

## "I Saw The Light"

If all the receptors in our eyes are working, red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, and violet are the colors that we can see when white light waves get refracted, reflected, and absorbed by earthly matter. In his theological reflection on the properties of light, Episcopalian priest Adam Thomas noted:

*God created light first because without light the rest of creation would have no definition or vibrancy. We humans see only a tiny fraction of all the light that God made, yet we persist in the presumptuous notion that only what we see exists---that only a 300-nanometer piece of the spectrum is real* (Ch. Century, Feb. 9, 2010, p. 18).

Rev. Thomas' commentary suggests that some sort of persistence in our mind's eye tends to block and limit our ability to see the full spectrum of Our Creator's life giving light. His observation is helpful for our faith in three ways. First, it pauses us to praise our Creator and to give God thanks for a body which embodies light in such a way that we can discern ordinary shapes, movement of things, and beauty. Secondly, his reflection prompts us to wonder about what we miss on a daily because of our limited ability to see all the Hidden Hues of our Creator. Third, his meditation helps us remember the times when an inexplicably brilliant light has broken through our ordinary visual field and we have erupted with the faith exclamation: "I saw The Light!"

Human history is filled with testimonies of "I saw The Light!" moments as well as a colorful range of human responses to that Holy Light. Along the spectrum of radiant responses we have reported receiving: inspiration . . . enlightenment . . . personal transformation . . . unity in love . . . spiritual growth in communities of faith . . . deeper connectedness and greater interdependence with all creation and God's creatures.

I saw the Light. When Moses spoke with the Lord, the Light of God's Word caused the face of the prophet to beam with radiance. Moses was not aware of the transforming power of God's Word of Ten Commands until people refused to come near to him. Everyone,

it seemed, was afraid of turning into a streaming beam of light like Moses. When Moses understood their fear, he covered his face with a veil so that they could calm down, listen, and let the social and religious laws of Yahweh seep into their hearts and minds.

I saw the Light. When Jesus was praying, the light of his Heavenly Parents Love for him caused Jesus' face to change and his clothes to become as bright as a flash of lightning. God smiled upon him saying, "This is my son whom I have chosen, listen to him." With the light of the Lord's countenance upon him all the days of his life, Jesus had eyes to see the Light of God within each person. If he were Buddhist he would have bowed and greeted others with "Namaste," (which means, I honor the God light in you). It caused him to shine like the sun with God's love for all and to cherish God's good creation.

*The word 'cherish' derives from the Latin carus, meaning 'dear' or 'precious'. To cherish is to hold dear, to set a high value on, to care for. From the same root come both 'charity' and 'caress'. In the old marriage service of the Church of Scotland, both partners promise to love, honor, and cherish (not obey).* (Cherish the Earth, p. 15-16).

I saw the Light. When the psalmist looked at the heavens and saw the Light of God exploding in the heavens, it caused him to wonder about Unseen Vibrant Reality. He started to ponder questions of faith. Do human beings have a special relationship with their Creator? Does the Creator love us? Do we have a spark of Divine light within us? Does this God Light give us the power to care for all creation?

Decades ago at the outer limits of space, when *cosmonaut Aleksei Leonov gazed from his space craft window back towards his earth home*, the radiant light of the planet earth broke open the eyes of his heart. He *spoke feelingly of earth*, saying, "a small, light blue, and so touchingly alone, our home that must be defended like a holy relic"

(source unknown). With eyes opened wide, he saw the earth vibrantly aglow with Divine Light. From another heavenly point of view, James Irwin added:

*The earth reminded us of a Christmas tree ornament hanging in the blackness of space. As we got farther and farther away it diminished in size. Finally it shrank to the size of a marble, the most beautiful marble you can imagine. That beautiful, warm living object looked so fragile so delicate that if you touched it with a finger it would crumble and fall apart. Seeing this has to change a person, has to make a person appreciate the creation of God and the love of God* (source unknown).

Meanwhile, down on earth, theologian Sallie McFague was proposing that people of faith think of the earth as God's Body and churches everywhere began launching new stewardship initiatives to care for the earth.

I saw the Light. One church on its way towards shining with the life giving light of God is All Souls in Washington, D.C. Eco-faith activist Charlene Hosenfeld wrote:

*Unitarians have seven guiding principles, the last of which is "respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part." The All Souls Church "7<sup>th</sup> Principle Committee" (or Green Souls) spearheads multiple environmental stewardship initiatives, and ASC wholeheartedly embraces the ethic of "Reduce-Reuse-Recycle." They have a Ride-Share program; hold an annual Green Transport Day to encourage members to walk, bike, car pool, or take public transportation to church; recycle beverage containers; reduce their energy consumption; sell Fair Trade Certified organic coffee, tea, chocolate, and olive oil; and also sell energy-efficient light bulbs, environmentally safe cleaning products, and toilet paper and notebook paper with recycled content. . . and host zero-trash (vegetarian option, no paper or plastic, dishing) Sunday lunches* (Eco faith, p. 166-169).

In the beginning . . . the light was good. Visible and Hidden Hues of Divine Light set all of God's creation, AGLOW! Now, through eyes of love we pray: **Lord, by the glories of your creation, which we did not devise, fan our faith into flame. Holy Spirit, Enlivener, in this new creation, already upon us, fill us with life anew. Amen.**

Gen. 1:1-3. In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters. And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. God saw that the light was good, and God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light "day," and the darkness God called "night." And there was evening and there was morning---the first day.

Exodus 34:29-35. When Moses came down from Mount Sinai with the two tablets of the Testimony in his hands, he was not aware that his face was radiant because he had spoken with the Lord. When Aaron and all the Israelites saw Moses, his face was radiant, and they were afraid to come near him. But Moses called to them; so Aaron and all the leaders of the community came back to him, and he spoke to them. Afterward all the Israelites, came near him, and he gave them all the commands the Lord had given him on Mount Sinai. When Moses finished speaking to them, he put a veil over his face. But whenever he entered the Lord's presence to speak with him he removed the veil until he came out. And when he came out and told the Israelites what he had been commanded, they saw that his face was radiant. Then Moses would put the veil back over his face until he went in to speak with the Lord.

Luke 9:28-36. About eight days after Jesus said this, he took Peter, John, and James with him and went up onto a mountain to pray. As he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became as bright as a flash of lightning. Two men, Moses and Elijah, appeared in glorious splendor, talking with Jesus. They spoke about his departure, which he was about to bring to fulfillment at Jerusalem. Peter and his companions were very sleepy, but when they became fully awake, they saw his glory and the two men standing with him. As they entered the cloud, a voice came from the cloud, saying, "This is my Son, whom I have chosen, listen to him." When the voice had spoken, they found that Jesus was alone. The disciples kept this to themselves, and told no one at that time what they had seen. As the men were leaving Jesus, Peter said to him, "Master, it is good for us to be here. Let us put up three shelters--- one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah." (He did not know what he was saying.) While he was speaking, a cloud appeared and enveloped them, and they were afraid.