



Spiritual Light Center

Newsletter—October 2014

MESSAGE FROM ARTHUR

Dear SLC Family,

Our theme this month is Spiritual Freedom. Our Constitution guarantees to us Religious Freedom. But that is just the right to worship in whatever way each of us desires (as long as it doesn't infringe on the rights of others).

Spiritual Freedom is something else. Each Sunday, we sing: "I release and I let go. I let the Spirit run my life..." and we dance and clap our hands to remind ourselves of that spiritual freedom that we don't exercise all of the time. To me, Spiritual Freedom is surrender. How's that for a paradox! A *Course in Miracles* teaches us: "Father, thy will is mine, and only that. There is no other will for me to have. Let me not try to have another will, for it is senseless and will cause me pain."

That is our ideal, to completely live aligned with God's Will. However, we live in a world of constraints – time constraints, obligations, schedules. We have to fit our exercise of Spiritual Freedom into the framework of our every-day world of appointments and routine. As an example, we have a one-hour time slot set aside on Sunday mornings for Spiritual Celebration. We can go over the hour by a few minutes, but if the Spirit moved us, would we celebrate all day? I think not; at least, not many of us.

We have an innocent two-year old boy in our congregation who hears the words:

"I release and I let go. I let the Spirit run my life..." and he does. He runs with abandon and joy, sometimes shouting for joy. What is our response? "We can't have that kind of behavior in church." If we said, "We can't have that spontaneous expression of Spirit in church," we would immediately see the hypocrisy in our words and actions.

And yet, I'm not advocating anarchy, although it might sound that way. We do live in a structured world, and we have to fit our expressions of Spiritual Freedom within that existing structure, or create a new one.

What I am saying is that each of us has to answer for ourselves the question posed by the old Gospel song: "Whatcha gonna do when the Spirit says, 'Do?' Tell me. Whatcha gonna do?"

Arthur Cataldo, President

OUR VISION STATEMENT

The Spiritual Light Center is a peaceful and joyful fellowship of individuals, centered in love, dedicated to the God within, and honoring the many paths to truth.

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

We seek to develop our highest selves by continuous sharing of spiritual ideas, in an environment of unconditional love and respect for others.



ONGOING EVENTS AT SLC

Every Tuesday at 5:15 p.m. - Join our group in the Hall as we watch a selected film of a spiritual nature, followed by discussion to develop our evolution. Afterward we choose a restaurant and go out to eat!

Every other Wednesday, Oct 8 & 22, at 2p.m. and at 6p.m.– Come to The Sacred Circle/TEA, an open group dedicated to spiritual sharing and growth. For more info please call Sandry Frary at 828-200-2451.

Every other Thursday, Oct 2, 16, & 30, at 5:15 p.m. - Please join us for our meditation group in the Chapel led by Dr. Richard Kimball. We have an informative discussion followed by walking and sitting meditation. Call Richard at 371-3425 for further details.

Every Thursday at 6:30 p.m. - Come join us for our **book study**. We are reading *One Day My Soul Just Opened Up* by Iyanla Vanzant. This is a very powerful book! Join us for some enlightening conversation.

UPCOMING SPEAKERS

October 5, 11 a.m.

Dale Allen Hoffman, a well-known scholar of the Aramaic language and teachings of Yeshua returns to speak on an as yet undisclosed but *good* topic.

October 12, 11 a.m.

Kim May, a Science of Mind practitioner from the Creative Thought Center in Waynesville, comes to share with us on “Learning to Play Again”.

October 19, 11 a.m.

Rev. Bonnie Mills, a gifted psychic who is working on her Masters in Metaphysics and Parapsychology, will speak to us on “Gifts of the Spirit”.

October 26, 11 a.m.

Rev. Mariah Brooks, ordained by the Beloved Community with James Twyman, active in the Oneness Movement, will speak on “Treasure Mapping”.

FRIDAY SPIRITUAL EDUCATION 6 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall

October 10 – Jim Swanson, Ph.D., our own long term member and friend who has journaled for many years will present on “Appreciative Journaling: applying the principles of Appreciative Inquiry to personal journal writing”.

October 24 – Dale Allen Hoffman, our friend and Aramaic scholar returns to conduct a Friday session on a topic we don’t know yet, but we *know* he is great!

