



March 2014
**From the Desk of
Rev. Chuck**

Unity Church of Bakersfield
1619 E Street, Bakersfield CA
93301

www.ucob.org

Church: 661-327-8614

Dear Friends,

As many of you know several members of our faith community have made their transitions. We bless these souls as they continue their journey in the spiritual realm. We bless and hold their families and friends in our prayers for peace as they find comfort in the loving memories of their departed loved one.

While reminiscing on Facebook with an old friend who knew my step-father, who passed recently, he shared a story with me about the passing of one of his friends 30 years ago.

They were both out drinking one night. And of course they were both drunk. Rather than call someone to take them home his friend got behind the wheel to drive home. He took a turn in the road to sharp and hit a light pole killing him instantly. "John" survived the crash only to be filled with guilt because he allowed his friend to drive and he did not die too.

So I asked him, "What if you were the one driving and the tables were turned? What would you say to your friend?" He was silent for a minute then said, "I'd tell him it was my fault, not his. I choose to drive. Please, let it go and live your life."

Letting go of guilty feelings is not an easy thing to do. Guilt is part of the human experience and can serve as a guide, telling us that something is off. **This type of guilt is not the road blocks on our spiritual journey but the red traffic lights that cause us to stop at certain intersections and take time to reflect.**

Sometimes events, even the most tragic of events, happen and it's no one's fault. How many times has someone taken on guilt due to someone else's bad decision or choice that led to a tragic event? Life, after all, is filled with choices and sometimes things don't turn out as planned.

My personal journey of toxic guilt that plagued me for years was survivor's guilt for coming home from Vietnam alive. And the question I had to answer in order to heal that part of me was: **If you have been spared in order to live, are you living?**

Toxic guilt is the type of guilt that Jesus was

concerned about when he taught his many lessons on forgiveness. This kind of guilt is rooted in self-judgment, our belief system, the spoken and unspoken lessons we were given as children by those in authority who had an agenda to control and manipulate our thoughts and feelings in a certain way.

Shame comes with the activity of toxic guilt in the sense that it relives those moments we felt guilty because we were taught our needs must always come last, that we must always be strong and not weak, giving instead of taking; to bury and hide any hurt, anger, or resentment that we may have felt.

Toxic guilt is part of the ego's self-critic thought system that likes to keep the past alive. Ego's first instinct is to get rid of the guilty feelings so we project them onto someone else. "Since I don't want to see myself as guilty or wrong, I will see you as being guilty and wrong." Using and hiding in this type of projection keeps the past alive and contaminates our future. Thus, it binds us to the things we have put into the closet or basement of the soul. Those things we don't want others to see such as: our sense of weakness; our shame; our unforgiveness.

If you or someone you know suffers from toxic guilt maybe these insights from the late Elisabeth Kubler Ross can help heal it:

1. Remember that peace and guilt are opposites. You cannot experience peace and guilt at the same time. When you accept love and peace, you deny guilt, but the opposite true: when you cling to guilt, you turn away from love and peace. As Jesus taught: "You cannot serve two masters."

2. Accepting God as a God of unconditional love and acceptance. **God does not see our mistakes, God sees us guiltless!** God presents the kingdom to everyone regardless of where they are or what they are doing as Jesus taught: "He causes it to rain on the just and unjust alike to let the sun shine on the good and the bad."

3. Commit to creating a time when you can go to God in prayer and meditation and offer a confession, a true spiritual release and letting go of the secrets hidden in the closet or basement of the soul so you can know that you are loved by a power greater than yourself. As Jesus also taught, "God desires mercy, not sacrifice."