someday appreciate the level walkway.

In another project, we were constructing the large concrete pads that would hold the heavy rainwater collection tanks. It was not financially reasonable to hire a concrete pump truck with a long boom nor could we get a motor mixer to the location. My dad happened to be visiting that weekend, which was unusual. We weren't particularly close at that time and church was not "his thing." Again, this was not familiar work for us and we were not getting far with this project. I called home for advice and dad came to the Saturday

workday to assist. He immediately assessed the scenario and found a process solution. The pads were substantially completed that day. I got to see my dad in a new light and he had a hand in building our church. Over the years and through our many projects, the Holy Spirit has provided many of us with special healing experiences like this.

Some of the major community construction projects at our current site include land clearing for construction, installing the concrete block retaining wall above the lower parking lot, building up the straw bale walls of the Sanctuary, staining and painting, and some landscaping.

The graces of community building would be incomplete without remembering some of the early leaders of CCH who have passed on and their contributions that are still blessing us. Patsy Wade launched the idea of building a church and she provided the initial substantial money pool that was used to begin fund raising within the community. Bill Browder was a wise professional marketer and an experienced leader in big picture thinking (God's got this), the sort that was essential in undertaking such a project without the backing or experience of a denominational support system. Lewis Bullard, a retired military officer, had gifts of order and common sense that helped keep many components on track. Lewis also had vast knowledge and was a valuable man to bounce ideas off of. Bob Rader was our volunteer leader in many construction projects. He gave so much time and still maintained a dental practice. It

wasn't that he knew construction, rather that he genuinely enjoyed people. Working with him was made pleasurable and productive. June Jeffers had a pioneer spirit with a flair for elegance. She pitched in, in the most uncommon areas. You would see June on jobs that were unattractive. She would say yes, get dirty and give royally of herself. Doug Saunders was much like Bob Rader; here so often, a joy to be around and quality control oriented. He was not comfortable in high places and yet much of the painting of trusses and beams was done by Doug. He was always a willing worker and inspired us to go beyond the ordinary.

There were others who have not been mentioned. Perhaps you remember someone or a special volunteer experience. Please take a moment to recall and give God thanks for all that have been a part of the grounds and facilities offerings that we enjoy today.

Design Ambiance

For most of us, entering the church grounds offers a gentle sense that something is different here. There is a peaceful, private and sanctuary feeling that begins at the entrances. Have you experienced this? Perhaps you've noticed that casual conversation about entertainment, politics, business and the like, that just seems to clash with the reverent atmosphere here. What is this? This is holy ground. Here are some of the ways it is expressed.

Beginning with the architectural design for our church, the plan had several key components that contribute to the "special feeling"

we enjoy. One was to create a campus that "worked" with the natural contour and character of the land, rather than to machine out the hillside in an invasive way. The construction of the Sanctuary, partially supported by the stilt like construction, and the linear horizontal lines of buildings are examples of following the contour of the land.

Another design feature was using "green building" components. At the time of construction, this church was an Austin leader in using green building techniques. Some of the many features include granite gravel parking areas, brick paver construction, straw bale walls, convective air flow for cooling and rainwater collection. Along with energy efficiency, many of these features offer cohesiveness with the surrounding nature.

The church was intentionally designed to maintain a natural look with a hill country retreat center ambiance, in support of our contemplative interests. Colors and surfaces and lines are intended to work with the earth tone surroundings. The grounds and facilities provide a canvas and the people as a community, become the colors.

In coordination with this, the architect was asked to design a church that did not resemble our familiar ideas of churches. As Tim once explained, the point with this was found in the parable of the wine skin, where the wine is the teaching and we are the skins. Most people who are drawn to this church have been searching and have left a church or religion. We carry with

us associations of what "church" looks like. If those impressions are detracting, especially if related to a bad experience, it is likely that the old associations will arise again and will interfere with the new way offered here. This church offers us a new impression (new wine put into new wine skins). It is for this reason that CCH is not decorated with stained glass, banners, statuary and common architecture. A fresh start is offered.

Additionally, the facilities and grounds are intended to support a culture of self-introspection and Centering Prayer. Rather than having your attention drawn outside yourself, the intent here is for us to feel comforted and at peace by the grounds and facilities so that we may welcome a practice of going to *our inner room to pray*. Someone once described the experience of worshiping and praying in the Sanctuary as like being in the comfort of the womb. Yes!

Intentional Places

Our grounds and facilities are steeped in prayer and intentional service guided by Spirit. One of the first examples of this is the inscriptions on the tiles on the Paths of Intention. Each parking lot is connected to the campus with a Path of Intention. The inscriptions were sponsored and selected by members of the community. We are encouraged to walk slowly, whether coming or leaving, in a contemplative way and allow one inscription to make a special connection in our awareness. It is a joy to engage with God in this way, inviting God to show me a message that I need to receive.

