

and movements which are also rooted in this tradition. He labels this religious outgrowth as "harmonial religion." Ahlstrom defines this expression as follows:

Harmonial religion encompasses those forms of piety and belief in which spiritual composure, physical health, and even economic well-being are understood to flow from a person's rapport with the cosmos. Human beatitude and immortality are believed to depend to a great degree on one's being 'in tune with the infinite.'<sup>123</sup>

Aspects of this religious expression are particularly found in Mary Baker Eddy's science of health, Ralph Waldo Emerson's transcendentalism, Bruce Barton's Jesus as the successful business executive, Norman Vincent Peale's positive thinking, and most recently, in the emergence of growth centers which believe that life can be controlled through meditation and the proper cosmic consciousness (a kind of spiritual magic).

Substitute in Ahlstrom's definition the word "God" for "cosmos" and this formula is also evident in some charismatics: "have enough faith and be healed."<sup>124</sup> The message from these groups is that happiness, wealth, health, success, and fame not only "flow from a person's rapport with the cosmos [God]," but they are the purpose of rapport with the cosmos (God).

Howard Thurman's theology has a very

different focus. While he concedes that God consciousness yields power, the intent of this power is to serve God and not the individual's well-being. Thurman does not deprecate well-being, but serving God may mean a vow of poverty, risking health, experiencing pain, suffering, ostracism, and death (as it did with Jesus). Serving means discovering peace, not as the world defines it, but a "peace which passes all understanding."

Again, Thurman's involvement in America's race problem gives a key to understanding his difference with harmonial religion. He recognizes the dangers in identifying the circumstances of a person's life as evidence for one's spirituality. This test always results in the poor/oppressed and the rich/oppressors meriting their conditions. Thurman argues that God's beloved children are not defined by their socio-economic status. This would deny their innate infinite worth.

Jesus is a model for this principle. His is not a rags to riches story (as in Bruce Barton's account of Jesus in *The Man Nobody Knows*), neither is he the winner of a popularity contest, but Jesus is God's beloved Son because of his faithfulness to the vision of Love. Likewise, black Americans cannot be defined by their socio-economic conditions for they have innate worth. Neither does their salvation hinge on release from these conditions, but in their ability to express love as an affirmation of