Saturday, Oct. 18, 2- 5 p.m.

Annual Tri Center Picnic

Join in the fun, food, and comradery with other new thought folks!

Bring food to share, beverages, and a lawn chair. There will be games, hikes, & other activities afterward.

W.C.U. Picnic Grounds, Cullowhee

OUR SLC METAPHYSICAL STORE IS BEAUTIFUL!

Our store is open under the experienced management of Sandy Frary, certified gemologist. We are selling consignment or donated items, including books, jewelry, gift and decorative items, original art, and handmade crafts and clothing. **The store hours are Fridays 2 pm to 6 pm & Saturdays 12 pm to 4 pm, and Sundays after the service.** Come see the beauty! For information please call Sandy at 828-200-2451.

OUR BOARD OF TRUSTEES

PRESIDENT.....Arthur Cataldo
VICE PRESIDENT.....Kay Smith
SECRETARY.....Millard Deutsch
TREASURER.....Linda Ramsey
VICE TREASURER.....Bill Groves
TRUSTEE-AT-LARGE.....Raymond Braziel

SPIRITUAL LIGHT CENTER INFORMATION

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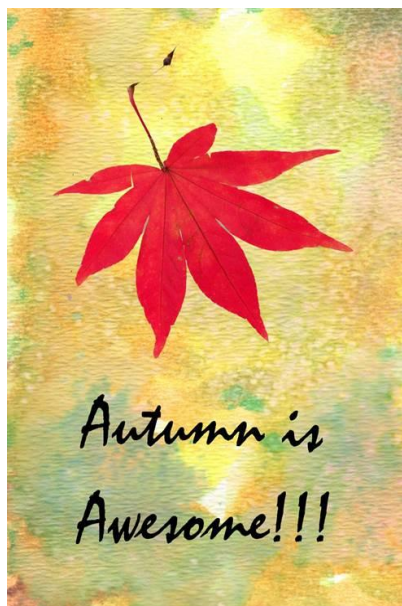


Reflections on Freedom

Finding Freedom by Bill Groves

As the weather cools and the season calms to a somewhat slower pace my feet begin to itch. I want to hit the roads and trails in search of a new adventure. I caught myself feeling a tad funky a few weeks ago and wasn't sure why. After some thought it struck me, "I'm bored!" I came to Franklin going on three years ago and haven't yet ventured out of the mountains (which I love and call home). At heart I've always been a nine year old gypsy boy and I don't do well for long playing in a small sand box. I've decided the remedy is to prescribe myself a trip to the Outer Banks. Right now I'm working on my pop up trailer and making preparations to hit the Frisco and Ocracoke National Park campgrounds for a couple of weeks in early October. I think the beach will make a great big new sandbox to play in for a while. I can't wait for the wide open spaces!

Once a very long time ago a psychic voluntarily did a reading for me and made an extremely astute and accurate comment that sort of startled me. She said, "It is clear that Freedom is your greatest passion and goal." My brow furled as I wondered how on earth she knew that. Well, that's still very much true. I've always lived in small towns and rural areas to give myself space and I've never gotten into a permanent relationship. I'm not recommending that for others; it's just been what worked for me. Perhaps I want to live life as unencumbered as I can and it seems to be what I need in this phase of my existence.



I hear people talk a lot about freedom and see them waving the flags of whatever nation demanding changes (or bemoaning changes) all with the conviction that, if they get their way, the circumstances they advocate will bring about the freedom they seek. I don't doubt that if they do get their way that little victory will provide temporary satisfaction. It will not, however, give them true, genuine freedom. If there is anything I have learned from a long, earnest quest it is that real freedom does not come from our surrounding circumstances. Our circumstances can certainly be an aid to our immediate comfort, and having our immediate needs met will allow us to pursue loftier goals, but it remains my

solid conviction that true freedom is genuinely an inside job. This realization does not excuse me from seeking justice for humankind, for natural life, and for the earth. I do that simply because it's the right thing to do. But even should I somehow succeed in establishing justice on this earth, I must still seek my true freedom from within.

