

Who's Who in the FOCUS

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www.plcoakhurst.com

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The PLC FOCUS

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MESSAGE FROM ANGIE

Life Preserving Abundance
By Rev. Dr. Angelo Pizelo

We are entering into one of the most empowering months of the year, the magnificent month of April, the month of renewal and transformation. As we become inspired by the rebirth occurring all around us in nature, we are reminded that each of us also has the innate ability to birth our deepest desires.

What was so glorious this first spring day was the tremendous abundance that the Universe provided in the form of four to six inches of snow. This substance of life is desperately needed, without water we could not continue to live and prosper. Having fifteen to twenty feet of snow in the higher elevations of the Sierra guarantees



life preserving abundance the rest of the year.

All of us have an opportunity to learn from Nature; we can call forth life preserving abundance anytime we desire. Just as snow was called forth the first day of

spring when one would normally see sunshine and clear skies, we only need to place our attention on our deepest felt desires and, by so doing, we are placing our request into the energy field of intention.

Manifestation follows intention and brings forth life preserving abundance that transforms our lives.

During this month of transformation and renewal, we have the opportunity to review what is working in our lives and what we no longer need to hold on to. We have the opportunity to birth life preserving abundance any time we desire.

And So It Is....

ANGEL OF THE MONTH by Mary Elliott

Each month The Focus features someone who works for the good of PLC without being in the spotlight. They are our *Angel of the Month*.



If you tied her hands down, I suspect this month's Angel of the Month, would be mute. **Sheyla Cook** uses gestures like a mime, her hands gracefully pointing, swirling, flowing through the air as she speaks, emphasizing or embellishing words and ideas. And what words they are. Sheyla has been a student of



New Thought for many years, and absorbs new ideas quickly, and just as quickly puts them to use. She definitely walks the talk.

The director of the bookstore, she volunteers hours there as well as doing all the

ordering. She is working with the children at the Boys and Girls Club, teaching them self-esteem, conflict resolution, and many other issues by using New Thought principles.

Sitting in a class with Sheyla is a stimulating experience. She does not hesitate to give insightful comments about the material being studied, and often has a personal experience to back up her views. She tends to think outside the box, and is quick to evaluate where another student is stuck and offer a resolution. She is presently an intern minister in seminary. We are blessed to have such an enthusiastic, energetic, evolved creature among us.

Just watch out for the hands.

WHO'S WHO at PLC

SENIOR PASTOR

Rev. Dr. Angelo Pizelo

CO-PASTOR

Rev. Dr. Marie Lane

RITUALS AND SUNDAY SERVICES MINISTRY

Rev. Sandy West

CHILDREN'S CHURCH MINISTRY

Kanya Ellington

YOUTH CHURCH MINISTRY

Drs. Tom & Mary Brownell

COMMUNICATIONS/MEDIA & WEBSITE MINISTRY

Rev. Dr. Joyce Sterling

EDUCATION MINISTRY

Rev JoAnn Burgess

Rev. Dr. Maggi Butterfield-Brown

PASTORAL COUNSELING MINISTRY

Rev. Dr. Pizelo

Rev. Rozella Dudley

BOOKSTORE & LIBRARY

DIRECTOR

Sheyla Cook

MUSIC DIRECTOR

& SERVICES SCHEDULER

Rev. Jeff Hartwig

NEW CHURCH & FUND

RAISING MINISTRY

Rev. Dr. Marie Lane

DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS

Mark Henning

THE FOCUS

The PLC Newsletter

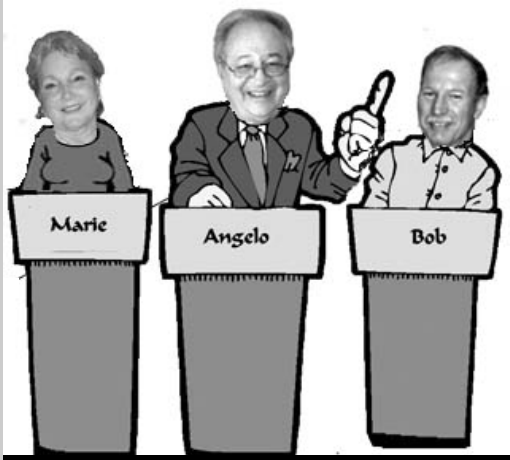
You are invited to participate in this on-going dialogue with others of like mind by sharing personal stories, poems, inspirational pieces, humor, etc. The **PLC FOCUS** is published **monthly**. Please have your submissions in the office by the **15th of the month**. If you prefer, you may e-mail your article to either:

Janna Lewis:

jannalewis@sti.net or

Mary Elliot:

leclair@hotmail.com.



