

HOWARD THURMAN: AN ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

OneLife Institute for Spirituality & Social Transformation ~ Rev. Liza J. Rankow, MHS, PhD

Thurman H. *Deep River and The Negro Spiritual Speaks of Life and Death*. Richmond, IN: Friends United Press, 1975. (*Deep River* was first privately published in 1945.)

These two volumes, reissued under one cover, grew from lectures given at Morehouse (1929-30) and Harvard (Ingersoll Lecture - 1947) addressing the role of the traditional Spirituals in the African American resistance to slavery and oppression. Thurman offers both history and interpretation of these powerful songs of protest, inspiration and affirmation.

Thurman H. *Jesus and the Disinherited*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1949. (Paperback reprint, Boston: Beacon Press, 1976.)

Thurman's exploration of "what the teachings of Jesus have to say to those who stand...with their backs against the wall" provided a theological foundation for the Civil Rights Movement. Understanding the historical construction (and institutionalization) of oppression through the manipulation of fear and hatred, we may take a page from Jesus' "working paper" to employ love as the radical force of liberation.

Thurman H. *Deep is the Hunger*. New York: Harper & Row, 1951. (Paperback reprint, Richmond, IN: Friends United Press, 1978.)

Dedicated to the members of Fellowship Church, and intended to nourish and challenge "those who are intent upon establishing islands of fellowship in a sea of racial, religious and national tensions," *Deep is the Hunger* is a compilation of meditations Thurman wrote for weekly Sunday services. The subtitle "Meditations for Apostles of Sensitiveness" references Paul's letter to the Church at Philippi (Philippians 1:9-10) urging a love rich in knowledge and insight, and infused with a sense of what is vital. It is this illumination of *what is vital* -- organized under the section headings "A Sense of History," "A Sense of Self," "A Sense of Presence" -- that forms the substance of this collection.

Thurman H. *Meditations of the Heart*. New York: Harper & Row, 1953. (Paperback reprint, Richmond, IN: Friends United Press, 1976.)

This is volume two of *Deep is the Hunger*, a collection of meditations written during Thurman's years at Fellowship Church. "Their purpose," he writes in the Foreword, "is to focus the mind and the heart upon God as the Eternal Source and Goal of life."

Thurman H. *The Creative Encounter*. New York: Harper & Row, 1954. (Paperback reprint, Richmond, IN: Friends United Press, 1972.)

This book considers Thurman's belief that it is an individual's personal and intimate encounters with God that establish the foundation (and perhaps even the mandate) for the demonstration of love in community -- especially in the community of religious fellowship.

Thurman H. *The Growing Edge*. New York: Harper & Row, 1956. (Paperback reprint, Richmond, IN: Friends United Press, 1974.)

A collection of Thurman's transcribed and edited sermons on subjects including enemies, prayer, God, peace, seasonal festivals, and Christian character. In the preface Thurman defines the sermon as "an act of worship in which the preacher exposes his spirit and mind as they seek to reveal the working of the spirit of the living God upon them." Each entry follows the pattern of the worship service in which it was originally presented, including the precedent meditation and quoted reading, as well as the closing prayer.

Thurman, H. *Footprints of a Dream: The Story of The Church for the Fellowship of All Peoples.* New York: Harper & Brothers, 1959.

From Thurman's inspiring vision at Khyber Pass and his early years in ministry, through the founding of Fellowship Church (in 1944) and its first 15 years of existence, this first-person account presents the history of an "experiment in religious fellowship" to create community among people of diverse backgrounds and cultures in a social context of segregation.

**Thurman H. *The Inward Journey.* New York: Harper & Row, 1961.
(Paperback reprint, Richmond, IN: Friends United Press, 1971.)**

These meditations, originally presented in the weekly *Bulletin* during Thurman's tenure as Dean of Marsh Chapel (Boston University), comprise the third volume of *Deep is the Hunger*. Addressed, as he says, to the "deepest needs and aspirations of the human spirit," they offer both a description of and sustenance for the spiritual quest. Included in this collection are Thurman's original prose poems based on the text of I Corinthians 13 and Psalm 139.

Thurman H. *Mysticism and the Experience of Love.* Wallingford, PA: Pendle Hill Publications, 1961.

Part of the Pendle Hill Pamphlet series published by the Society of Friends, this essay is based on Thurman's delivery of the Rufus Jones Lecture (1961). It considers various definitions of "mysticism," settling on "the response of the individual to a personal encounter with God within his own spirit," and explores how this relates to the workings of love. Thurman suggests that through loving others as we are loved by God, without judgment or conditions, we may become conscious participants in the redemption and reconciliation of humankind.

**Thurman H. *Temptations of Jesus.* San Francisco: Lawton Kennedy, 1962.
(Paperback reprint, Richmond, IN: Friends United Press, 1978.)**

This slim volume gathers five sermons given by Thurman in Marsh Chapel, Boston University, during July of 1962. The series addresses "certain dilemmas of Jesus growing out of the temptations which he faced" and uses them to shed light upon the journey and struggles of each individual. Each sermon is presented in transcript form, including the meditation that preceded it during Sunday service.

**Thurman H. *Disciplines of the Spirit.* New York: Harper & Row, 1963.
(Paperback reprint, Richmond, IN: Friends United Press, 1973.)**

In this book Thurman examines certain universal aspects of human experience as the context in and through which we encounter God. Areas considered in this collection of essays include commitment, growth, suffering, prayer, and reconciliation.

