

# God Who?

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*A Paradigm for Religious Tolerance*

Dr. Frederick David Graves  
Philadelphia Trust

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Philadelphia Trust

[www.TheGospelMystery.com](http://www.TheGospelMystery.com)

[Trustees@PhiladelphiaMissions.com](mailto:Trustees@PhiladelphiaMissions.com)

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866-529-3279

Stuart, Florida

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## **Dedication**

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*To little children destined to inherit what we leave for them when we adults depart this life.*

*To peace that's possible when men and women make an effort to agree and act on agreement.*

*To wise teachers and writers who long ago taught the beautiful truths presented here.*

*To you, dear reader, with the sincere hope you will see and share with others this truth that should not and cannot honestly be disputed.*

*To God by whatever name men choose to call the One, the All, our Only Eternal Hope.*

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God Who?

## Preface

What is this “paradigm for religious tolerance”?

Where does it begin?

Where does it end?

What is its purpose?

Why this book?

What does it mean to *you*?



### ***What is a Paradigm?***

Dictionaries define this powerful word as:

- a theory
- a pattern that may be copied
- a structure on which things may be built
- a way of seeing something

My book is

- a theory about religion
- a pattern of religion that may be copied
- a structure on which religious agreement may be built
- a way of seeing all religions as a promise of world peace

My book is just that.

Nothing more.

It is not a new doctrinal statement in conflict with existing doctrines.

It is not a denominational thesis intended to create a new religion.

It is not an effort to upset anyone’s religious apple cart in any way.

## Preface

It's a way of seeing all the world's religions working toward peace between presently warring religious factions.

It does not refute beliefs or traditional tenets of any religion.

To the contrary, my intent is to strengthen not to undermine or replace, to explain not to refute or attack.

I pray my book will bring people closer together, no matter what they believe or don't believe about God at present.

My goal is to tear down some of the walls we have erected that separate our individual chosen religion's view of God as unique from others, walls that prevent our sharing a celebration of core religious truths that we *already* believe in common with other religions ... without knowing.

- Tear down walls we hide behind.
- Tear down walls that divide us.
- Tear down walls that promote bigotry and violence!

The paradigm offered here reveals that *every* religion sees God as essentially the same God ... different viewpoints, but in all major religions God is the same!

The various religions' names for God are different, but their view of ultimate deity is fundamentally identical!

God is the same to *every* religion.

This fact is hidden only by varied doctrines and traditions, historical practices and popular misunderstandings.

What could be more important in these critical times when we learn each day of human beings killing other human beings *over differences of religious opinion about the same God?*

We need a safer world for our children.

We need a universal global brotherhood.

## God Who?

This paradigm is no new religion. It is just a peek into what *every* religion believes about God ... including *your* religion, if you have one!

It is a new way to “think” about God that in no way conflicts with what any religion already says about our ultimate deity.

It is an effort to promote peace between zealous advocates of violently opposed religious cultures, irreconcilable religious doctrines, and foolishly intolerant religious views.

By your sharing my book with others, perhaps my work will have its good intent, to free our lovely planet from the curse of perverse religious and cultural divisions that have too long been the breeding ground of senseless violence.

What is God?

## What is God?

What *do* all the world's religions believe about God?<sup>1</sup>

Who is God?

Where is God?

When did God begin?

Will God ever end?

Where did God come from?

What *is* God?



We're so busy with our everyday lives we don't spend time asking such questions about God or discussing God with others, asking what they think, what they believe. Most think about God when led in some religious function, e.g., organized meetings or ceremonies with others of their chosen faith where leaders tell them what to think about God, what to believe about God, and how to live their daily lives so God will be pleased and bless them with favor.

The focus of all religious teaching is how to live our lives so God will be pleased and we will be blessed. There is very little talk *about* God beyond views of how we should live to please God and avoid God's displeasure.

Most are told God simply *is*, what God has done in the past, what God wants of them in the present, and what God promises them in the future, according to how obedient they are to rules and precepts their leaders set out for them about what they must think and do to obtain God's blessings.

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<sup>1</sup> Each of the world's religions is examined later in my book, comparing their view of God and showing how each sees and considers God from different cultural and doctrinal backgrounds but ultimately knows God the same as every other religion!

## God Who?

Little is said about the who, what, why, and how of God and *nothing* about views of other religions (other than that they're all in error and should never be considered or investigated).

We're told about God in the context of our chosen religion's history and regulations, whether we are Jew, Christian, Muslim, or follower of any other faith-based walk.

Never are we told the God of each religion is the God of all.

We are told only *our* religion has the truth of God, all others are in error, and that for God to bless us with long life, health, prosperity, friends, family, and so forth, we must do as we're told and never question the wisdom of our religion's leaders.

*But!*

What we've *not* been told is what this book reveals.

What we've *not* been told is what we *most* need now!

What we've *not* been told is the *similarity* between what *all* religions in the world believe about God and share in common.

We're led away from the truth that makes "Peace on Earth" a distinct, tangible, and immediate possibility!

We're herded together, indoctrinated with a set of ideas and concepts that fall short of truth.

Truth that offers hope.

Truth that promises a safer world for our children.

Truth that agrees with what *all* of us already believe.

Truth that must build bridges of agreement and peace now!

## Introduction

### Introduction

‘Twas Shakespeare, was it not?

A rose by any other name?

Wars we fight, sufferings we endure,  
pain we cause, future days of danger we  
leave our children, and the terrors life is  
heir to ... *all because of a name!*

God’s name.

So many variations.

So many languages.

So many different religious views of God.

All striving to define and describe the *same* God!

All searching for “ultimate truth” from different angles.

All struggling for the meaning of reality, life, and death.

God!

The same in every culture, every religion, every language.

And still we fight!

Still we separate ourselves into divisions, pride ourselves on knowing what ultimately cannot be fully known, and proclaim with Antony in Shakespeare’s *Julius Caesar*, “Let slip the dogs of war!”

Peace?

Where is peace?

When has our planet ever known peace?

And, how can we hope for peace while men’s pride drives them to demand that all who disagree with them are wrong?



## God Who?

My book reveals an extraordinary fact.

We *already* agree!

We just don't know it ... *yet!*

We all have a "name" we use for God ... all 7 billion of us!

You have a name you use.

I have a name I use.

