

THE PULSE OF SPIRIT



EMISSARIES
OF DIVINE LIGHT

PRAYER AND RECIPROCITY

27 APRIL 2009

It is so good to be together on this occasion, one hundred years from Martin Exeter's birth, which was on April 27, 2009. Martin led this Emissary program from 1954 to his passing in 1988. He was a profound influence in the lives of many people. Whether it's your first time in this Dome for a service or whether you've been coming here since it was built in the mid-seventies, it is very good to have this opportunity to celebrate the spirit and stature and vision of this man.

I brought with me an early book of Martin's—*Meditations on the Lord's Prayer*. It is interesting that he wrote this relatively early on in his cycle of leadership. Much later in his life, he worked with that prayer in a different way and transformed it to the first person. That's a remarkable thing for someone to do—I would say an audacious thing to do. But he had a reason for doing it. There was a profound spiritual understanding that is conveyed by the words in the first person. I doubt that for most people who knew Martin that they think of him particularly as a philosopher; not even a religious philosopher. It would also be hard to characterize him as a great thinker. He was a great thinker, actually. But that is not a particularly accurate description of his life. His understanding came from a different place, a more profound place than a philosophical musing about what's true and what's not true. It was, as I understood it, an understanding that was born out of his living, which included his leadership of this program. And his understanding was born not only out of his own living but from the life of the people who served with him. It was understanding born out of experience. I'd like to read the Lord's Prayer as it appears in the King James Version of the Bible:

“Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy name.

“Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.

“Give us this day our daily bread.

“And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

“And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.”

Here are beautiful words. They are words of truth that speak of God in terms of something higher than we are, in terms of someone with whom we have a relationship. It might be said that this prayer speaks of God in terms of a duality—God on one hand, and us on the other. It does take two to have a relationship. So in his *Meditations on the Lord’s Prayer*, which I would highly recommend, Martin works with that relationship.

Over the years, Martin came to something else that he shared, which was his rendition of the Lord’s Prayer in the first person. I described it as audacious, and it is in worldly terms, but I would suggest to you that the prayer that he offered isn’t best understood in worldly terms. It’s best understood by meeting it on its own terms and discovering for oneself the profound meaning that is conveyed by the words. So I will read what he called in his book *Thus It Is* “The Lord’s Prayer.” It’s interesting that in other places he called it “The Prayer of Being.”

I am in heaven.

The revelation of myself is holy.

My kingdom comes because I am here.

My will is done in earth because my will is done in heaven.

I give the bread of life in each moment of my living on earth.

I forgive, and that forgiveness is received by those who share the spirit of forgiveness.

I lead no one into tribulation, but deliver all evil into the creative cycle.

For mine is the kingdom present on earth because I am present on earth.

Mine is the creative power of the Word.

And mine is the glory which results, shining round about, to be reflected by the world which I create.

For me it’s hard to imagine more profound words being spoken than these. They are a portrayal of the fulfillment of the original prayer that Jesus offered. It’s as if Spirit said through the lips of Jesus, “Keep saying this prayer (the original Lord’s Prayer) until you can say this one (“The Prayer of Being”), until you can speak from the place of oneness with the divine and let that have meaning in your experience; until you can let that be real for you. If your experience is one of separation from what is true, what is real, what is holy, speak words of relationship to that reality, and words of surrender to that which seems to you to be separate. And in speaking those words, open yourself to what seems to be separate to you, until the day when you can say words that will be My words, the words of Spirit, and you believe that those words are, indeed, your words.”

I suspect that if Jesus had presented his prayer in the first person, it would have had very little meaning to the people of his day. I note that when he did speak in the first person, for instance by saying, “I am the way, the truth, and the life,” people were happy to, in essence,

say back to him, “Yes, you are the way, the truth, and the life,” instead of taking the same personal responsibility that Jesus did. “I am the way, the truth, and the life.” I think that might also have been true of Martin when he originally wrote this book, that if he had spoken the prayer in the first person it might not have had a lot of meaning to people. Why did it become possible for him to present it in the first person later and let that have meaning for people? I do not believe it was because he woke up one morning and had a bright idea about it. It was because of living. It was because words that bring true illumination aren’t spoken out of good ideas; they’re spoken out of the substance of living. The understanding that we come to have in our life is hard earned—or pleurably earned. But it is earned through living, and not just any kind of living.

It is prayerful living that brings understanding. It might seem like pretty poetry to say that our living could be a prayer. But if the word *prayer* has any meaning, wouldn’t it have to relate to our living? Maybe brought to focus in words of prayer at specific times, but those words of prayer have meaning because there is a life of prayer, or because a person’s life is a prayer, a deep longing—the deepest of desires. There is no deeper desire than to let the kingdom come—not some religious kingdom but to let the truth and beauty, the reality of what is sacred, the reality of wholeness be present—not only someplace else, not only up there someplace, not only tomorrow or years from now. The deepest prayer is that it should be right here, right now. When a person realizes that their deepest prayer relates to what could happen right now, there can be the opening in consciousness that lets that prayer be fulfilled.