WHO & WHEN APRIL 10:00 A.M. SERVICE

April 2

Speaker: Rev. Angelo Pizelo

Music: Laurie Ballard
and Ray Balck

April 9

Speaker: Rev. Marie Lane

Music: Joe Nelson

April 16

Speaker: Rev. Angelo Pizelo

Music: Easter Concert

April 23

Speaker: Rev. Marie Lane

Music: Debra Martsof
and Jeff Hartwig

April 30

Speaker: Rev. Vern Martin
(Guest from Parker, Colorado)

Music: Guest Musicians

To receive I-Focus
e-newsletters of timely
events and information,
e-mail: plcstaff@sti.net

THE MAIN CONCEPTS OF NEW THOUGHT

Formulated by
The Seminary of the Sierra
Graduating class of 2007

1. God is everything; everything is part of God.
2. Ideas are realities and all primary causes are internal forces.
3. When we change our thinking, we change our lives.
4. Mind is primary and causative, while matter is secondary and resultant.
5. The remedy for all defect and disorder is metaphysical, beyond the physical, in the realm of causes which are mental and spiritual – we do not deny sickness or pain – but we hold that they are not realities – but rather lack of ease, harmony and health.
6. Sin and moral evil are ignorance of Infinite Love; a separation from the Divine.
7. New Thought is profoundly spiritual in consciousness.
8. New Thought is the present and progressive revelation of Truth.
9. New Thought has no formal creed.
10. New Thought is a philosophy of life.

MIND SHOP FEATURED BOOKS

Soul Stories

By Gary Zukav

Writing with profound psychological and spiritual insight, prize-winning author Gary Zukav has had a major impact on the consciousness of millions. In his New York Times number-one bestseller, *The Seat Of The Soul*, he explained how the expansion of human perception beyond the five senses



leads to a new understanding or power – the alignment of the personality with the soul – which in turn leads to an awareness of our extraordinary creative abilities. **Now**, in one of the most important and useful books you will ever read, *Soul Stories*, Zukav shows how this new understanding of power – authentic power – transforms lives in countless ways.

Soul Stories is filled with marvelous stories that show how concepts

such as intuition, harmony, cooperation, sharing, and reverence for life actually express themselves in people's lives. Best of all, the stories lead to practical advice on how you can discover your own Soul Stories and the truths they reveal about the deepest sources of your being. Wonderfully readable, *Soul Stories* is a wise and inspirational book. This book is bargain priced at only \$14.00, less 10% for PLCers, plus tax.

After the Ecstasy, the Laundry By Jack Kornfield

Most spiritual accounts end with illumination or enlightenment. But what if we ask what happens after that? What happens when the Zen master returns home to the spouse and children? What happens when the Christian mystic goes shopping? What is life like after the

ecstasy?

After the Ecstasy, the Laundry is one of the most authentic and convincing accounts ever written of the lifelong path of inner transformation. Written by a Buddhist teacher and meditation master of international renown, this moving and fascinating book also draws on the firsthand experiences of dedicated leaders and practitioners within the Christian, Jewish, Hindu, and Sufi traditions.

The result is a uniquely intimate and honest understanding of how the modern spiritual journey unfolds – and of how we can prepare our own hearts for awakening. This book is worth every penny of its \$24.95 price.

And remember, PLC members get a 10% discount.

MIND SHOP NEWS

We want to remind you to take advantage of our extensive Lending Library. The books are on the shelves in category order, and are yours to use as often as you have a desire.

All that is required to take advantage of this vast Library of information is to sign out the books you've chosen, and sign them back in upon your return.

There is a white notebook on the top of the bookshelf just inside the main Lending Library area. This is the sign out/in book. Also, located on top of this bookshelf is the "Return Book" crate. A Bookstore staff member will replace the books to the area where they belong.

The Lending Library is a great opportunity for you to read up on all your favorite subjects, without having to purchase the books. **Enjoy!**

Usual Book store hours: (Staffed by Volunteers)

Monday: 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Tuesday: 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Wednesday: 11 a.m. – 3 p.m.