Most people have a name for God, albeit spelled differently and pronounced differently, *but all mean essentially the same!*

You think *your* name for God and *your* ideas about God are all that matter, and they *may* be all that matter ... *to you!*

*But!*

An increasing number of people are willing to fight and die for *their* ideas about God, *their* names for God, *their* way of life, *their* theocratic form of government and controlled economy.

Are we wise to ignore *their* view of God?

If, as my book reveals, *their* view is merely clouded by a culture we don't understand and that, in fact, *their* view is in all vital respects identical to that of *every* religion's view (including yours and mine), are we wise to remain ignorant of the reasons they see us as enemies of *their* God, *their* religion, and the form of government *they* want?

There *is* room for common ground!

There *is* room for agreement, sharing understanding without compromising religious beliefs of either side!

There *is* opportunity for peace!

We *can* make peace!

Millions, however, want a new world order based on *their* views of God, a theocratic new world order, a global caliphate

## Introduction

led by one man having absolute power over the entire human race.

That *is* their goal!

An angry host of obedient followers determined to destroy all who refuse to submit to *their* view of God.

Some are even willing to destroy all of mankind to achieve their goal of ridding the world of what they call “unbelievers”.

These aren’t like most who ignore what others believe about God, or don’t much care, or think God and religion are no longer relative in a modern world intractably pursuing the “good life”, no matter what suffering it causes future generations or how it infuriates those for whom God is the center of their lives.

Those millions are determined to murder you, your family, and every man, woman, and child who refuse to agree with what *they* believe about God and the theocratic government *they* are determined to impose on the world by whatever violent force *their* goals demand of them.

Are you ready for that?

Are your children ready?

Dare we continue sticking our heads in the spiritual sand of our precious political correctness and imagine what they believe is unimportant?

Dare we continue insisting, “My God is the only God,” without making any effort to discover that others may actually see God as *you* do (i.e., without your knowing it)?

Dare we remain nonchalant about God and “religious stuff” as if it really doesn’t matter what anyone believes?

God Who?

## Defining “Reality”

Think for a moment.  
No need to agree with me.  
Just think.  
Agree later, *if you choose*.  
For now, just think.  
Think about IT.



What’s IT?  
That’s what we’re going to think about.  
That’s what we’re going to decide.  
What’s IT?  
We will define IT.  
We will think about IT.  
We will agree about IT.

### **Consider**

Consider the universe ordered by strange but *natural* laws.

Galaxies, gardens, gravity, geese, glaciers, glow worms, and old goats like me.

Everything that IS and everything that controls what IS.

The universe *plus* all laws and forces that hold it together and keep it going.

All the stars plus the gravity that holds them where they are and pulls them around in glowing galaxies with intense internal nuclear reactions that make them shine so brightly we can see them in the distant sky billions of miles away.

## Defining “Reality”

All the trees and plants, bees and ants, beavers, foxes and crows plus all the biological juices and electrical impulses that make them reproduce to fill our forests with self-perpetuating life *plus* the laws of biology, biochemistry, and genetics that make bees bees and foxes foxes.

All the banjo players, stock brokers, single moms, and little boys and girls with dreams, fears, and imaginations *plus* all the tendencies and inclinations built in each of us that make us who we are and cause us to do the things we do.

Don’t leave anything out.

Everything that IS.

Let’s call what we’re thinking about “IT”.

We now have a good start on our definition.

But, there’s *more!*

Include the mysterious laws of nature that make things be what they are and make them do what they do.

Anything that IS, including the forces that perpetuate and control everything that IS.

The only “things” we don’t include in IT are things that aren’t “things” at all ... tooth fairies, hobgoblins, and spooks hiding in closets. That stuff doesn’t really “exist” ... *even if we believe it does*. We won’t include such “things” in IT, because they are not *real*.

To be included in our IT, a thing must BE.

If it *is* we count it “in”.

If it *isn’t* we count it “out”.

### **Add Time**

Instead of just what *is* (excluding what *isn’t*) let’s add time.

## God Who?

Include everything that ever *was*.

Add everything that ever *will be*.

And, be sure to include everything captured in this fleeting measureless moment we call *now*.

All that ever existed in the past, all that exists in the present, and all that ever will exist in the future.

And, for good measure, include everything that may exist *beyond* the end of time itself.

The only things we won't include in IT are *unreal* things that don't "exist". Things that never existed. Things that never will exist. Things that aren't part of "reality".

This chapter is entitled, "Defining Reality" so our IT does not contain anything that isn't "real", things that don't "exist".

### ***Things That Don't Exist***

Consider zero.

We use zeros when writing numbers, like "\$50" on a check or "10" at the bowling alley counting pins.

Zeros *exist*.

But what zeros *represent* does not!

Zero represents "none".

Zero is a mathematical invention.

Zero is empty.

The zeros in "100" say, "There are NO tens and NO ones."

And, as we learned in algebra  $43 \times 0 = 0$ .

Anything multiplied by zero is *nothing at all!*

Zero exists.

## Defining “Reality”

But, what it represents does *not!*

Nothing is nothing ... “no thing”.

Nothing does *not* exist.

But our IT *does* exist everywhere and forever, but “nothing” by definition *does not exist*.

IT, then, is everything that is not nothing.

### **How Big Is IT?**

It’s impossible to imagine all that IT is.

IT is *unthinkably* huge.

IT is *unthinkably* inclusive.

So much to imagine – from black holes to baby’s first tooth, potholes to palm trees, applesauce to a giant slice of grandma’s homemade blueberry pie.

And, we mustn’t omit Mrs. O’Malley’s lamp-kicking cow or the great Chicago Fire ... or the breakfast we ate last Tuesday or the dinner we’ll have next week.

IT includes Belmont Stakes thoroughbred winner next year and the fireworks on July 4<sup>th</sup>, 2089 (if we Americans survive to celebrate that Independence Day).

All that *is*, all that *was*, all that *ever will be*.

That’s the IT we are defining.

The IT in whom we live and move and have our being.

The IT we seldom stop to ponder.

The IT we lose sight of in the distractions of our everyday deadlines, dust mops, dirty dishes, and dental appointments.

From beginning to end, from start to finish, from the tiniest atomic sub-particle to the farthest reaches of the extra-galactic

## God Who?

cosmos, together with the forces that keep everything in motion, past, present, and future.

### **Give “IT” a Name**

We could call IT “the universe”, but that term is stuck in present time, while our IT includes all *reality* past, present, and future.

We need a name that includes all that *is*, all that *was*, and all that *will be*, plus all that operates to control and perpetuate IT.

