TED TALK WITH MARTIN UMC FRIENDS AND FAMILY



**Georg Christoph Lichtenberg**

All mornings my awaking includes a quick scan of my body to ensure heart, lungs, and other essential organs are functioning as should be. Once assured, I stretch exactly as I stretched when my mother woke me for school, church, or the daily grind on our small farm. Then, still lying in bed, ritual begins.

When I am satisfied I can stand and deliver in the new day, I say “Thank you” to the Universe, God, and the Divine presence within me. Inner strength gained from knowing to whom I offer gratitude is, I believe, the same for you and me and all humankind.

You and I are all creatures of His/Her great design for humanity on a pale blue dot in an entire universe. We are endowed with an element of God in us regardless of race, or gender, or belief, or socio-economic status, or preferences. We should never forget “in each of us there is a little of all of us.”

Georg Christoph Lichtenberg’s late eighteenth century quote has become my image for all my TED TALKs past, present, and going forward. The image of hands holding wrists of every gender and race encircling the earth is my vision of New Testament scripture. The Bible never says, “all Men are Created Equal”, and I believe the scripture offers a higher and better calling than the Declaration of Independence.

The Apostle Paul gives us wise words in Galatians 3:28. The verse is often misquoted as saying, “there is no Jew and Gentile, slave and free, male and female, because *we are all equal*.” In reality, Paul writes, “there is no Jew and Gentile, slave and free, male and female, because *we are all one in Jesus Christ*. In Colossians 3:11 Paul does not write about equality “between barbarians and Scythians,” but rather asserts that “*Christ is all, and is in all*”…

Our world today is a mess as we all know and live. There is much anger, tons of fear, lots of despair and depression, and dis-ease over the disease and racial tensions. When I heard the news about a gargantuan explosion in Beirut Lebanon, my mind went immediately to a young couple I was blessed to serve as their wedding officiant. Maher is from Beirut, now living in Grapevine, living the American dream.

His family remains in Beirut. My heart sank when I saw the devastation. I called him as soon as I could and learned his family has “many injuries, destroyed homes and businesses,” but “they’re alive.” I realized that in my desire to pray for good health in people you and I know and love, and for peace in the world, and for solutions to tensions related to Covid-19, and humankinds inhumanity to humankind, I am called to pray for people I know through my neighbors, and others I would never know. I am called to pray because “Christ is all, and is in all.”

This new TED TALK series is based on 128 poetic words that have mistakenly been attributed to Nelson Mandela’s inaugural speech in 1994. It is understandable in that it was published in a self-help book written in 1992.

When I read the words, I can hear President Mandela write and say them in his inaugural address in post-apartheid South Africa. But the credit goes to one of my favorite authors, Marianne Williamson in her first book in 1992 titled “A Return to Love: Reflections on the Principles of a Course in Miracles.”

If you have read Marianne’s books, attended a seminar, or watched her talking to Oprah Winfrey under the trees on Oprah’s property, you would know why people might give Mandela credit. Her life work in many ways parallels his, with the exception of 27 years he was jailed in an apartheid ravaged South African prison.

She founded *Project Angel Food*, a food delivery program that served home-bound people with HIV/AIDS and other life-threatening diseases. Marianne also co-founded the *Peace Alliance* to support peace building projects.

After this week I intend to write seven different TALKS using sections of her poem in the book aptly named “A Return to Love. God, let it be so!!

I encourage all of you to Google or search other engines to find the poem. Simply search for “Our Deepest Fear”. You can use Marianne Williamson’s name or type in Nelson Mandela. Both will get you there, but know that the words are Marrianne’s, not Nelson’s. Read it. Ponder the words. Then hold me accountable for my words that vary from your thoughts and opinions.

May God’s peace and grace be added to the understanding of these words for our world today.

Peace always.

*Ted*