**Thurman H. *The Luminous Darkness.* New York: Harper & Row, 1965.
(Paperback reprint, Richmond, IN: Friends United Press, 1989.)**

Subtitled "A Personal Interpretation of the Anatomy of Segregation and the Ground of Hope," this extended essay addresses the mechanism of action and the profound effects of segregation and racial prejudice on the individual and collective psyche of both Black and white Americans. He suggests the hope for reconciliation lies in the recognition of our common human being-ness as part of the one divine Life.

**Thurman H. *The Centering Moment.* New York: Harper & Row, 1969.
(Paperback reprint, Richmond, IN: Friends United Press, 1972.)**

A collection of "Prayer-Meditations" used in a variety of meetings for worship. Both intimate and universal, they deal with the aspirations and frailties of the human heart in its hungering for sanctuary within the presence of God.

**Thurman H. *The Search for Common Ground*. New York: Harper & Row, 1971.
(Paperback reprint, Richmond, IN: Friends United Press, 1986.)**

Thurman's self-described life "working paper," this book builds on his earlier writing to discuss the paradox of individualized uniqueness and universal oneness as essential components of existence. He traces these through something of an historic lens considering the origins and nature of community and the quest for its attainment despite societally imposed divisions.

**Thurman H. *The Mood of Christmas*. New York: Harper & Row, 1973.
(Paperback reprint, Richmond, IN: Friends United Press, 1985.)**

A collection of poems and meditations (most gathered from previous publications) honoring the spiritual truths within and behind the Season. While many relate specifically to Jesus, Christmas, and the New Year, many transcend the boundaries of the specific holiday to offer insights and inspiration to make *any day* holy.

Thurman H. *The First Footprints: The Dawn of the Idea of The Church for the Fellowship of All Peoples*. San Francisco: Lawton and Alfred Kennedy, 1975.

The collected letters between Thurman and Alfred Fisk during 1943 - 1944 documenting the conception and founding of The Church for the Fellowship of All Peoples -- the first intentionally interracial, intercultural, interfaith church in the United States.

Thurman H. *With Head and Heart: The Autobiography of Howard Thurman*. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1979.

Thurman's autobiography chronicles, as he puts it, "the highlights of a career because it is impossible to describe a life." Offering valuable context and insights into Thurman's writings and teachings through a discussion of his major influences, experiences, and life purpose.

COLLECTIONS

Fluker WE, Tumber C, editors. *A Strange Freedom: The Best of Howard Thurman on Religious Experience and Public Life*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1998.

Drawing from both previously unpublished and published works, this collection includes essays, meditations, sermons and speeches on a variety of themes which span the years of Thurman's professional career. Each entry is preceded by brief editorial notes providing thematic and historical context.

Smith LE, editor. *Howard Thurman: Essential Writings*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2006.

Part of the *Orbis Modern Spiritual Masters Series*, this volume includes excerpts from more than a dozen of Thurman's books, selected and introduced by Thurman scholar, Luther E. Smith.

Thurman AS, editor. *For the Inward Journey: The Writings of Howard Thurman*. Richmond, IN: Friends United Press, 1984.

An anthology of Dr. Thurman's writings selected by his daughter Anne Spencer Thurman, this collection provides an excellent introduction to the writings and central concerns of this modern day prophet. A helpful key code indexes the source (book and page) for each selection.

BIOGRAPHIES

Yates E. *Howard Thurman: Portrait of a Practical Dreamer.* New York: John Day Company, 1964.

Drawn primarily from a series of “day-long conversations” with Thurman during the summer of 1963, this biography is conversational rather than scholarly in tone. It is valuable for its extended quotes (some many pages long) conveying Thurman’s thoughts on themes such as prayer, suffering, pastoral counseling, and the uses of the arts in ministry. It offers detailed templates of services for worship, marriage, christening, and memorials as Thurman developed them during his pastorate.

COMMENTARIES, ETC.

Fluker WE. *They Looked for a City: A comparative analysis of the ideal of community in the thought of Howard Thurman and Martin Luther King, Jr.* New York: University Press of America, Inc., 1989.

Hunt CA. *Blessed are the Peacemakers: A Theological Analysis of the Thought of Howard Thurman and Martin Luther King, Jr.* Lima, OH: Wyndham Hall Press, 2005.

Makechnie GK. *Howard Thurman: His Enduring Dream.* Boston: Boston University, 1988.

Mitchell MG. *Spiritual Dynamics of Howard Thurman's Theology.* Bristol, IN: Wyndham Hall Press, Inc., 1985.

Mitchell, MG, editor. *The Human Search: Howard Thurman and the Quest for Freedom. Proceedings of the Second Annual Thurman Convocation.* New York: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc., 1992.

Pollard AB. *Mysticism and Social Change: The Social Witness of Howard Thurman.* New York: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc., 1992.

Smith LE. *Howard Thurman: The Mystic as Prophet.* Richmond, IN: Friends United Press, 1991.

Stewart CF. *God, Being and Liberation: A comparative analysis of the theologies and ethics of James H. Cone and Howard Thurman.* New York: University Press of America, Inc., 1989.

Young HJ. *God and Human Freedom: A Festschrift in Honor of Howard Thurman.* Richmond, IN: Friends United Press, 1983.