We must be careful, for whatever we decide to call IT will to a degree alter or amend our ability to share what IT *is*.

We need something other than “IT”, however, so let’s decide on something we can agree upon ... *at least for now*.

Here’s an idea!

Let’s call IT the “Great Ordered Doing”.

- Great because IT is bigger than the physical universe.
- Ordered because everything in IT obeys ITS rules.
- Doing because IT is active, constantly at work.

Since the Great Ordered Doing is “everything that IS”, there is nothing “outside” the Great Ordered Doing, nothing that isn’t.

There is nothing “real” that is not included.

The Great Ordered Doing existed *before* the universe, since IT (being “everything”) has to be the primal cause that brought the universe into existence.

The Great Ordered Doing will exist *after* the universe comes to an end (if ever it does), because IT is not *just* the universe but that which caused the universe to begin and may, if IT chooses, cause the universe to collapse upon itself and disappear!

## Defining “Reality”

The Great Ordered Doing has a “will” by which IT does the things we’ve been thinking about as well as all the things we do not often think about (like how bats “see”, why sky is blue, and what makes some deep sea jellyfish glow in the dark).

We are finite and temporary.

The Great Ordered Doing is infinite and eternal.

The Great Ordered Doing *does* because IT chooses to do.

IT does *only* what IT chooses and allows us to do *only* what IT chooses ... if and when IT chooses.

IT makes your heart beat and decides when you will die.

IT has always been, always will be, and *is* right now.

The Great Ordered Doing includes bears, bananas, bingo cards, and the creative force that brings such things into being.

The Great Ordered Doing is all this because we defined IT to be all this when we decided in this chapter to “define reality”.

For now, let’s shorten ITS name to the initial letters: GOD.

We now have a view of God about which we can agree. We can now talk about God without arguing. We can build a bridge of agreement to promote world peace.

Only misled people doubt if God “exists” because, by *our* definition, there can be no doubt whatever.

God (by *our* definition) most certainly “exists”.

*Every* one of this world’s religions sees deity this way.

There is *no* room for doubt! Atheists are misled!

The Great Ordered Doing *is* God!

To think otherwise is madness.

## God Who?

### A Call for Tolerance

You may be surprised to learn that in each of our 5,000 different languages the different names of God *mean essentially the same as the IT we just defined!*

- ✓ The all that always is.
- ✓ The eternal soul.
- ✓ The beginning without end
- ✓ Etcetera, etcetera, etcetera ...

*Your* chosen religion agrees with all these.

*All* religions agree.<sup>2</sup>

All!

Every one!

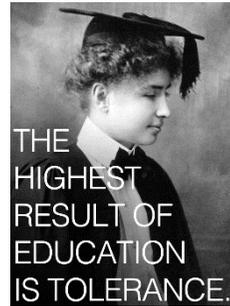
Are you surprised?

*Every* religion shares an *identical* view of God the All that ever is, the Almighty Power, the Eternal Father, the One!

They differ only in particular aspects, and because of those particular aspects many believe their view is the *only* “correct” view, but they *all* agree on the reality of God, the all-powerful, everywhere pervading eternal IT that created and sustains all we perceive as reality as well as all that is to us invisible.

After 50 years of studying bibles, books, and ancient scrolls and writings of every religion I could uncover, I found that *all* of them agree on the essential nature of God.

Every religious view is in agreement.



Helen Keller

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<sup>2</sup> I use the term religion restrictively, intending *not* to include belief systems that have no “god” or think themselves “gods” and such like ilk.

## A Call for Tolerance

God is creator, sustainer, destroyer, omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent.

The same to Hindu, Christian, Muslim, Jew, Shintoist, Sikh, and followers of every religious faith on Earth!

Most today are ignorant of this abiding truth.

So we have troubles.

Most take offense if you disagree with one “jot or tittle” of their faith, yet the God of Abraham, Jesus, and Mohammed is the same God worshipped for millennia by *every other religion!*

It's true!

Why must we be threatened with unending war, deprived of the peace we might otherwise enjoy, all because we refuse to see that all religions agree: *God is!*

With this knowledge we can build a bridge of world peace and understanding in *this* age when peace is most assuredly in peril and understanding thwarted by unwilling minds insisting only *they* know God.

We're an endangered species led by egotists who deny truth.

We're endangered by our refusal to see how dangerous our religious intolerance is and how our intolerance is leading us to a terror-ridden tomorrow we can avoid today!

Since the days of Pharaohs people have allowed themselves to be manipulated by self-styled religious “leaders” who insisted their view of God is the *only* view, that those who disagree are wrong, and that the penalty for disagreement has adverse eternal as well as temporal consequences.

It's not been many years since dissenters from the Catholic and Puritan doctrines were burned at the stake. Today, dissenters from Islamic doctrines are beheaded or bombed or buried alive.

## God Who?

Can humanity afford to ignore the root of this insanity?

Most people I've met these past 72 years are close-minded about God. If you don't see eye-to-eye, "You're wrong!"

Most are told what to believe, choose to believe whatever they're told, and that settles it.

Millions of innocent children died in ages past and die today because some people think *their* God is the *only* God ... when, as I discovered after years of studying the world's religions, *all worship the same God!*

The same God *you* believe in.

They seek to please the same God *you* seek to please.

They pray to the same God *you* pray to.

Different names.

Same God.

Uncreated, always existing, everywhere present.

Not one single religion disagrees with this.

Not one!

So, why do we fight?

Why do we pride ourselves on *our* separate view of God?

To remain ignorantly intolerant of other views is insane.

It must stop!

So, I wrote this book for you after reading every "bible" I could find, every reliable resource I could locate presenting various varied views of world religions, traditions, doctrines, practices, theories, and theologies.

Though nearly all use different names when referring to God, they all use the generic "God" in their writings, reserving

## A Call for Tolerance

special names to describe or illustrate some unique character or nature of God.

But, the God they describe is *the same God for all!*

God is merciful (when God chooses to be merciful).

God cannot be commanded.

God will not be our debtor.

God is everywhere, in all things pervading.

All these things the world agrees upon ... *in every religion!*

God is *not* the name "God".

Nor is God any of the hundreds of names used by competing religious leaders throughout our world.

God is God, no matter what names we use.