The gardens are substantially

cared for as a part of the monthly Saturday community workday. From mulching, pruning, shaping and bed weeding, it is the intention of the community that graces us with the landscape upkeep that we enjoy as an expression of the natural beauty here. It is the same for much of the cleanliness we enjoy here. We can praise our seva groups for this. They arrive at 7 a.m. on Sundays and begin with prayer before sweeping, cleaning and preparing to welcome the community for prayer, fellowship, study and worship.

Did you know that inside the straw bale walls of the Sanctuary and Theosis Chapel are sacred items from around the globe and from many religions? At the time of their construction, we were encouraged to bring sacred items from our home alters to be blessed and dedicated as a permanent part of the church. Many of these items we did not want to part with. But the opportunity of letting go was offered. And so we


inserted the items into to walls and then they were sealed in. There are icons, prayer beads, rosaries, prayer books, metals, crystals, sacred ash, holy water capsules, photographs, religious attire, holy oils and more.

Another blessing with intention was made with the construction of the creek that flows between the courtyards. A special service was held for the community to participate in giving thanks and praise to God. As a part of the blessing, vials of water from sacred places were added to the creek. They included waters from the rivers Jordon and Ganges, the Jesus Place fountain at Gobind Sadan in India, holy water from the Vatican and more.

The church is also blessed with special places for God to be revealed through nature mysticism. We have a professionally designed and constructed trail system. These were designed for the specific intent of use for contemplative walking and praying. Along the trails there are

various spurs with chairs for private sitting. Some overlook various parts of the wooded slopes. Other sitting areas are near the tributaries that feed Barton Creek. Trail maps are found in the Fellowship Hall at the information shelf.

Along a trail walk, you may come upon a labyrinth. It is in a very private location and offers a unique pattern for a contemplative walk with God, in wonder or in prayer. All in the community are welcome to enjoy it. The labyrinth was constructed by the CCH Youth Council and is used with some of the lessons and activities of the Harmony Youth Program.

Throughout the month of July, we give special attention to the ways God blesses us with these grounds and facilities. Please join in extending a prayer of thanksgiving and well being for all who have contributed in the purchase, design, construction, and service that has culminated in the church we have today. This is holy ground. 

Aim to Serve a Higher Purpose

The aim of the Work is to become free, and to help others to become free—
free to serve a higher purpose. What makes for freedom?

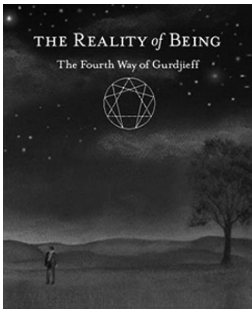
Faith, kindness, courage, knowledge, selflessness, and understanding.

This is the work of Schools. ...

True humility is connected with giving up the luxury of worrying about ourselves—
it makes no difference whether it is in the form of vanity about our achievements
or doubts that we can do what is required of us.

Both are preoccupation about ourselves; and preoccupied with oneself,
one cannot see what is needed nor be open to receive the help which is pouring down upon us all the time,
and which if we trust in it can enable us to do the impossible.

Rodney Collin, *The Theory of Conscious Harmony*, page 163.



The Work

of Inner Christianity

*My Father is still working,
and I also am working.* John 5:17


The Miraculous in Action

In coming together to practice the work to be present in practical activities, we are drawn by an irresistible desire for the miraculous but find ourselves working at mundane tasks like construction, cleaning, cooking, pottery. How do we relate these two, the miraculous and life? Through action. Without action, there is no miraculous and no life.

...we know that our action is meant to reach an aim, and we expect a result from it. We always think of the aim, of the result, but never of the action itself. Nevertheless, the aim does not determine the action. It is the quality of the force entering an action that conditions it, that makes it automatic or creative. The miraculous is the entry into an action of a conscious force that knows why and how the action is performed. ... And it is this force that sees what has to be done and directs my thought and body. It creates an act and an object, which contains a dynamism and intelligence that are irresistible. ...

In order to act in this way, I need to be free, without any image or idea, without thought trapped in memory. Freedom is not freedom from something, but freedom to be in the present, in a moment that never existed before. Action is immediate, without the intervention of thought.

I never know; I learn. It is always new. In order to learn, I must have freedom to look. The thinking is silent, entirely silent, free. It sees. In this state, we can understand and carry out an action with all the parts ourselves. We can even act together with others, provided that, in this moment, all have the same seriousness and intensity.

An action depends on the way my energy is engaged at the very moment I act. I have to be conscious of this at the moment of action and feel the movement of the energy going toward its goal. Once the movement has begun, it is too late to intervene. What has been launched no longer belongs to me. Nothing can stop it from giving the results that will follow—whether good or bad, strong or weak, pure or distorted. Everything is thus determined by the disposition of my different centers at the moment of the action. Each act requires a certain freedom of my body, a one-pointedness of my thought, and an interest, a warmth for what is being done. This will bring me a new way of living. 