For most of my life I have sought to create just the right circumstances and environment around me in the hope that it would give me the freedom I am seeking. That has never done the job. I've put myself in some really beautiful, serene places and enjoyed the scenery (and took some *great* pictures in the process). From Southeast Asia, Indonesia to Central America, Europe and all over this country I've found and photographed genuine, stunning beauty and met truly memorable people. But I've found freedom in none of those places. Why not? I've done the rituals and dances and sat in the right vortices, so where's the freedom? Maybe I should ask for my money back! Well, I guess not. I learned what I needed from those experiences. They were ALL good. I am grateful. I've had many years of fabulous adventures and wonderful memories (and let's not forget the pictures!) But a significant lesson from all this is that my goal of freedom is not found in a place where I can go or as a result of a circumstance I can cause to be around me. It was something I have carried within me all along.

I don't know if I'll stop traveling from time to time, and I'm sure I won't stop enjoying a walk in the woods, especially at this time of year. I just want to

*"Every being, every creature,
seeks freedom; not that we are
conscious of it, but it is the
ultimate human impulse."*

Swami Vivekananda

remember who I AM, and where my true serenity rests, because wherever I go, there I AM. What imprisons us is not a lack of external freedom or being in the wrong situation. Our slavery is due to our obsession with and reaction to our objective circumstances. Changing those surrounding circumstances will provide neither true freedom nor serenity. Our circumstances by nature *must* change and because of this they cannot give us any hope of lasting peace of mind or security. It is only by anchoring ourselves in a relationship to our eternal being and by choosing to no longer react to environmental circumstance that we can find lasting freedom.



I have tried and failed miserably in an attempt to create an external environment that will set me free and give me peace. Something always blows down my little house of cards. Somebody comes along and says something that just raises my hackles and I end up sulking for a day. Or I mouth off and say something I quickly regret and end up feeling ashamed of myself. No matter how hard I try, it has always turned out that my circumstances are just not always (perhaps seldom) within my control. If my

freedom and peace of mind were to rest upon those shifting external realities I'd be out of luck for sure. There appears to be only one solid foundation upon which I can locate the freedom I seek, and that is within the eternal realm of internal serenity that is my true Self. I can trust that within that Kingdom which is within me I am free from the ever changing circumstances that distract me from my true freedom. I have come to trust that the Universe is on my side. Regardless of what whirlwind may blow around me, my eternal Self is untouched and at peace, and truly free.

Independence from circumstances, emancipation from requiring my environment to give me dignity and peace, this is what I seek. It is by *trusting* that my eternal Being is now and always has been enveloped in our loving Creator, cherished and untouchable, herein is my freedom. At last I can stake my claim on that unchanging, everlasting ground I now call home.

WIn order to regain our **spiritual freedom**, the comfort most difficult to surrender is the belief that we, and not life, are in control. But, it can be done by people who are willing to accept that life is in control, that we are part of Nature, not separate from and above it, and that we are here, not to control, but to take care of life. Indeed, the love we feel for one another, and for the habitat that sustains us, is how life rewards us for taking care of it. Only by comprehending the implications of the fact that life is not about self, but about life, can we—after thousands of years—regain our natural state of being in which loving and being loved, unconditionally, is as natural as breathing. ~Chet Shupe

True Spiritual Freedom by Michele Moore

“The highest and greatest of the human freedoms is to choose your attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one’s own way.”~ Viktor Frankl, “Man’s Search for Meaning”

The concept of Spiritual Freedom grew from Viktor Frankl’s incredible accounts of how some prisoners triumphed emotionally and spiritually over the most horrific of circumstances, Auschwitz. “Man can preserve a vestige of spiritual freedom, of independence of mind, even in such terrible conditions of psychic and physical distress.”

The inmates ultimately chose whether to succumb to prison camp mentality and become a mere product of their environment and experience or to try to triumph spiritually and be something more, better and different. “Fundamentally, therefore, any man can, even under such circumstances, decide what shall become of him – mentally and spiritually. He may retain his human dignity even in a concentration camp.”

Frankl describes how some went about comforting and aiding their fellow prisoners while others succumbed to the most selfish, basest motivations and desires. “If we don’t consciously decide what sort of person we want to be and then work to become that person, our environment and our experience determine both our identity and our destiny for us.”

Beyond the barbed wires in life, there is always a wide expanse of opportunity, spiritual freedom and emotional independence that frees us from being dominated and controlled by our circumstances. We can decide what sort of person we want to be and work to become that person. We can decide to practice being our best selves all of the time and our best will continue to get even better.