To believe otherwise is ridiculous ... *and dangerous!*

My Spanish-speaking friends call a coffee cup *taza de café*, while I enjoy my morning brew from an old beat-up mug I've been using for years. My coffee tastes the same as theirs (I drink espresso, as they do), and my container may be somewhat larger than theirs, but both our containers provide the same function. It is the same thing, whether we call it cup, mug, or *taza!*

It matters not what name we use.

God is God.

Call a rose chrysanthemum or tulip, and the flower remains as it is, unchanged by the name we assign to it.

The names we give things do not change what they *are!*

The rose is *not* its name.

The rose is *itself*.

The name we give to things is something *we* decide.

## God Who?

To think otherwise is foolish.

God is God ... no matter what name we use.

God is not changed by the names we choose!

Though the world's religions use many names, they *all* are used to identify the same ineffable, eternal, all-powerful, One.

The One who calls us to be tolerant of each other.

The One who urges us to make peace with each other!

The One who *is!*

*God!*

People

## People

Dad said, “People have more fun!”

It didn’t make sense.

I wondered what he meant.

I thought he was just trying to make us laugh at his peculiar saying.

More fun than whom?



“My God is better than your God!”

As I grow older it seems he was poking fun at humanity in general, the comical ways we interact with each other, our silly disagreements, our useless pride.

Dickens, Cummings, Burns, Jacobs, Twain and Shakespeare all poked fun at people taking themselves too seriously, causing trouble with ego-centered opinions, imagining themselves more important than they were, gathering round themselves people to agree with them (or, at least, pretend to agree).

We humans are a peculiar species with our predispositions, prejudices, and preposterously absurd theories about the infinite, how life began, where the edge of the universe might be, what happens after we die, and how many angels can dance on the head of a pin.

So we clump.

We join clubs, take sides with “our” political party, live in a particular part of town that marks us members of a special class of folks unlike others, fly various flags, and assimilate doctrines and traditions of our chosen religion from which pious positions we look down on those who foolishly fail to see God as we do.

We clump.

People who use big words say we’re gregarious.

## God Who?

We live in flocks of people *like* us.

We herd with our own “kind”.

And, within our chosen herd or flock we seek recognition, to be seen as unique or superior, even as we huddle together.

Strange but true.

We clump then seek ways to be different.

We clump then seek praise as unique within our clump.

We work to rise within our clump, scramble to lead the clump or, at least, to avoid sinking to the embarrassing bottom of our clump.

Distinction is a goal of clumpers.

Even if our clump itself isn't very special or in any way regarded highly by other clumps, yet we want to be recognized within “our” clump as one “special”, unlike others.

We seek desperately to belong to a clump then, on gaining admittance, we fight just as desperately to retain our significant individuality within the clump.

Few there are who do not clump then compete for rank or a special place in the clump they choose.

I now understand Dad's saying, “People have more fun.” It was his way of poking fun at what many famous authors say is true about us social beings.

We want to be part of our special clump, so long as we don't get lost in the crowd.

We are ethnocentric, a word that means we share an inherent need to be “in” and a common disdain for those who are “out”.

## People

Though “ethnic” comes from the same etymological root as “ethnocentric”, neither word has anything to do with race or culture but, rather, addresses the clumpiness of human nature.

We yearn to be identified with those who share our beliefs, attitudes, habits, and similar characteristics, people who make us feel “at home” in our chosen clump, folks like us!

We then oppose anything and anyone “outside” our chosen clump. We may even use violence against those who refuse to share our clump’s views and practices.

Margaret Mead, anthropologist (and, incidentally, pioneer of the feminist movement) wrote how our cultural relations give birth to our group morality, that the two are inseparable, that the latter results from the former.

### Cultural Relations → Group Morality

What our clump considers “moral” is considered moral by all clump members and, contrariwise, what our clump considers “immoral” includes thoughts or behavior that is unacceptable by members of the clump, causing errant members to be punished, e.g., excommunication, incarceration, or in some cases extermination (depending on the clump’s sense of its unique view of clump morality).

Though perhaps in error about minor points in her view of the human condition, Mead was undoubtedly correct in her conviction that human behavior in any closed society is shaped by conventions of morality absorbed by individuals within the cultural environment of that society.

We see this every day as madmen motivated by beliefs of their closed group sever heads, while others influenced by peace-loving attitudes build hospitals, schools, and labor with courage and commitment to create a safer world for the children of tomorrow.

## God Who?

Each clump decides what its leaders decide.

We see this in how moral yardsticks of nations are shaped by laws enacted by legislative bodies and how courts interpret those laws as they apply to individual citizens. National morality (our shared sense of “right and wrong”) shifts as clump leaders decree by legislation and clump judges decide by judicial fiat.

To believe otherwise is to be intentionally blind to truth.

The morality of nations is decided by its laws.

We believe “what our clump believes”. Individual thought is molded by group-think that punishes any maverick mentality that dares to deviate from “politically correct” thinking and the behavior approved by those who control means to influence the group.

Yet, there is hope for a better tomorrow!

Group-think can be modified by individuals acting in peace with wisdom, good intention, and undaunted persistence.

Mead wrote, “Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the *only* thing that ever has.”

To change the world.

To make our planet a better, safer place.

To believe it can be done!

It starts when individuals dare to influence what their local clump believes and then how local clumps influence the larger social sphere, until wisdom works at national and international levels to make a better world.

So, this book.

A paradigm for religious tolerance.

## People

A bridge of thought.

A plan for peace.

Binding diverse cultures and religions by acknowledging that no matter what we or our group individually believes about *the reality in which we live and move and have our being*,<sup>3</sup> we can see beyond the boundaries of bias, reach across the distance between our differences, and forge a new tomorrow where roses grow in peace amid the smiles and laughter of little children.

Every soul desires what *you* desire, seeks what *you* seek, and by our coming together with love and willingness to consider what others believe (without giving up our own beliefs in any way) we can build a bridge of peace for our children.

It begins with our shared view of God.

### ***Problems People Have***

Few will argue that creation had to have a beginning sometime long ago. Indeed, for anything to “exist” it had to have a beginning, just like you and I.

We had a beginning.

You had a beginning.

So did everything!

And, anyone who sees a flower, rainbow, or baby’s smile knows some kind of wise order keeps all the parts and pieces in their proper places.

The very fact you are reading this book attests to the undeniable fact that everything you know as creation, including yourself, is being “kept going” by *something*, or you wouldn’t “keep going”.

