

# THE PULSE OF SPIRIT



EMISSARIES  
OF DIVINE LIGHT

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## THE GIFT OF FAMILY

6 SEPTEMBER 2010

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We are all here, gathered in this chapel and connected by family, by friendship, by association of some kind—we are in relationship. We came together yesterday—family, friends and associates—to celebrate a particularly significant moment (their marriage) in the lives of Victor Barrera and Helena Karchere, and at the same time we had the opportunity to mark that union as we witnessed and supported what was happening for those two. We've journeyed, many of us, to be in this room together today—different families, different cultures, from different parts of the world. My husband Phil and I journeyed here from South Africa via England and San Francisco, and we were traveling with our families—some of the time with mine and some of it with Phil's. It led me to thinking about family connections and family patterns. There are also cultural and national patterns. The Emissary organization has a cultural pattern; we have a language, a way we do things.

What happens when those patterns bump up against each other? I know that being with my sister immediately brings up our childhood associations. I'm sure that in the process of families coming together for this wedding, there were remembrances and patterns of perhaps discomfort that also came up. I've had cause to think about that when I was visiting Phil's family, with which I haven't had a lifelong association, and coming into different routines, other people's children, and all those factors. What a wonderful opportunity I had to take a look at what makes me uncomfortable, and why.

I don't want to dwell on the discomforts of these associations. I want to highlight the fact that we do get the opportunity to reflect and think about the way we do things—maybe it's the way we've done things for years; maybe it's even the way we've done things for generations. I sometimes feel that my mother's persona is in me. I find myself walking like her, and I

think, hang on a minute—this is somebody else! We do take things on unconsciously, and it takes something to be alert to them. We have the chance to think about how we could do it differently. Is there something new and fresh that wants to take form, that wants to be changed? It's really useful to ask these questions. Should something change?

There seem to be two possibilities in these family relationships. There's the opportunity to say, "That's the way I've always been with \_\_\_\_\_," or "That's what always happens when we're together." Or there's the other side of it—to say, "Remember when... Remember when there was simplicity and there was passion, and there was just the fun of being together, of playing together." We get very tied up with our adult responsibilities and the structures that we have to use to have a life, to earn money, to work. But there was simplicity, there was innocence, in youth. I long for that space of communion. And often family is the hardest place to find it! But family is also the place where the rubber hits the road, the place you go, "Okay, I didn't choose these people"—you don't choose your family, right?—"I didn't choose them, but look what I've been given. Thank you for this opportunity. Thank you for this chance to look at things anew."

I was grateful for the family patterns that bumped up against me during my travels, so that I could see what it was that was preventing me from finding this communion. What gets in the way? What stops us fulfilling the potential of the present moment, where bringing in the baggage of the past gets in the way, where doing things the way my mother did, the way my boss does, suggests I have to do things the same way.

I think the opportunity is to stop and take stock. It's difficult in the movement of life to stop for an instant and say, "Is this true? Is this real? Is this what I'm passionate about now? Is it what's important for me now?"

I sometimes come forward with a way of doing things that's really no longer important. What is important, as in the opportunity we had yesterday, is to come together for a larger purpose, to witness a piece of destiny. Not just destiny for Victor and Helena's partnership, but destiny that brought us into the room yesterday or into the room today. Why did you come? There may be many answers to that question. For instance, "She's my best friend," "I really want to support and celebrate the relationship," maybe "I want to have a party"—many external reasons. But do you ever ask, "Why am I in this place at this time? Why am I in this family? Why am I in partnership with this man or this woman?" Because there is potential for something larger to occur if we're open to it, because we free ourselves from habitual patterns that can come up so readily, so quickly.

So I know the significance of the celebration we marked yesterday was a way of touching into the future. It was setting an intention of support, of love, of surround for two people. I found myself thinking about my commitments to Phil, thinking about commitments to my family, large and small, and my vision for what we can do together in the future. All of this is potentially present the moment we ask those questions.

I love the opportunity to share some of my thinking, to express something that is much larger than all the little details we find ourselves so often involved in. I think of us as part of this wonderful planet, with an opportunity to contribute to it, to provide an expansion, radiance, so that it sparkles more. I've been told that astronauts see a blue and green jewel sparkling in inky black space. What makes the sparkle? That's us. That's us, realizing the potential that we can in each moment.

*Ruth Buckingham (Sunrise Ranch)  
rbuckingham@emnet.org  
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100 Sunrise Ranch Road ♦ Loveland, CO 80538  
970.679.4200 phone 970.679.4248 fax