

Celebration of the 162nd Anniversary of Modern Spiritualism

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Written by Deborah White, Student Minister

For centuries contact has been made between us here in the physical and those on the other side of life, the etheric world. People like Moses, Jesus, Mohammed – all received their inspiration and words of wisdom from contact with the other side. In fact, these men and the guidance they received went on to be the inspiration for world religions. Through the centuries many others have been making contact with spirit - many we are currently familiar with – the great Edgar Cayce, Maurice Barbanell and Silver Birch, Jane Roberts and Seth, Esther Hicks and Abraham, but for a time it went underground.

As the Christian religion was taking root in the 3rd century a group of political and church leaders got together and formulated the beginnings of the dogma and creed of the early church. Those early decisions began moving man away from his direct connection with spirit. The church was to be the intermediary.

For several centuries the western world was plunged into what is called the dark ages and during that time many mediums and intuitives had to go underground. To speak openly about being in contact with spirit could have you killed as an unbeliever, a heretic or even a witch. Even though it was underground, the contact continued with folks in their communities in very quiet ways taking on such roles as healer, midwife, herbalist or even home remedy specialist.

Then in the 1400's a major invention began to shake the foundations of the Christian Church. It was the invention of the printing press. Soon people were able to read for themselves and not have to take the word of God from priests. It revolutionized people's thinking. It was during that time that Martin Luther and others began planting seeds of discontent in the world and the reformation began with the Christian Church seeing the beginnings of the Protestant faiths.

A renaissance started and people began questioning and thinking for themselves. Great writers, philosophers, scientists and inventors produced works of profound impact during this period. The Christian church still continued to try and maintain its hold on the minds of people and many of those great thinkers were tortured, excommunicated or even killed.

In the 1700's a man of intelligence and skill emerged - his name was Emanuel Swedenborg. He wrote many great works about his connection with spirit. He was a man of such great intellect, education and humility that it was hard for people to ignore him. He paved the way for others to come forward with their experiences with spirit.

Then in the early 1800's more people began coming forward to speak about their experiences with spirit. They received very little public support but the door was already open.

In the 1850's there was a house in upper state New York which had seen several families come and go. Each family stating that they could not live there because of all the activity from an unknown source. The Fox family moved into the house and the activity began in earnest. What made this family different is that two of the children – two daughters, Margaret and Kate – were natural mediums and even though they were frightened in the beginning they soon began to communicate with the spirit that was attached to the house. They communicated through rapping. They would pose questions and the spirit would rap back answers. The phenomenon soon became known in the town and people flocked to see the girls rapping with the spirit. Scientists and investigators came to see the phenomenon.

This event became well known because at this time there were newspapers for people to read so the situation was talked about all across the United States and as far away as England. What made this event different from what had come before was that it was physical phenomenon not just one person's contact with spirit. It was audible for others to hear. It caused quite a sensation and the Fox sisters soon began touring the United States and England showing their physical skills (rapping) to a curious public.

Soon after that people like Daniel Dunglas Home came to prominence. He and others at the time were incredibly gifted physical mediums. In concert with spirit, they could produce such events as levitation, apports, spirit voices, visible spirit manifestations and spirit writing. It seems that spirit wanted to produce physical phenomenon so that many people could see and experience contact with the other side. Such evidence was hard to refute though many tried and the mediums suffered with the scientific attempts.

In 1854 the first Spiritualist organization was born in New York. It was called the “Society for the Diffusion of Spiritual Knowledge” and had many prominent and politically well connected members. Then in 1856 Emma Hardinge Britten who was a very gifted medium and enthusiastic speaker began travelling all over the United States and Britain spreading the word about spirit contact and Spiritualism. It was she who gave us the Seven Principles that we have at the front of our song book.

There is a long list of phenomenal physical and direct voice mediums that followed – people such as Helen Duncan, Gladys Osborne Leonard, John Sloan, and Lesley Flint. Along with these wonderful mediums making the contact came great scientists and investigators who looked into the phenomenon and wrote about it so we could understand it better – men such as Sir William Crookes, Sir Oliver Lodge, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and Arthur Findlay. Arthur Findlay’s books are very readable and available for sale in our centre.

Over the years Spiritualism has progressed and changed. It is often asked why there are not so many physical mediums today. Spirit has told us that there is not so much need for it as science has progressed with its many proofs of what mystics and spiritualists have been saying for eons. Spirit also tells us that physical mediumship is very hard on the body of the medium. It seems they want to keep mediums healthier. Today Spirit concentrates on working with us through inspirational writing, speaking, artistry, trance speaking, mental mediumship and healing.

Our movement is progressing and reaching out to those who want to understand the link between us here in the physical and those who inhabit the etheric world. There is much knowledge and learning that comes to us from those on the other side. Spiritualism helps us all to understand that we are spirit temporarily having a physical experience and that when we pass to the other side we join our spirit families and friends. We go back home to continue on our journey of understanding and growth.

Our purpose here at the International Spiritualist Alliance is to continue that tradition of spiritual growth and understanding in a supportive and caring way. There is much we can continue to learn about and share – we hope you continue to join us in our journey.