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<sup>3</sup> As the Apostle Paul described his view of God to the men of Athens. Acts 17:28

## God Who?

For now, at least, you need not buy the religious argument that God is “someone”, as many competing religions profess.

For now, we’ll just continue thinking of God as “something”, the IT we defined earlier. Later we can discuss if God is “someone” and the consequence that follows making such a distinction.

Our God is creation plus all the laws and forces that started it in the first place, ordered it to be as it is, and keep it going.

I really want to keep religion out of our shared thoughts, at least for the moment, to avoid the troubles and divisions that religion invariably creates.

Ok?

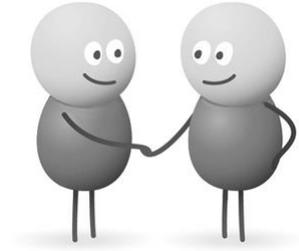
For now, let’s not think of “God” as a person like you and me, running the universe with a magic wand or sitting somewhere on a throne pulling strings.

Let’s leave those thoughts for later and go digging for truth!

## Agreement

### Agreement

Anyone who takes time to read “bibles” of various religions soon discovers that *God is essentially the same to every one of them!*



Each recognizes the One, the All, the Truth past understanding.

Each agrees God is the beginning that has no end, the uncaused cause, the creator of the universe, supreme soul, immortal, invisible, absolute, and forever beyond our finite comprehension!

The unchangeable is not changed by names we choose.

Nor by traditions taught by those who wish to be leaders.

God is not persuaded to be what we choose to believe.

God is God ... regardless what we believe.

This may seem difficult for many who've grown up with a lifelong history of church, synagogue, mosque, gurdwara, or other temple teachings.

Most people are fearful of new ideas, yet the ideas presented here are anything but new. They are as old as history itself.

Through the vast expanse of time men sought to understand the unknowable.

Most people believed as they were told to believe. Others were cruelly murdered for failing or refusing to believe as they were told to believe.

Difficult or not, this truth remains.

God is not mindful of what we wish God to be.

No religion believes otherwise.

## God Who?

God continues to be God, no matter what we believe, no matter what we are threatened to believe, no matter what ... *period!*

We all see God through different telescopes, diverse cultural perspectives, traditional observances, religious doctrines, and a disagreeable host of varied theologies.

But none of our telescopes is *perfect* ... however much we wish to believe otherwise!

God doesn't change by what we say God is.

God doesn't change by what we insist God is.

God *is* what God is.

God doesn't change by what some man in robes or feathers or a three-cornered hat proclaims.

God is the great continuously changing unchangeable everything!

And, all religions agree!

The way we individually choose to think about God changes the way we treat each other! It does not change God.

We peer at God through the fog of private interpretation, insisting *our* view is the only correct view, that the myriad views of others are incorrect, foolish, or even dangerous.

Compare telescopes with an open mind, however, and you'll see a host of wonderful truths we can *agree* about, truths that let us love each other in spite of our "religious differences", truths that promise to make our world a safer place for the children.

Though our many telescopes see God from different angles, God remains the One, Eternal, Unchangeable, Unknowable All.

## Agreement

It is written the fool says in his heart, “There is no God.”<sup>4</sup>

If a man or woman sees God as we defined “IT”, then that person is assuredly a fool to deny what *is* by definition!

Another kind of fool says, “There’s only *my* God.”

As we look through our imperfect lenses, with our imperfect wisdom, we admit to each other as brothers and sisters, “I don’t yet understand *all* of God.”

Who does?

We can look beyond private views.

We can think beyond what others tell us to think.

We can admit that none knows all that can be known.

We can share our limited understanding about God.

We can make peace with each other!

We must!

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<sup>4</sup> Psalm 14:1

God Who?

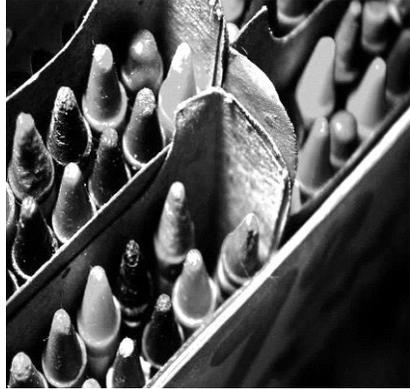
## Opposition

You've been taught *your* God is *the* God ... the *only* God.

That is *precisely* correct!

Your God *is* the only God.

If you've adopted any particular religious teachings, undoubtedly those teachings instructed you that God is One, the Alpha and Omega, the Light in which there is no darkness.



What you were *not* taught is that all religions agree about this!

Different religions have different colors, points of view, different stories, different characters ... but all recognize the *same* primal God!

The one and only God!

The God above all demi-gods.

Ignorant people who rely on others to tell them what to believe, and those who posture and present themselves to be the inerrant priestly representatives of their various denominations and doctrines, will debate me.

The first because they are blinded to any outside "truth" not approved by their priestly representatives whose inerrancy they trust without thinking.

The second (whose livelihood and social position depends on keeping their followers "under wing") because they build a neatly framed box around God with stories and approved books by which they claim to know the ultimately unknowable! They tell followers they can "know God" by reading their "bibles" or

## Opposition

by studying the character of certain people who've walked this planet in the past.

Certainly one may know more “about” God by reading and contemplating the deeds and teachings of wise men and women from the past who shared their experiences and revelations from God, yet God is beyond our ability to *know completely*, and any priestly pretense to the contrary is just that: priestly pretense.

Both insist their God is the *only* God.

Both insist they alone understand “who” God is.

Both insist they alone know what God does and why!

But, those who yearn to be priests to rule their lay followers, claiming to be oracles of what their chosen religion professes to be true, can never know *all* there is to know about God.

Nobody can know it *all!*

So, they stick to their “book”, the box where they keep their sheep secure from wondering if there might be more to know.

As of old, so today.

Competing religionists meet on an age-old battle-ground where pride insists it knows what it cannot possibly understand, pretending God and all that can be known about God has been captured and contained within the pages of their “book”.

They teach “truth” from selected texts, pretending no other texts are reliable, warning their sheep to avoid other writings.

They pen their sheep securely within the fences of doctrines.

They train their sheep to follow traditions invented by men.

Don't question.

Just believe!

## God Who?

Some threaten inescapable, eternal fiery hell for those who can't see God as they do, pulpit-pounding pastors and priests who terrify folks into "being good", warning that "being bad" will securely chain their souls in a place of utter darkness, intolerable heat, and eternal loneliness!