A key to happiness and spiritual success is to always look past the circumstance of barbed wire!



What is Spiritual Freedom by Carey Kinsolving

While taping a video for a television spot, I asked a kindergarten boy, “What did the signers of the Declaration of Independence declare freedom from?” He looked at me with some certainty and said, “Our parents.” Speaking of spiritual freedom, another child said, “You get to go outside and play and say, ‘Yea!’”

I like this definition of spiritual freedom because it makes me recall the sheer joy of going outside to play. In my childhood imagination, a whole world was "outside" waiting to be explored. No one had to teach me how to play or explore. Every child knows this instinctively. It's part of God placing eternity in our hearts.



God wants us to experience the play and exuberance of spiritual freedom. He wants us to come outside into the wide spaces of his Freedom, where we can learn the dance of his union. God is waiting for us to respond to his love so that he can fulfill our hearts' desire for true freedom and spiritual intimacy.

Some would like to portray spiritual freedom as only a call to give up something, but it's more of a call to gain something greater. Writer C.S. Lewis once compared our spiritual blindness to a small child's fixation with his sandbox. When his parents remove him from the sandbox for a vacation at the beach, he may kick, scream and cry. But all this ceases at the first sight of beach, sand dunes and vast ocean horizons. Suddenly, the sandbox isn't so appealing. The problem isn't that we're seeking too much pleasure but that we're settling for too little. We're so infatuated with our little mud pies in the sandbox that we can't see the vast oceans and continents God would have us explore.

How God ever got tagged as being against pleasure, I'll never know. King David wrote, "You will show me the path of life; In your presence is fullness of joy; At your right hand are pleasures forevermore" (Psalm 16:11).

Have you ever noticed the faces of those who try to find life apart from God? The strain of life in the sandbox shows. In our hearts we know there must be something more, but few have the courage to question prejudices they inherit from culture, friends, family, and religions. Of course our own bad decisions play a role in keeping us confined as well because we tend to justify ourselves rather than admit our need to change and grow into full freedom.

True freedom requires revolution. Our forefathers declared freedom from English tyranny. The Spirit calls us to declare freedom from the sandbox and experience the joy of exploring an infinite horizon.

The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit. John 3:8

Freedom by Gary Vacca

Your greatest asset is that you are an individualized expression of the life of God; with complete freedom of choice, volition, will and consciousness. Freedom is a spiritual fact. Freedom is a characteristic of God being expressed in, through and as you. Even though freedom is a spiritual quality which you already possess, you are free to take as long or little time as you choose to make that discovery.

True freedom is both the ability to think, feel, dream and imagine, and the power to turn your thoughts into physical reality.

Your freedom is realized with the physical manifestation of your state of consciousness. Bondage and frustration is the ability to think and imagine what you desire, but with no power to bring it into your actual experience. So true freedom is both the ability to think, feel, dream and imagine, and the power to turn your thoughts into physical reality. To imagine, think and dream without the power to manifest your thought would be hell on earth.

The book of Proverbs tells us that “unfulfilled desire dries the bones.” In other words un-realized desires drain you mentally, emotionally and physically. This is not the way God designed for us to live! We are created with the ability to imagine, and equipped with the power of self-expression. That’s Freedom!

Your freedom will come as you awaken in consciousness and begin to be who you already are.

The meanest trick God could ever play on you would be to equip you with unlimited potential and then leave you powerless to bring it into expression. The root of frustration and hopelessness is knowing what is possible but with no way to make it happen. Potential without the power to express it is bondage. However, potential with the power to experience it is freedom. So spiritual freedom includes both the infinite potential and unlimited creative power to express and experience it.

If you continue to focus on past limiting experiences, you will be in bondage to them in the present just as you were in the past. Freedom comes through a change of consciousness. As you choose to focus your attention on the highest good, and what can be, instead of what was or is, you will be free to enjoy new experiences and fulfilled desires. Freedom to think, freedom to dream, and freedom to create the life you have imagined is already yours by Divine birthright. You are a child of God, an individualization of the Infinite. Your freedom comes as you awaken in consciousness and begin to be who you already are.



 *“You will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.”* John 8:32