



“GOD IS IN US AND WE ARE IN GOD.”

“PEOPLE TELL ME THAT MY GARDEN IS MY CHURCH. They step into the garden, and they feel that same sense of investment and symbolism that many other people feel in churches. I feel them in both places. I rarely step into a place of worship, no matter how humble or what faith tradition, that I don’t get a sense that this is an expression of awe and gratitude. And people feel permission when they step through those doors, in a way they don’t in their ordinary lives, to let the mind contemplate the mystery of creation.”

Tom Spencer is a man who believes that the garden is not only a place to explore nature, but also a place to explore God.

“There is a Buddhist way of saying that compassion is the fruit of humility. It’s the virtue that grows within us when we look at the world realistically and humbly and with gratitude. We develop the sense of concerned, loving care for those around us, and I think compassion has to extend beyond just the circle of humanity. I believe that God is in us, and we are in God, and all of creation is the same. God has a thousand, ten thousand voices. You can hear it in the birds. You can see it in the streets in the morning when parents are walking with their kids or perhaps an older woman is walking with a companion. That is something incredibly beautiful, and you have to see God in those things. And once you begin to see God in creation and each other, that spark of the divine, how could you not feel compassion? And all of the great faith traditions dwell on that and try to drive us toward it. One of the great strengths of the Christian and Jewish traditions is that focus on how we live together. And the answer is, with compassion.”

TOM SPENCER *Gardener. Buddhist. Texan.*