Such is the ignorance of men who don't yet know God.

Such is the arrogance of men who rule by royal-sounding rhetoric and pretentious claims of private priestly insight into the unknowable All that is God.

Billions yearn to be led by such men.

Billions wish others do their thinking for them.

Billions seek leaders to tell them what they want to hear!

Look back in history to the Inquisition that drenched Europe in innocent blood, filled the air with a stench of burning human bodies roasted at the stake to "convert" them to views of hateful men who knew no more about God than my toothbrush!

Such are crimes of those who prey on a fearful, guilt-ridden populace for their own profit and popularity.

The lies are perpetuated so religious leaders may be funded sufficiently to erect their temples and feed their so-called priests at the people's expense.

Their opposition to truth is driven by self-interest.

The error is not so much in what they teach but what they hide.

They could not feather their own nests if people knew other religions seek the same God!

They could not encourage followers to investigate truth that is contrary to their goal of gathering more sheep *for themselves!*

Amazing that this reality is not more widely recognized!

## Opposition

Sheep are warned not to wander from the safety of the sacred fold by seeking truth in the teachings of other religions!

So the truth revealed by this book is hidden from the ages!

Few have read as many “bibles” as I this past half-century, or they would know the consensus of religious thought on the nature of that which *all* religions call God.

Opponents of the “One and Only One God” concept refuse to read the writings of religions they fear and despise, religions they consider beneath their loftier wisdom, religions they fear will win converts from their own fold from which they rob the tithe.<sup>5</sup>

Opponents preach private interpretations of their religion’s writings, tell followers to *avoid* learning anything else, and insist their religion’s writings include “all that’s worth knowing”.

I’ve heard it said by robed men in pulpits, “All you ever need to know is in this Bible!”

Yet, every “bible” I read over the years had something of value that would benefit each of us and make our world a better, safer place for our children *if we only knew!*

God does not belong to *any* religion, nor has *any* religion a corner on truth.

Each religion has something to offer.

Some religions have more to offer than others.

Yet, each has its unique value.

All seek the same God!

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<sup>5</sup> Read the book of Malachi, the last of the Old Testament books. It was written to proclaim God’s condemnation of priests, not the laity as preachers today proclaim!

## God Who?

The knowledge of God is not exclusive to pope, priest, preacher, medicine man, mullah, or rabbi.

Those who kill or threaten hellfire in their “Name of God” have no idea what other religions say about the God they claim to adore (or know perfectly well and refuse to tell).

Most people, like sheep, are followers. This is true in *all* religious cultures. Most are content to be led by others who seek preeminence over them and receive financial support motivated by a combination of generosity and fear of God’s displeasure.

It’s as it’s been since the first man claimed to know what follows death, the unifier, the uncertain future we all share. By preying on people’s fear of death, early men made themselves priests, ruled the laity, and consorted with kings and potentates even as many do in our modern age so-called.

Rulers were propped up by priests.

It was so in Egypt, and it is so today in many nations where people know no better because the truth is seldom told.

It’s no stretch to understand that men ruling by persuasion of threats will oppose any thought that tends to undermine their claim of priestly authority and that they will resort to extreme measures, if necessary, to secure themselves in their honored position with its social and political power.

Sad, but true.

Yet!

God is God, no matter what religion you embrace.

God is God, no matter what your spiritual leaders teach.

Different names. Different viewpoints.

Same God.

## Theology

### Theology

Theology is the enemy of truth about God.

Theologians will, of course, strongly disagree with this simple statement.

Yet, it's true!

It's true because every theologian has his or her unique twist or angle on God, who God is, what God is, what God wants, how we are to please God or even how we ourselves can become God!

They all claim to know the truth about God.

That's what their books are about, the "truth" they want you to know about God from *them*.

That's what their lectures and sermons are about, the "truth" they want you to know about God from *them*.

They want you to believe God is only what *they* say, and so anyone who disagrees is wrong ... *and potentially dangerous*.

There are so many "truths" about God.

Most theologians present *some* truth about God but insist on their own private interpretations.

All recognize that God is omniscient, is omnipresent, and is omnipotent, for example.

This is true of theologians of *all* religions, Jew, Muslim, Sikh, Hindu, Buddhist, Christian, and even shamans of the Plains Indians and aboriginal cultures throughout the world.



## God Who?

All agree God is.

All agree God is the uncreated creator.

All agree God created us and not we ourselves.

All agree on those things we explored earlier in my book.

*But each puts a unique spin on particulars!*

Therein lies the problem with theology.

Partial truth parading itself as absolute truth.

Billions march mindlessly in the priests' parade, believing the "particulars" of their adopted theology somehow make them different from those who don't quite see those "particulars" in quite the same way.

Sadly, the billions are prevented by their priests from seeing that as far as the ultimate deity we call "God" is concerned, each and every one of them agree!

And the children suffer because this truth is not told!

Ignore "particulars" of this world's many theologies, and we find the entire world *in agreement* about how we got here, what holds stars in space, how gravity and magnetism came to be, and how doing good just seems to bring about good results most of the time ... *because that is what all religions believe about God!*

Not one theology is *more correct* than others, because not one is *perfectly correct* in all "particulars".

The consequence at this hour is distrust, fear, and increasing violence and senseless destruction.

It's good to hold some kind of theology, some idea about God and how God impacts our lives as individuals and nations, but refusing to see how much our theologies agree is downright dangerous in this modern world of technological warfare and

## Theology

multiple languages where differences of viewpoint tend to make enemies out of people who should be friends.

## God Who?

### Nicolaitanism

There's a three-dollar word!

What does it mean?

Why is it important?



The term *nicolaitan* is mentioned in the Christian bible in plural form without explanation.

We are left (by those who composed the books Christians call their “Bible”) to think they were a sect whose deeds God hates. Nothing more is said about them. They are not mentioned (as such) in bibles or writings of other religions.

Some “theologians” try to hide the meaning of this word by claiming *nicolaitans* were indeed a sect, followers of some man named Nicola, but the truth is something altogether different!

Odd that the Christian bible puts this word in Greek, instead of spelling out what it means in English, because when read as a Greek word *without translation* it certainly sounds like it refers to a sect (as those who hide the truth would have you believe).

In fact the word is comprised of two Greek words: *nico* and *laos*.

The first means “ruler”.

The second means “laity”, i.e., the people who follow their ruling leaders, the priests.

So, the *nicolaitans* were priests who ruled the laity.

