

## FROM NEW THOUGHT TO NEW ACTION

Compiled by Jane Simmons

*"If you think you're too small to have an impact, try going to bed with a mosquito in the room."* Anita Koddick

In every major religion in the world, there are similar underlying principles. One similarity is that each has a variation of the Golden Rule:

**BUDDHISM:** *Hurt not others in ways that you yourself would find hurtful.* Udana-Varga 5:1

**CHRISTIANITY:** *Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them.* Matt. 7:12 (KJV)

**HINDUISM:** *This is the sum of duty: do not do to others what would cause pain if done to you.* Mahabharata 5:1517

**ISLAM:** *Not one of you truly believes until you wish for others what you wish for yourself.* 13 of the 40 Hadiths of Nawawi

**JUDAISM:** *What is hateful to you, do not to your neighbor. This is the whole Torah, all the rest is commentary.* Talmud, Shabbat 31a

The Golden Rule does *not* say, He who has the gold, rules. Instead, the message is one of love and compassion for our fellow human beings. Whether it is called karma yoga, dharma, loving kindness or social justice, clearly, the message from all of these faith traditions is to treat members of our human family with kindness and respect, as we ourselves would want to be treated.

In New Thought, we could surmise that our version of the Golden Rule might go something like this: "Whatever you put out into the universe returns to you, multiplied." This teaching has its roots in our foundational belief in the oneness of all life. What we

do to another, we do to ourselves. We are all expressions of God in action. Jesus' moving words from the book of Matt. 25: 40 (KJV), speak of this truth; "*Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.*" When we bless another, we are, in that moment, being the Way of God, rather than being *in* the way.

Jesus modeled the lifestyle of one who was awakened. While taking the time to be in prayer, He also fed the multitudes, healed the sick and raised the dead. Whether these were actual events or metaphor, the message remains that "*faith without works is dead*". (James 2:20) As Unity's co-founder, Charles Fillmore spoke, "*I fairly sizzle with zeal and enthusiasm as I spring forth with a mighty faith to do the things that ought to be done by me.*"<sup>1</sup>

Jesus' story of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:33) well illustrates the importance of helping our fellow human in their condition and treating one another with compassion and kindness. Fillmore writes, "*Jesus gave His very life in service to the world, and He left us an example that we should follow. We should be eager to become unselfishly humble and willing to minister to others for their eternal good as He was.*"<sup>2</sup>. When we bless others through our actions, we are in alignment with the Truth of who we are, spiritual beings in a physical universe. Service to God and service to our fellow human being is the highest form of love in action. What does Spiritual Social Action look like for the New Thought movement?

#### WHAT DO OUR TEACHINGS TELL US?

Certainly, the power of prayer is the important foundation upon which all of our teachings are based. And just as certainly, teaching the principles of how to change your

life is the key to transformation. We want to “teach someone to fish” and support their empowerment. However, as Gandhi so eloquently put it, “*You must be the change you want to see in the world.*”<sup>3</sup> Our fifth Unity principle is action; if we do not put these principles into practice, we will not see transformation. As New Thought teacher, Ernest Holmes points out, “*A passive meditation will never produce an active demonstration, any more than an artist can paint a picture by setting down with his paints but never using them.*”<sup>4</sup> The question is – do we use prayer as a bypass for taking action?

Our New Thought teachers spoke of the power of giving, service, love and action:

*“If we would live the life of real success, real joy, real Christlikeness, we must keep the current turned to flow from within outward instead of in the opposite direction. God says, “If you offer your food to the hungry and satisfy the needs of the afflicted, then your light shall rise in the darkness and your gloom be like noonday. The Lord will guide you continually and satisfy your needs in parched places, and make your bones strong; and you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water, whose waters never fail” (Is. 58:10-11). H. Emilie Cady*<sup>5</sup>

*“.... service is one of the steps that lead up to the place where all the fullness of God awaits men.....Unless you use for the service of others what God has already given to you, you will find it a long, weary road to spiritual understanding.” H. Emilie Cady*<sup>6</sup>