Thursday: 11 a.m. – 3 p.m.

Calling ahead is always a good idea as sometimes volunteers have medical appointments or family emergencies that prohibit them from being at the bookstore. (559) 642-4614.

Focus On Youth

By Alexia Montagnoli
(17 years old on December 8, 2005)

The state of transformation is defined as a marked change in appearance or character, usually for the better. The average person identifies themselves solely as a physical body that interacts with the world, and they tend to unconsciously believe that their views on life are the only correct way. A change of one's belief system is needed at this point.

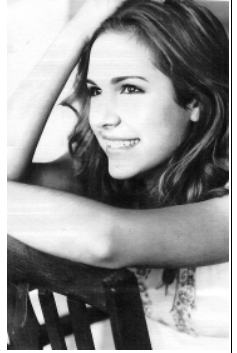
Many individuals (like my mother, Sheyla Cook, as she told it to me), come to realize at a certain stage in their lives that a change must be made within themselves, a transformation of their thoughts, sometimes even their way of life. It's a scary thought for most people, including myself. I find myself denying that I need to change **any** aspects of my life. But I'm not perfect, and no one is. Sometimes it takes a bad experience to make one want to change. Sometimes regrets or even disgust with what we are doing will open our eyes to the consideration of changing. The happiest way of coming to this realization is by seeing a loved one make the transformation with superb results.

Once we are conscious of this essential fact of life, that we must grow and that change is okay, we have a stronger potential to transform ourselves into whatever form of a spiritual human being we desire to be. In the book *Truth – vs – Falsehood*, David Hawkins states that consciousness is an expression and is the quality of life's essence itself.

That means to me that the quality or state of my awareness is reflected in how I express myself, which is my essence. To make the transformation within one's self in a positive direction requires a sudden positive jump by either offering-up (letting go of) one's "old" self, or forgiving life's difficulties (and one's self for the past) and then just jumping into it head on.

Remember that there is no easy form of transformation, nor is it as simple as it might appear. Depending on how we wish to change, sometimes thoughts must be pushed away, actions must be stopped, words must be silenced, and choices must be made. Then, and only then, are new habits formed – that is what *transformation* is all about.

Transformation requires true commitment. Thank goodness any positive thing strongly desired and worked for has a great outcome! In my life experience so far, I believe that to make one's self look within, and truly acknowledge what you are here for, and what changes are needed, is the best approach, not to wait for someone else to tell you, or a bad experience to show you. So let's all jump boldly into this month by ridding our selves of the "bad" and giving ourselves the opportunity to learn more and become/ transform into a better, stronger person.



Our job is not to impress the One who knocks but simply to open the door.
(from *GOD HUNGER* by John Kirvan)



Focus On Sunday School

By Kanya Ellington

Greetings from the Children's Church! We've had a great time this past month. During the month of March we focused on the Power of Thought, specifically, that we are in charge of our own thoughts. We began by learning to identify emotions because emotions are the key to our thoughts. We played a game and told a story to look at the differences between race thought and our own thoughts. We followed this by doing a demonstration and a game to show how we are all part of the one mind (we are expressing God). In the last week of March we wound up our lessons by making some affirmation cards to remind us that we control our thoughts.

In the month of April we will be focusing on the Core Concept - Immortality. We will start out with a lesson that helps us all to understand that we are not our bodies. The next week we will learn the story of Easter. We will also be coloring Easter eggs. On Easter Sunday we will make some lovely butterflies and have an Easter Egg Hunt. In the weeks that follow we will be discussing the role of *death* in the Circle of Life and the role of unconditional love. Stop in and see us anytime!

JANNA & MARY talk about . . . Truth, Renewal & Transformation



Janna: When I read the themes for April: **TRUTHFULNESS, RENEWAL, and TRANSFORMATION**, I had this overwhelming awareness of the interconnectedness of the three. I was going to elaborate on that feeling but before I could, it became muddled in the morass of my thoughts. *I hate it when that happens. Sometimes I think that 'thinking' should be outlawed so*

we could just live by feelings. Oh well, what was I saying? Oh, right! The first thought that muddled the waters was: Is this truthfulness with a small 't' or Truthfulness with a capital 'T'? The second thought was: Does it matter? Perhaps *Truth* – that which we know at our deepest levels to be our spiritual reality, is probably the same as *truthfulness* – that state of being constant and sincere in our everyday dealings with things and facts. Jesus said, "You will know them by their fruits." I think he meant that 'what we sow we reap', or what we are at our deepest level – as well as our everyday level – are the 'fruits' we'll produce for the world to see. What do you think?