And the Christian Bible says, God hates their rule!

Yes, according to the Christian bible, God hates the practice of ruling the laity, priesthood that holds itself in a high position

## Nicolaitanism

to sit as rulers over others, leading their flock, instead of letting the flock be led by the Good Shepherd alone!

The *nicolaitan* practice is so common today that reasonable minds may doubt it is something God hates, but, that's what the Christian bible says!

There is nothing "wrong" with leading people to recognize God in their lives. Indeed, it is a wonderful thing to do.

But, holding oneself up as an *oracle* of God, a *spokesperson* for God, an *authority* on God under which others should sit and obey is frowned upon by the Christian bible ... for good reason.

The problem is in what was said in a previous chapter about theologians.

It's been said for years, "Opinions are like noses. Everyone has one."

But, opinions differ.

Religious leaders differ among themselves.

If all religious leaders taught the same thing, why would anyone follow the same leader? People would soon learn what all the leaders taught, and *religious tolerance* would be the beautiful result.

Instead we have men (and an increasing number of women) who want to rule their roost, be top dog, hog the limelight, and be seen as great persons deserving the praise in which they bask and the financial support they glean from those who make them their go-between with God.

*Nicolaitanism* is alive and well in *every* religion.

And, God hates it (at least according to the Christians' Bible that so many *nicolaitan* leaders use to secure their power over the people)!

## God Who?

It is an artificial barrier between people and God.

It restrains people from seeking elsewhere for truth.

Instead of leading people directly to God, *nicolaitan* priests lead the people to themselves and retain them as their laity for personal pride or financial gain!

## Humanism

### Humanism

Humanism.

Sounds like a good thing.

Working for the good of humans.

Making the world a better place for humans.

That's what the American Humanist Association claims.

*But!*

Humanism is a religion all its own.

A godless religion.

In 1933 the American Humanist Association published the first Humanist Manifesto, ostensibly presenting what they called a new philosophy, a “developing point of view”, recognizing a “radical change in religious beliefs throughout the modern world”.<sup>6</sup>

They say in their Manifesto I the universe is “self-existing and not created”.

They say “religious institutions, their ritualistic forms, ecclesiastical methods, and communal activities must be reconstituted as rapidly as experience allows, in order to function effectively in the modern world.”

They call for a “socialized and cooperative economic order” for an “equitable distribution of the means of life”.

Their motto: “Good Without a God”.

Government without a Creator that gives us rights that cannot be taken away by government, totalitarian government



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<sup>6</sup> [http://americanhumanist.org/humanism/humanist\\_manifesto\\_i](http://americanhumanist.org/humanism/humanist_manifesto_i)

## God Who?

that can impose its view of future human goals and achieve those goals by force *for the good of the majority*.

The day I was born in April 1943 such a government tried its best to rule the world *without a God*.

Humanists went on to publish two more manifestos. One in 1973 and their most recent version in 2003, each more extreme in its methods to achieve “Good Without a God”.

In Manifesto II they decree we are merely biological beings, that no soul lives beyond physical death, and that religion is an “obstacle” to human progress.

Euthanasia and unfettered right to suicide are supported.

Sexual expression without regard to gender is applauded.

And they openly insist that a single world government must be established with power to enforce these “human rights”.

Probably sounds good to people who don’t think past the end of their own noses, but the consequence of this philosophy is already upon us as those of us capable of seeing past our own noses are well aware.

Manifesto III re-stated the premise set forth by the first two with an emphasis on the need to work for a “secular society”.

Still sounds great to the short-sighted, perhaps.

However, atheism has adverse consequences beyond mere denial that reality has a mind of its own independent of man’s will.

Atheism is an open war against “religion” but in its battle against “traditional human values” it misses the mark in a very serious and significant way by denying the obvious reality that the “social order” they seek to establish *cannot sustain itself*.

## Humanism

In every age eternal forces (fools call laws of nature) have determined the destiny of men and nations.

The Unseen Hand of God has marvelous power to intervene and redirect the path of man's direction in spite of man's intent and prodigious labors.

Thomas à Kempis' wrote, "Man proposes. God disposes."

This fact of life is not drawn from theology or established religious doctrine, but from mankind's experience.

One cannot live long on this planet without learning that a force outside ourselves orders not only the universe but also the destinies of men and nations.

Good begets good, because God orders it to be thus.

Selfish ambition, willful blindness to truth, ego-driven determination to control reality, and the foolishness of atheist views yields predictable consequences precisely because there *is* a mind behind the scenes, a will that refuses to bend to the blind machinations of mankind's conceited nonsense.

To deny this is nothing short of madness.

God Who?

## Churchianity

Millions are being “churched”.  
Churched away from other churches!  
Churchianity seeks only its own.  
Churchianity fills pews and plates.  
Churchianity talks about God.  
Churchianity is a powerful force.  
Churchianity has closed doors.  
Churchianity puts God in a box.  
What do I mean?



Humanists are not entirely mistaken in their abhorrence of the practice of “churching” people.

Let me begin with a few questions:

- How many church-going self-styled Christians do you know who have *studied* their Bible “cover-to-cover”?
- How many synagogue-going self-styled Jews do you know who have *studied* the Torah “cover-to-cover”?
- How many mosque-attending self-styled Muslims do you know who have *studied* the Koran “cover-to-cover”?
- How many temple-worshipping self-styled Hindus do you know who have *studied* the Vedas “cover-to-cover”?
- How many gurdwara-attending Sikhs do you know who have *studied* the Guru Granth Sahib “cover-to-cover”?

Not many I imagine.

Of those who “say” they have, only a few truly *studied* their book of faith, the book that tells them about God.

We could go on with the list, but you get the point.

## Churchianity

Most people are too lazy or disinterested to take the time to learn what the official books of their chosen religion say about God. It's too easy to let leaders take that responsibility, spoon-feeding the people with whatever the leaders happen to know (or think they know or are told by others to know).

Most worshippers, regardless of religion, believe what they believe about God because they were told what to believe. Many merely pass on what they are taught by leaders who learned the approved doctrine at seminary, yeshiva, matha, or monastery.

Direct revelation has nothing to do with it.

Sticking to what the official books say has nothing to do with it.

The laity are "churched" in all religions, told what to believe and are content to be convinced with what they are told.

Only a few aspire to be leaders. Most of those learn doctrine from others, doctrine that restricts interpretations contrary to the traditional teachings.

