

## **Brief Summary of New Thought and Affirmative Prayer**

New Thought was born out of a movement mostly in the United States, but also in Europe, that was inspired, in part, by the Transcendentalist like Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, John Muir and others in the early to mid-1800's who were exploring the interconnectedness of God, nature and humankind. They were seeking a spirituality independent of religion. These ideas were fused with Vedic thought which was introduced to the U.S. for the first time by Swami Vivekananda in 1893 at the first World Parliament of Religions in Chicago, IL (which the Fillmores attended, while they were studying with the "teacher of teachers", Emma Curtis Hopkins.)

With this lens, New Thought pioneers found a new way of looking at the Bible, namely a metaphysical and mostly symbolic interpretation. They endeavored to find the heart and true spiritual meaning of Jesus' teachings - they looked where Jesus was pointing but refrained from looking to and glorifying the pointer.

They took to heart the master's instruction "*Whatever you shall ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.*" This idea is the basis of affirmative prayer - which is the type of prayer that we practice in New Thought. We begin with a realization that we are all expressions of God, and as such embody all the qualities of the Divine. We work to develop a belief that the good we are asking for in prayer - the wellbeing, harmony, love, joy, abundance and peace -- is already our spiritual reality. As we contemplate that spiritual reality more than we focus on the temporary human limitation, we begin to embody it.

Emerson said, "Prayer is the contemplation of facts from the Highest point of view." When we pray for others we contemplate this Highest point of view for them and attempt to see them as God does, whole, complete and perfect. And because we are all connected on the invisible side of life, there is something within the one for whom we are praying that hears that affirmation of Truth and responds to it. As the person opens to healing and transformation, a healing will occur in their life. This is what we know, as we have seen it proven time and time again.

This is the basis of the prayer work on which Silent Unity was founded... prayer work which has helped thousands and thousands of people. It is how Unity began, and it is the Fillmore's greatest legacy.