Mary: I'll address your second issue first. If I remember my Bible correctly, in this passage Jesus was referring to how to identify false prophets. If they said one thing, but their lives reflected something else, we are not supposed to believe them. Of course we can apply this same criterion to ourselves. Now as to the "T" vs "t" issue, I think you are right in your conclusion about there being no difference. New Thought affirms that we always do what we are. That is the Law. What we are is what we believe or know, and that's where renewal and transformation come in. Life is a process and the more Truth we can grasp, the more our lives will be transformed. This has been true in your life, no?

Janna: It sure has! I think your idea of 'grasping more Truth' as being transformational in our lives is the same thing I think of as the 'Aha's' of life. One interpretation of Renewal to me, metaphysically speaking, is when the ordinary lives we have been living take on a deeper meaning. You know, when something that you have been doing for years (or life-times) all of a sudden takes on a whole new context. That happened to me recently when I was reading an article by Emma Curtis Hopkins, that marvelous 'teacher of teachers'. She wrote that everything we do is for our own *good*. If I stretch out a hand to pick up a cup, it's reaching for my 'good'. If I go to bed early (or late), it is reaching for my own *good*. Whatever we do, or think, or say, is geared toward getting more of our own *good*. It may not seem so at the moment, at least not always to others, but, as New Thought states, it is the Law of Nature – we cannot do anything that is not toward our own *good*. We do what we **believe** is good for us at the moment. After I 'got' that concept, I got another of

Emma's - That not only is God *GOOD*, but **Good is God**, therefore, everything I do (EVERYTHING) is to get more GOD (GOOD) in my life. To me this is a Truth that offers Renewal at its greatest and deepest level. I bet you've had moments of Truth like that, right?



Mary: Too many to remember. A couple years ago after a Tuesday night "Spiritual Discussion" meeting, I was walking toward the door. Angie had just said, "We are spiritual beings having a human experience." Okay, I'm a little slow and over 20 years I'd heard this and even said it maybe a thousand times or so. But that night, when I went through the door I "got it." My perception did a 180. I absolutely cannot remember how I thought before that moment. That's the beauty of Truth, Renewal and Transformation. Truth is what begins the creative process. Renewal is the activity and means to "make new"- in this case cleansing the mind completely of past errors. Transformation is the result. Since Truth is Truth, can't you see this process in the world around us?

Janna: Sometimes, but usually I have to be hit over the head with an 'aha'. I'd like to learn to be aware of it as every moment – because it really is **every moment**. I finally 'got it' in what you just said that these are the steps we go through (consciously or unconsciously) to manifest whatever we want in **every** way – not just the 'ahas'. Truth not only begins the creative process, it **is** the creative process, whether we understand it or not. The **Truth** is that we are thinking beings using a spiritual mind, and our **truth** is what we believe at the moment. The Renewal is that every thought we choose causes something new to come into our lives each moment. Transformation is the response to our chosen thought. Is this the way you see it?

Mary: Exactly. I don't believe transformation is a choice. By contemplating and understanding more Truth, we establish a new Cause in mind. That kicks in the Creative Process in which renewal (a verb) brings the transformation into our lives. That process is absolutely automatic. I have experienced this transformation as an "aha" but also slower. I remember a couple years ago I realized one day it had been ages since I'd experienced fear. It had just gone away as I enriched my mind with the Divine Knowledge that I Am One with God. Like Jesus said, "Know the Truth, and the Truth will set you free."

The truth is, I'll meet you here again next month. Same Time. Same place.

DISCUSSION GROUPS

TUESDAY NIGHT - LIVE! AN ON-GOING SPIRITUAL DISCUSSION



Everybody from the community is welcome to drop in at our Tuesday night Spiritual Discussion sessions. In the spirit of Easter and springtime, the month of April has to do with Truthfulness, Renewal and Transformation. Drop in and share your story about these issues. These meetings are always fun and exciting because everybody gets to throw in their opinions. We welcome folks from all belief systems to add spice to our mental stew. The only criteria for attending is having a pulse. **Stop by on Tuesday nights at 7:00 and check it out.**

Facilitators are Rev. Dr. Angelo Pizelo and staff.

TUESDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDY

Murder, mayhem, backstabbing, and a really dysfunctional God. That was my reading of the Bible before I was introduced to the metaphysical meaning of all those stories. What we are discovering in our Bible class is that all those stories are about growing in consciousness and how to do it. All the characters, places, and drama's have something to do with personal growth. Our group is constantly surprised at what we discover, with lots of laughter and "ah hah's" thrown in for good measure.

For more info call Mary Elliott at 642-6655. Or just drop by Tuesdays at 11:00 a.m.

TUESDAY NIGHT THE COURSE IN MIRACLES

Students world-wide study *The Course in Miracles* to learn about love, forgiveness, non-judgment, change in perception and much more. It teaches that miracles are an everyday event and how to achieve them. The teaching is based on self responsibility, and that thoughts and actions produce reactions in our lives. There are no fees. Group meets Tuesday evenings from 5:30-6:45.

**Facilitator Rev. Rozella Dudley
(559) 683-4212**

THURSDAY NIGHT SPIRITUALITY AND MANIFESTATION IN DAILY LIVING

One of the great things about the New Thought philosophy is that it is practical. Rev. Dr. Sandy West facilitates a support group on Thursday evenings to help us utilize this philosophy to solve problems and manifest what you want in everyday life. This is an on-going group discussion involving topics such as, "*why isn't my life working; how can I manifest what I want; why am I 'stuck' and how can I get past it?*" Drop in to PLC Thursday evenings at 7:00 for an interesting evening.

Facilitator: Rev. Dr. Sandy West

ON-GOING CLASSES

PLC is not a teaching institute, but offers classes that are accredited by Emerson Theological Institute.

Monday: 2:00 - 3:30 p.m. *Practitioners & Interns in Training*

Starts April 3rd, PLC for 6 weeks \$75.00 Facilitator: Rev. JoAnn Burgess (559) 222-8307

Wednesday: 2:00 - 4:00 p.m. *Seminary Class*

A two year seminary class is held Wednesdays in the church office. This class is open to all completed practitioners and practicing ministers. It has already begun, but Rev. Marie said if you are willing to play "catch-up" you are welcome.

Facilitators: Reverends Angelo Pizelo and Marie Lane

For information call **(559) 642-4616**

Thursdays: 4:30 - 6:00 p.m. *The Abundant Life At Home, At Work, At Play*

The PLC is offering a new class based on Eric Butterworth's classic book, "Spiritual Economics". Many highly successful people have attributed this book as a crucial step in their achievements. The focus of the course is that within each person there is limitless life, limitless substance, and complete access to Infinite Intelligence. When we understand and embody these ideas, and are grateful for them, we become channels for a flow of abundance that draws great things into our lives.

The class will run from **April 27 - June 1**, and meets in the Mindshop Bookstore.

Cost is \$75. Everybody is invited. Emerson students receive 1 unit of credit.

Facilitator: Dr. Connie Thomas

Pre-registration is encouraged.

(559) 683-7719 or 642-4616

ON-GOING STUDY GROUPS

Tuesday: 11:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. *Metaphysical Bible Interpretation*, Facilitator: Mary Elliott (559) 642-6655

Tuesday: 5:30 - 6:45 p.m. *Course In Miracles* Facilitator: Rev. Rozella Dudley (559)683-4212

Tuesday: 7:00 - 8:00 p.m. *Spiritual Discussion "Tuesday Night - Live!"* Facilitators: Dr. Angelo & staff

Wednesday : 6:30 p.m. *Reiki* Facilitators: Bill & Betty Fleming (559)683-2274 or 642-6389

Thursday 6:00 - 7:00 p.m. *Spirituality and Manifestation* Facilitator: Rev. Dr. Sandy West

Friday: 9:30 to Noon *Life Story Writing* Facilitators: Dr. Ed Hibler & Jackie Hibler, e-mail: edhib@sti.net

Members' Page

PLC Members are encouraged to submit original works and/or interesting pieces written by others.

