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From the Desk of Rev. Chuck

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Dear Friends,

Growing up on a farm in Niagara County, New York, November has always been a time of harvesting and thanksgiving. As I look at the month ahead I also look back to see how Spirit has influenced me and my understanding of letting God be God through me.

My development of an attitude of gratitude began when I allowed myself to connect with those around me, instead of seeing them as competition.

Many of Unity's teachings and the works of the great spiritual teachers helped me to look within myself and find the truth of my being, the truth that will set me free, the truth that will help me usher in a spiritual renaissance.

For me, one of Jesus's most powerful statements about his ministry can be found in John 12:47: *"I came not to judge the world, but to save the world."* And what it says to me is this:

We are not to judge the appearances of what was going on, but to bring a different way of looking at things and their relationship with each other. The world will be saved when we realize, as Jesus did, that we are all one. There is no separation in God mind.

In his book **Living Buddha, Living Christ** Thich Nhat Hanh, a Buddhist monk writes:

There is a deep [ma-laz] malaise in society. We can send e-mails and faxes anywhere in the world, we have pagers and cellular telephones [to bring us closer], and yet in our families and neighborhoods we do not speak to each other. There is a kind of vacuum inside of us, and we attempt to fill it by eating, reading, talking, smoking, drinking, watching TV, going to the movies, and even overworking. We absorb so much violence and insecurity every day that we are like time bombs ready to explode.

Many of our young people are uprooted. They no longer believe in the traditions of their parents and grandparents, and they have found nothing to replace them. They have not been able to transmit the deepest values of their traditions because they have become meaningless. Combined with a lack of understanding of humanity's need to reconnect on a oneness level and

a general lack of tolerance, it is little wonder the young men and women of the world today feel alienated within their own societies.

The world has changed dramatically since I was that child on the family farm. And yet, the idea of love, forgiveness, thankfulness, and peace remind the same for all people seeking to know and understand a loving, nurturing, compassionate, all providing God. And every step of the way Spirit is leading us into a new consciousness, a spiritual renaissance. As Paul Ferrini reminds us in his book **Reflections of the Christ Mind:**

Consciousness is shifting on the planet. The age of the individual is coming to an end. A spiritual renaissance has begun, characterized by the formation of small, decentralized communities guided through group consciousness and mutual practice of the forgiveness process. This is the way of Spirit.

What will these communities look like? I would like to think something like what Unity brings to the world:

The new church will have nothing to do with dogmatic and doctrinal walls of separation and exclusiveness. It will be a place where all are welcome. It will be a place of peace and reconciliation, where fears are acknowledged and trespasses forgiven. It will be a place where judgement of appearances gives way to open mindedness and tolerance of another's condition. It will be a place where an environment creates a climate of understanding, safety, and love. It will be a place with each person can connect with his or her spiritual essence and the God of their understanding. It's spiritual guides will set a sincere example by demonstrating spiritual integrity. That is to say, the spiritual guide will teach and live the spiritual principles that govern the world. That they do not have to be perfect, but will have and show the courage to admit their mistakes as they are compassionate about the mistakes of others.

These things are not new. They were ushered in over a hundred years ago by Unity and many other New Thought spiritual movements. Today there is a behind the scenes desire to free humanity from the religious hierarchy and elaborate organizational structure than ever before. And that is truly something to be thankful for this Thanksgiving season.

May you and yours have a very blessed and safe Thanksgiving holiday!