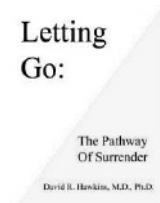
Jeanne de Salzmann, *The Reality of Being – The Fourth Way of Gurdjieff*, pages 272-274. For more information and experience with these teachings, you are invited to attend the *Work of Inner Christianity* classes held every Thursday at 7:30 p.m. at The Church of Conscious Harmony.

CCH Bookstore

August Community Reading

Letting Go

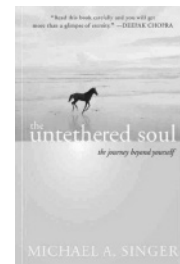
by David Hawkins



Letting Go describes a simple and effective means by which to let go of the obstacles to Enlightenment and become free of negativity. Having sought the most effective ways to relieve human suffering in all of its forms, the author found the inner mechanism of surrender to be of greatest practical benefit.

The Untethered Soul

by Michael A. Singer



A lucid, engaging and non-religious introduction to the hidden truths that have allowed people to wake up from the hypnosis of life to a new generation of interested seekers of personal transformation.


Bookstore and Library Hours
Monday-Friday 8:30 am-3:30 pm
Sunday 9-9:50 am & 11:30 am-12:30 pm

Lawful Affections

Peace is, as it were, the atmosphere of the soul seeking God, which needs to feel peace if it is to follow the hard road that leads to Him. But this peace comes, not because the soul feels brave and strong, but because it is leaning on Him Who is *Deus fortis...God the Mighty*, the God of Love. The soul, having the conviction of this support, fears nothing, and cannot fear. Or, if it does, its fears are no more than passing impressions, which it throws off quickly, placing them in the heart of that infinite Charity, which transmutes fear into confidence and love.

It is in this all-embracing plan of Divine Love that our affections become lawful and a source of sanctification. One might almost say that they are necessary. The Heart of Jesus was anything but unfeeling. We know how deeply He loved His Mother and St John, and the family at Bethany... But His affections were controlled and directed, and when, one after the other, He had to leave all these to whom He had given His love so unreservedly, He pronounced His *Fiat*, and this in itself was a still further expression of His love and of the gift of Himself.

God means us to have family affections. Not only are they good, but they create ties which ennoble our being by linking us up with those who have gone before us, and with those who are to come after. We are not isolated beings; we form an immense family in Eternal Love, in Whom we must all be united. Individual families are the links in this immense family, and we should all be welded together in divine Charity.

These family affections are a grace, and a safeguard for us in this life, as well as proof of the integrity of a soul which has known how to keep its innocence. They serve, moreover, to raise us up to Him Who wants us to call Him *Our Father*. We should accustom ourselves to pass almost naturally from one to the other; or, better still, to see one in the other. Our earthly father is the living and visible image of our heavenly Father, Whose love we see reflected in him. The life of faith thus enables us to supernaturalize all these realities innate in us. It is the Holy Spirit communicating His own light to us, so that we may see what He sees. He joins Himself to our spirit so that we can penetrate that higher world, from which we came and to which we must return. 

A Carthusian, *They Speak by Silences*, pages 99-100.

July Calendar

Visit consciousharmony.org
for a complete listing of events

Special Events

Simple Explanation of Work Ideas
July 11 7:30pm
for six consecutive Thursday evenings

Intro to Centering Prayer
July 13 8:30am - 3:15pm
for 6 consecutive Monday evenings 7:30pm
Cost: \$75 Pre register with the office.

One Day Centering Prayer Retreat
July 27, 8:30am-4:30pm
Cost \$15 no pre registration required
Bring a potluck dish to share.

Monthly

Tuesday Enrichment 7:30pm
July 16 Gurdjieff Music

Community Workday
July 20 9am-noon

Weekly

Centering Prayer Support Group
1st & 3rd Mondays 7pm
2nd & 4th Tuesdays 7:30pm
Praxis Center

Prayer Circle
Wednesdays 9:15am

Contemplative Lunch
Wednesdays noon

Mid-Week Communion Service
Wednesdays 6-7pm

Yoga
Thursdays 6-7:15pm
Cost \$14 each session

Work of Inner Christianity class
Thursdays 7:30pm

Daily

Weekday Centering Prayer Service
M-F 7-7:35 am in Theosis Chapel

Recordings of services are available
through the Bookstore and online at
www.consciousharmony.org



The Church of Conscious Harmony
A Contemplative Christian Community
7406 Newhall Lane Austin, Texas 78746

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When I look at the heavens,
the work of Your hands,
at the moon and stars You set in place –
What is man that You should be mindful of him?
Woman that You should care for her?
Yet You made them little less than gods,
You crowned them with glory and honor,
gave them dominion
over the work of Your hands,
set all things under their feet.

cf. Psalm 8:4-7

Icons of God

Creation is not a one-time event.
It's always happening, and in a sense,
being in God is always becoming.
Becoming what?
Everything,
because He's constantly producing everything.
Human consciousness is really God
experiencing human consciousness
and that means that we're
a kind of icon of God
... and this is why humans are so important
and so dignified,
because God dwells in them.

Thomas Keating, *Interview with Rick Archer, January 19, 2013*