A group of professional people posed this question to a group of 4 to 8 year-olds, "**What does love mean?**" The answers they got were broader and deeper than anyone could have imagined. See what you think:

"When my grandmother got arthritis, she couldn't bend over and paint her toenails anymore. So, my grandfather does it for her all the time, even when his hands got arthritis too. That's love." Rebecca- age 8

"When someone loves you, the way they say your name is different. You just know that your name is safe in their mouth." Billy - age 4

"Love is when a girl puts on perfume and a boy puts on shaving cologne and they go out and smell each other." Karl - age 5

"Love is when my mommy makes coffee for my daddy and she takes a sip before giving it to him, to make sure it's not too hot." Danny - age 7

"Love is what's in the room with you at Christmas if you stop opening presents and listen." Bobby - age 7 (*Wow!*)

"If you want to learn to love better, you should start with a friend who you hate," Nikka - age 6
(*we need a few more Nikkas in the world!*)

"Love is like a little old woman and a little old man who are still friends even after they know each other so well." Tommy - age 6

"My mommy loves me more than anybody. You don't see anyone else kissing me to sleep at night." Clare - age 6

"Love is when Mommy gives Daddy the best piece of chicken." Elaine-age 5

"Love is when Mommy sees Daddy smelly and sweaty and still says he is handsomer than Robert Redford." Chris - age 7

"Love is when your puppy licks your face even after you left him alone all day." Mary Ann - age 4

"I know my older sister loves me because she gives me all her old clothes and has to go out and buy new ones." Lauren - age 4

When you love somebody, your eyelashes go up and down and little stars come out of you." Karen - age 7

And the final one -- Author and lecturer Leo Buscaglia once talked about a contest he was asked to judge to find the most caring child.

The winner was a four year old child whose next door neighbor was an elderly gentleman who had recently lost his wife. Upon seeing the man cry, the little boy went into the old gentleman's yard, climbed onto his lap, and just sat there.

When his Mother asked what he had said to the neighbor, the little boy said, "Nothing, I just helped him cry"

Out of the mouths of babes!

Wouldn't it be wonderful if all humans could find the security of one place where there is neither the Vedas, the Bible, the Koran, or any other formal scripture to tell us how to believe; but rather, a place where our many and diverse religions are accepted as nothing more than variations of a single, simple belief - the belief in **Oneness**, the unification of ALL.

Paraphrased by Sunny Baker,
from *Godians for World Peace and Unity*

Pearls of Wisdom - submitted by Pearl Schmidt

- ☺ **Hugs are like pancakes, much better when they are warm.**
- ☺ **A laugh a day puts wrinkles in the right places.**
- ☺ **You can never get to second base if you keep your foot on first.**
- ☺ **The brook would lose its song if you removed the rocks.**
- ☺ **Sometimes you have to be silent in order to be heard.**
- ☺ **The best way to win is to forget to keep score.**
- ☺ **Don't drive as if you own the road, drive as if you own the car.**
- ☺ **The art of being wise is the art of knowing what to overlook.**

And So It Is!

WHAT PRACTITIONERS CAN DO FOR YOU

By Rev. JoAnn Burgess

Religious Science Practitioners at the Positive Living Center offer a dynamic service. They are trained to help with whatever challenges life may be presenting by enlisting the help of the greatest of all helpers - God. Astounding results have been reported in many cases.

Prayer/treatment is the prayer procedure our students learn to do for themselves and the professional Practitioners do for others in our Emerson accredited classes. Prayer/Treatment work is available to you for any need facing you.

One person's need recently was a place to live quickly as his present place became no longer available. A treatment was done by an intern practitioner and a new place became open immediately – rent free – in trade for maintenance services.

The person wrote a letter of verification for the intern that the intern needed to become a licensed practitioner. Prayer/Treatment is a Win. Win.

Phone or personal treatment from a licensed practitioner is available at \$55.00 per hour. Or take advantage of the licensed practitioner available after church services each Sunday morning - free of charge.

Practitioner and Intern Contact List below.

What is Pastoral Counseling?

By Rev. Rozella Dudley

Pastoral counseling is a listening ministry. It creates a safe, confidential space to vent, discuss, and just be yourself without expectations or judgments. It does not give answers but allows space and time along with gentle questions or feedback to help the seeker find answers within themselves. It can be a time of self-exploration into personal problems or to assist in a chosen spiritual path. It is strengthened by prayer treatment.