*“It is (Creative Energy’s) nature to spring into being through our thought and action.” Ernest Holmes*<sup>7</sup>

*“...man should commit the justice that he wishes to see brought into human affairs.” Charles Fillmore*<sup>8</sup>

*“Spiritual thinking is the pioneer that opens the way into the new birth, but it must be followed by spiritual acting on the part of every faculty.” Charles Fillmore*<sup>9</sup>

*“As you help others spiritually and in every way you not only fulfill the law of giving and receiving, you develop your own resources and capabilities in fuller measure.” Myrtle Fillmore*<sup>10</sup>

*“It is quite a burden lifted when we realize that we do not have to move the world – it is going to move anyway. This realization does not lessen our duty or our social obligation. It clarifies it. It enables us to do joyously, and free from morbidity, that which we should do in the social state.” Ernest Holmes*<sup>11</sup>

*“Here is the great lesson for us. We should give ourselves first. Walt Whitman said: “... When I give, I give myself.” Here is a great lesson for all of us, that we must put the spirit of giving into our gift. If we don’t do that, it falls short of the real thing.”* Charles Fillmore, *The World Redeemed*, March 24, 1929.<sup>12</sup>

*“The way to give is to give yourself first. Consecrate yourself to God’s work, to God’s ministry. You will feel a new inspiration in your giving.”* Charles Fillmore, *The World Redeemed*, March 24, 1929.<sup>13</sup>

In a sermon delivered on Sunday, October 21, 1928, on the topic of giving, Fillmore invites the congregation to donate to an annual charity drive. All of the Kansas City area churches were participating in a drive for 46 different charitable institutions of the city. He says, *“We, here at Unity, are of course a charity institution ... and yet we contribute to this great need and have never asked ourselves from the city any help of any kind. We are helping people on every side. We have here a large corps of workers in our local society who are giving out the greatest medicine that man ever had – the Lord of God. They are giving their time, night and day, to the service of the sick and asking nothing in return.”* Charles Fillmore, *Giving*, October 21, 1928.<sup>14</sup>

*“If you give yourselves, you consecrate yourselves to the Lord’s work, you will find that the Lord will enter into all of your business affairs and it will be an easy way to live, to give yourself to the work of God.”* Charles Fillmore, *Giving*, October 21, 1928.<sup>15</sup>

*“So many people pray and pray and pray. They don’t get action. Our bodies need to be acted upon. It is not altogether praying, but it is doing. You must do something.”* Charles Fillmore, *Giving*, October 21, 1928.<sup>16</sup>

*“If your mind is set upon giving, look to the Father and say to the Father, ‘I give of your Substance, I give of your inexhaustible bounty,’ and you have opened a large way, regardless of what the appearance may be... give in that large way and you will rejoice and your gift will result in bounty to everybody.”* Charles Fillmore, *Giving*, October 21, 1928.<sup>17</sup>

#### NEW THOUGHT’S HISTORICAL ROLE IN SOCIAL ACTION

The following quotes are found in the book, *Each Mind a Kingdom: American Women, Sexual Purity and the New Thought Movement 1875-1920*, by Beryl Satter:

*“Cramer, Brooks, Rix Militz, and the Fillmores were simply the most dedicated of Hopkin’s numerous students who spent the last two decades of the nineteenth century criss-crossing the nation on missionary journeys, lecturing and healing the sick, establishing churches, schools, and seminaries, and producing journals, pamphlets, tracts and novels elaborating what become known by the 1890’s as “the New Thought” perspective.”*<sup>18</sup>

“(Emma Curtis) Hopkins took concrete steps to align herself with the broader woman movement. *The Hopkins Metaphysical Association* sent representatives to the Woman’s Alliance, a Chicago based coalition of reform-oriented women’s groups.”<sup>19</sup>