Several weeks ago I spoke about reciprocity here in the Dome. I was speaking about how we reciprocate with other people—how we respond to what we receive from others. We could also think about how we reciprocate with invisible God—how we give back, for one thing. I suppose there are a lot of ways to describe what reciprocity looks like. In a relationship with another person, it begins with acknowledgment of the gift that’s been given, and an honoring of that gift. That honoring turns to appreciation and love. Where those qualities are present and they are allowed to go deep because there is a true gift being received, it compels something else.

As I was describing it a few weeks ago, it’s not enough, eventually, just to say thank you for the gift that another person has given to us. Where the gift is profound and true, and it goes deep, the gift that we receive from another compels us to give in kind. So I think of the gift of Martin’s life, and I honor whatever that’s been for any of you, knowing that each one who knew him would describe it differently. But I will say, for me, that that gift compels me to return in kind what I received. And to me, yes, there’s acknowledgment and appreciation, but as those words are usually understood, it’s not enough. Giving in kind requires of me that I serve what he served, that I serve those qualities of Spirit, that reality of being that he served—that to the greatest of my ability I bring that reality which he brought, knowing that, like anyone, I have no way to do it but through who I am. And if his gift was to be so completely and totally himself that he brought the qualities of Spirit into the world, then

giving back in kind would be to have the courage, the willingness, to be who I am. And ultimately that is not a separate reality. There is one reality of being that we find that we are bringing as we are totally ourselves. We are not separate from others.

So I'd like to close by reading some words of Martin, from his book *Thus It Is*. This is from Chapter Fifteen: "One God, One Identity: I Am."

A statement apparently was recorded in the Old Testament: 'I am the Lord thy God. . . . Thou shalt have no other gods before me.' Here is an indication of the fact that there is, in truth, only one identity. Clearly this identity has become very scattered insofar as human experience is concerned. Each individual is inclined to think that he or she is unique; and it seems as though there are nowadays five billion separate human identities. All of these human beings are quite capable of uttering the words 'I am,' in English or whatever it is in their own language. There is one God. There is one identity—capable of being differentiated, but one identity. Over the years I have sought to speak and to live from the standpoint of the fact that there is just this one identity. There are those who have endeavored to agree with me; there have been those who have disagreed with me.

But insofar as I was concerned it made no difference. I have somewhat soft-pedalled the point of one identity, partly because of the extent of my own experience but also so as to allow whatever was working out in others to do so, to the point where all might be accepted into the experience of the fact of this one identity, of this one God. All kinds of good Christians are inclined to say they believe that there is one God, and in other religious persuasions there is the idea that there is just one God; but virtually no one has seen the implications of this truth, that there is in fact only one identity.

I am the Lord thy God. I am incarnate in the earth. We'll narrow it down a bit here, perhaps making it a little more obviously acceptable: I am incarnate in the earth. I am incarnate in all the myriad animate forms of the earth. I am incarnate in the human form. If I articulate these things, to what extent as individuals do we know that they are true? It has been the common human attitude to assume that we are all separate: 'I am me. You may be you, but I am me,' and I suppose never the twain shall meet. At least this has been the general experience. Human beings desperately try to get together, to agree—although no one would ever suspect this by looking at the state of affairs on earth—but have found it to be impossible.

I am incarnate—and we all may share this awareness, seeing that there is but one God and one identity—I am incarnate in the earth, in all the animate forms of the earth, and in my human form. My human form was created so that I might be consciously incarnate.

What a gift—the transformation of human experience, and the transmutation of human experience. Not in theory—or at least not in theory alone—but in substance and experience, so that what was opaque turns clear. How is it said: "A sea of glass mingled with fire. . . ." (Rev. 15:2)

So good to have this time of acknowledgment and celebration! We have a teleconference next week and expect to do more on this teleconference to celebrate this great spirit and also to celebrate what we have to do now, in our lives, in the light of that spirit.

So may this be, for any that care to let it be so, a week of meditation on the spirit of this man and what he brought into this world. For those of you who are not very familiar with what Martin brought, his writings are prolific and available at Sunrise Ranch, so they are not hard to find.

When we recognize that the spirit Martin brought is the one ever-present Spirit, then the celebration of that Spirit now is something current and alive, not something maudlin or even morbid, but something that's alive and present with us now. It is life-giving. It is that One Spirit that incarnates through everything.

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