As a pastoral counselor I have had the privilege of being a listener for various situations and dilemmas in people's lives. For example, a widow was having problems deciding whether to leave this area after her husband made his transition. She had no family here, had not developed deep or lasting friendships, and most importantly she did not like living in the mountains. She missed the larger metropolitan area from which she had originally moved.

With pastoral counseling she was able to confront her fear of making decisions on her own, and she discovered that she also had even more options. This particular session involved only 1 1/2 hours. This lovely lady has since moved to a larger area and is satisfied in her new life. By having someone to listen, getting feedback, and answering a few gentle questions she found her own answers within, then had the courage to act.

For more information contact:

Rev. Dr. Angelo Pizelo 559 683 2748 pizelo@sierratel.com

Rev. Rozella Dudley 559-683-4212 or rozell@sti.net

RELIGIOUS SCIENCE PRACTITIONERS

JoAnn Burgess
559 222-8307

Sandee Scott-Archer

559 658-8373

Sandy West

559 877-3775

Also

Maggi Belle Butterfield-Brown

Rozella Dudley

Jeff Hartwig

Alan Langunoff

Tiami Stavas

Connie Thomas

INTERN-PRACTITIONERS

Sheyla Cook

Mary Elliott

Betty Fleming

Janna Lewis

Looking for That Bridge Over Troubled Waters?



In addition to a prayer ministry, the PLC offers pastoral care for its spiritual family. We can help you bridge difficulties and anxiety over finances, career, health, relationships, major life passages or other concerns.

Pastoral Counselors:

Rev. Dr. Angelo Pizelo

559-642-4616 or pizelo@sierratel.com

Rev. Rozella Dudley

559-683-4212 or rozell@sti.net

Intern Pastoral Counselor:

Rev. Joyce Sterling

209-966-4425 or jsterling@sti.net

All counseling is confidential. Pastoral counseling is NOT, however, psychological counseling. It has a definite spiritual basis to it, to help you change your thinking and thus change your life.

For more information on pastoral counseling, visit the website:

www.plcoakhurst.org/counseling

EMERSON INSTITUTE

As the educational arm of ANTN (Affiliated New Thought Network) of which the Positive Living Center, is a member, Emerson Institute's vision is to awaken people to empowering Universal Principles and provide the instructional resources that will facilitate the development of healthy relationships, spiritual communities and the realization of potential.

To accomplish its vision, Emerson's core curriculum embraces the spiritual philosophy of the presence of God in humankind and the power of right thinking. It emphasizes the existence of One Life, One Mind, One Power, One Presence, in, as, and through all creations.

PROGRAMS OFFERED:

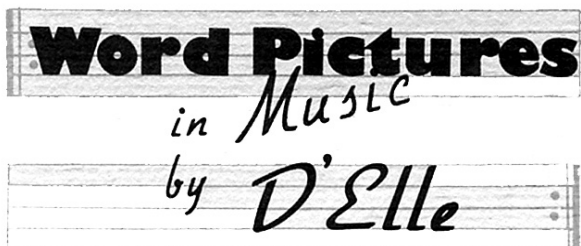
- ◆ Personal Growth
- ◆ Ministerial Credential
- ◆ Practitioner Credential
- ◆ Bachelor of Religious Studies
- ◆ Masters of Religious Studies
- ◆ Doctor of Religious Studies
- ◆ Doctor of Divinity

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THE TEN COMMANDMENTS OF NEW THOUGHT

On first observation, the Ten Commandments found in the Bible seem totally inapplicable to New Thought. In fact, the entire Bible, when taken literally as many people do, is almost incomprehensible. The problem, at least from a New Thought point of view, is that the Bible is presented as though it is the 'word' of a God outside of and separated from us. But before we dispose of these scriptures as merely antiquated documents, let's take a look beneath the surface of the words.

When we can come to terms with the idea that God is not separate from ourselves, is in fact our total being, we can then begin to see the Bible as a record of our evolution. When the Bible reports God as "doing" something, it might be easier understood as man's conscious awareness of his own level of divinity. Therefore, Moses, the main character in this 'commandment' drama, can best be understood as an enactment of God, or, as we currently term it, an *experience* of God.