“(Annie Rix Miltz’s) first step was to join Mrs. Sadie Gorie, another member of Hopkin’s San Francisco class in establishing a “metaphysical bureau” (a combination metaphysical bookstore and healing and teaching center). The bureau expanded quickly. It soon included a kindergarten, a school, a “Christian Science Bazaar” (labor exchange) and a “charitable branch” that distributed goods to the poor.”<sup>20</sup>

“Horatio Dresser edited a magazine, *The Journal of Practical Metaphysics*, that attempted to strengthen the ties between New Thought and reform.”<sup>21</sup>

In the 1923 edition of Unity magazine, Unity School of Christianity announced the printing of peace seals to be used in a peace campaign. They wrote, “*As a preliminary outer movement toward furthering the peace thought in the world, we are printing peace seals to be used on backs of envelopes, letterheads, packages, etc.*”<sup>22</sup>

Unity School of Christianity, in a publication entitled “A Call to Prayer”, invited people to join in a universal prayer for “*permanent peace, uniting all the nations of the earth in a league of justice and righteousness, in which the life, liberty, and love of God shall be paramount.*”<sup>23</sup>

In the words of Rev. Gary Simmons, Director of Peacemaking Services for the Association of Unity Churches, “*Just as our forerunners saw the necessity to create, out of our metaphysical heritage, a “new thought” to embody the spirit of the indwelling Christ, it is up to us to bring forth a new legacy, perhaps called “the new action”, out of which springs forth the living Christ. Is this not how we create a world that works for everyone?*” Let our closing words be from Unity’s gracious co-founder, Myrtle Fillmore, who wrote in a letter in 1930, “*A rich consciousness and loving service go hand in hand and are the foundation stones of plenty.*”<sup>24</sup> Let our foundation in New Thought be the power of prayer-centered love in action.

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<sup>1</sup> Fillmore, Charles. *Atom-Smashing Power of Mind*. Lee’s Summit, MO: Unity School of Christianity, 1951. Pg 26

<sup>2</sup> Fillmore, Charles. *Mysteries of John*. Unity Village, MO: Unity School of Christianity, 1985. Pg 125

<sup>3</sup> Classic Quotes, #27184

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- <sup>4</sup> Holmes, Ernest. *The Science of Mind*. New York, NY: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1938. Pg 57
- <sup>5</sup> Cady, H. Emilie. *God a Present Help*. Lee's Summit, MO: Unity Books, 1938. Pg 273
- <sup>6</sup> Cady, H. Emilie. *Lessons in Truth*. Unity Village, MO: Unity Books, 1894. Pg 86
- <sup>7</sup> Holmes, Ernest. *The Science of Mind*. New York, NY: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1938. Pg 47
- <sup>8</sup> Fillmore, Charles. *Christian Healing*. Unity Village, MO: Unity School of Christianity, Pg 126
- <sup>9</sup> Fillmore, Charles. *Talks on Truth*. Unity Village, MO: Unity School of Christianity, Pg 86
- <sup>10</sup> Fillmore, Myrtle. *Myrtle Fillmore's Healing Letters*. Unity Village, MO: Unity Books, 1986. Pg 134
- <sup>11</sup> Holmes, Ernest. *The Science of Mind*. New York, NY: Dodd, Mead and Company 1938. Pg 270
- <sup>12</sup> Fillmore, Charles. *The World Redeemed*, March 24, 1929. (Unity Archives)
- <sup>13</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>14</sup> Fillmore, Charles. *Giving*, October 21, 1928. (Unity Archives)
- <sup>15</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>16</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>17</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>18</sup> Satter, Beryl. *Each Mind a Kingdom: American Women, Sexual Purity and the New Thought Movement 1875-1920*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999. Pg. 81
- <sup>19</sup> Ibid Pg. 84
- <sup>20</sup> Ibid Pg. 104
- <sup>21</sup> Ibid Pg. 198
- <sup>22</sup> Unity Archives
- <sup>23</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>24</sup> Unity Archives.