The Ten Commandments, in the literal interpretation, are considered to be religious and moral imperatives or directives spoken by God to Moses after Moses (with divine intervention) had led his people out of Egypt and out of slavery. It is important to know that the exact interpretation from the Hebrew and Greek is the Ten **Statements**, not Ten Commandments. This in itself is very revealing for it would be impossible to have free will while acknowledging a God who *commands* (authoritatively orders; exercises a dominating influence over) anything. Therefore let's assume, for the sake of adventure, that God made *statements* to Moses (Moses' consciousness was elevated through God-inspiration). Now let's turn to Charles Fillmore for further enlightenment. His brilliant and inspirationally written *Metaphysical Bible Dictionary* gives us another glimpse into the depths of these *statements* when it interprets the name **Moses** as meaning *drawing out, extracting*, and the name **Egypt** as signifying *the darkness of ignorance*. It would seem that man/woman is coming out of the darkness of a consciousness limited to the material senses, and is awakening to divine Truth via a spiritual infusion called The **Ten Statements**.

Another important point is that these *statements* were literally depicted as 'carved in stone'. In our modern vernacular, that would mean - unchangeable. It seems that Moses (as God-inspiration) must have known that many written manuscripts would be lost (or changed to fit the need of the moment) – either through misunderstanding, neglect or actual intent; therefore, we can assume that these particular *statements* were of supreme importance and needed to be preserved intact. In actuality, God (through the elevated awareness of Moses) was handing down moral laws (righteous laws that when followed would keep mankind free from error and guilt and allow him spiritual fulfillment), as well as Universal laws (laws that are fundamentally true to their deepest core). These Ten Statements, then, are laws that not only *should not* be broken (moral truths), but *could not* be broken (Universal Truths). Let's take a look at these statements one at a time.

THE FIRST COMMANDMENT (STATEMENT)

I am the Lord thy God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. You shall have no other gods before me. (Exodus 20:2,3).

This is the most basic of principles extolled in every denomination of New Thought: *There is a God, and this God is the source and creator of everything – Is Everything. This God, in and through everything, is indestructible, all-powerful and absolute. This God is the inspiration within our continuous onward and upward movement toward our increasingly greater good.*

In this first commandment God *states* that He is Lord (Moses/mankind recognizes his own lord-ship). There is a great deal implied in this statement: Not only is a lord someone of rank or high position, it is someone to whom service and obedience are due. So, besides being a benefactor (bringing us out of the darkness of the bondage of ignorance - represented by Egypt), a lord (elevated understanding) is also responsible for helping us find (become aware of) our personal good (God). And further more, being lord suggests power and authority, so much power, in fact, that merely by holding on to the belief we can shed our ignorance, the darkness of an unenlightened state of mind. And, as we are drawn out of this darkness we will also shed the shackles that have bound us to the belief that we are physical beings separated from God.

Thou shalt have no other gods before me is a statement on the Moral level that we should not place our jobs, material possessions or relationships before our Spirituality. On the Universal level, however, this is a statement in the lack of evil. God, through man's consciousness, is not demanding recognition of Itself as the highest and best God available; God is *stating* a fact. Actually, God is *being* a fact: It is impossible for there to be two all-powerful Gods; they would destroy each other. There has been much argument over this statement. It has been said that evil does exist because it can be seen and felt (war, sickness, crime, poverty, etc). When we cling to our illnesses and our mental/emotional/physical pains we are, in fact, allowing them to have power over us – we are giving them godhood status in our lives. It is only when we recognize them as stepping stones that we have chosen (sometimes on a less than conscious level) for our own growth-awareness that they begin to have true value and meaning.

So, in this first commandment/statement, we are being instructed on two levels of thinking. On one level we learn to recognize the less-than-pleasant aspects of our lives as being our choices made in the darkness of ignorance (of our true Nature), but convertible into challenges that will lead us to a higher awareness. Ultimately it is God's desire that we be led back to God (our longing for God-recognition). On another level we learn that once we have elevated our consciousness we will recognize that God is all there is, and All-There-Is contains no evil. This belief holds all the power necessary to heal ourselves. In the words of Ernest Holmes, "We believe in the incarnation of the Spirit in us, and that all people are incarnations of the One Spirit." It follows from this, of course, that since there is no evil in God, there can be no evil in us.

(This is the first of a series of articles examining the Ten Commandments/Statements of the Bible using New Thought beliefs.)