Thus, truth is hidden or, at least, toned down.

The "churched" are not encouraged to think for themselves. They are disciplined to think what they are taught to think, and most find comfort in this, because nothing more is expected of them.

The fact that a different group of people across the street or down the road are "churched" differently becomes proof that the other people are wrong ... and possibly dangerous!

People separate into camps, instead of joining together as fellow human beings working together to promote a peaceful world for future generations.

If they don't openly fight and bicker, they ignore each other.

They are the "churched" ... and there are billions of them!

## God Who?

Take one tiny step beyond the boundary of what the leaders say is the “truth” and you’ve got yourself a battle!

So, people hold on, insisting what they “believe” is the ultimate truth, absolute verity, unchallengeable fact ... even though they personally make little or no effort to *study* any of it for themselves.

They parrot what they’re told.

Many “churched” people worship their pope, priest, pastor, rabbi, mullah, or guru as someone who possesses super-human powers, super-human knowledge.

Meanwhile, everything “churched” people need to know is available to any seeker who will simply read the official books!

There’s nothing in the Bhagavad-Gita a sixth-grade school child cannot learn for himself or herself, and the same is true of the Torah, Guru Granth Sahib, Koran, or the Christian bible.

The Christian Bible actually says, “You need not that men teach you, for you have the instruction of God *within* you!”<sup>7</sup>

The central truth they claim to know so much about is God the giver, God the creator, God the sustainer, God the Life that pervades each of us *according to every religion on Earth!*

Every religion agrees!

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<sup>7</sup> 1<sup>st</sup> John 2:27

## Dualism

### Dualism

Dualism is a mindset common to us all.

It's an habitual thinking we all possess, causing us to see ourselves as separate from others and separate from God "up there" somewhere.

It is thinking God is somewhere "not here".

It is contrary to what every religion says about God.

Every religion teaches that God is *everywhere* ... in your heart, your bloodstream, the food you eat, the rain that falls on your head, and the laughter of children.

Dualism is a dark drapery we draw across the window of our mind so we cannot see God.

It is tapestry on which we paint what we wish to see, instead of looking through the window to see what *is!*

Dualism is called *Maya* in certain Eastern religions, a spirit of error personified as an inchoate being that seduces us to hide from the certainty of death, believing things can insulate us from eternal consequence, from each other, from love, from joy, from life itself and, of course, from God who is within each of us as well as all around us *as every religion teaches*.

We live in a world of things.

With each passing day the things we want to "own" become more numerous, more enticing, and usually more expensive.

We groan to own.

We aspire to acquire.



## God Who?

And *Maya* laughs at our foolish blindness.

We take *nothing* with us when we leave this life behind.

Not family, not things, and certainly not money.

We die naked and alone, each and every one of us.

Though our death bed be surrounded by tearful friends and family, they will mourn us only a short while and, with time, they will forget us as we have each forgotten others who died, and finally those friends and family will pass into eternity just as we will.

We take nothing with us when we leave this life.

God ordains this ultimate truth ... now and forever.

*Maya* laughs at us who strive with resolute determination to insulate ourselves from Truth who *is* God in every religion.

*Maya* sidetracks us into selfish activities that have no lasting purpose, no enduring value.

*Maya* deceives us into thinking what we see is all there is!

*Maya* says, "God is 'up there' somewhere far way."

*Maya* says, "God cannot see me."

*Maya* says, "God cannot hear me."

*Maya* says, "God doesn't care about me."

And this insidious infection seeps deep into our souls and spreads into every aspect of our lives.

*Maya* tricks us into living as if there were no God, no Truth.

Dualism says, "You and I are separate."

*But, in the eternal scheme of things, are we really?*

To imagine we are one requires us to set aside our dualistic view of reality, the view we had when we were born, the view

## Dualism

we had when we threw our strained spinach on the floor from our high chair and kicked our feet until we got what we wanted.

To imagine you and I are one requires us to go into a quiet place, to be “one” with God and then one with each other.

There is too much noise in our world.

In silent introspection Truth is found, as say all religions.

We discover God by silencing the noisy distractions of this world, going to our “special place” where we *feel* across space and time, where we disappear as individuals and realize we are in fact one with God.

Strange yet true, as all religions agree.

We are one with God *right now*, as all religions agree.

We can slow down to discover what every religion knows, or we can continue pursuing our lives as if the day of truth will never dawn, as if we are somehow different from every other human who has come and gone before us, and as if God is “up there” somewhere far away.

Every religion on this planet teaches in their holiest and most sacred writings we are one with God *right now!*

*Maya* tricks us into believing otherwise.

Wisdom sees *Maya* for what she is, an optical illusion that makes us think what we see is all there is.

God remains.

Eternal Truth, existing in all time and all places ... even *within* you at this very moment!

God is *near* ... as all religions teach!

God is *never* far away ... as every religion agrees.

God is *ever* present!

## God Who?

It is we who hide from God, not God who hides from us.

We hide because we are dualistic beings by nature.

That's not to say our dualistic nature cannot change. It can. It assuredly can. Change that is the goal of all religions.

It requires only that we *let go* of the lies of dualism, that we are separate, different from others, and that God is far away.

This means letting go of ego, denying self, something none of us want to do. We want what we want when we want it, and once we have it we hold onto it with amazing tenacity as if we could keep it forever!

In this serious game of life we've taken up a poisonous viper and embraced it as our friend. Our fear of death has driven us to adopt a view of life that is not true, a view that shuts out God, blind to the Unity that binds us together in a mystic bond.

How silly.

Yet, how commonplace and ordinary.

We don't think about the lies of *Maya*, the deceit of duality.

Instead, we go merrily on our way believing God is "up there" somewhere far away.

Many display bumper stickers, "God is my co-pilot."

That's what *Maya* wants!

*Maya* wants you to live in dualism, believing you're unique and not at all like others, that God is *outside* you.

Sadly, for many, God is never truly *real*.

Churched people create (or adopt from their leaders) a view of God "outside" them, separate from them, "up there" waiting to answer their prayers with miracles when they find themselves in such dire straits they don't know what to do to but pray.

## Dualism

And then they pray to someone “up there”.

Dualism.

*Maya!*

A day will dawn when we will know how we wasted years of life hiding from what we truly are and who God truly is.

*Maya* tricks us into believing The Great Lie.

The most dangerous, because we so want to believe we are unique, separate from God, masters of our fate, captains of our own souls.

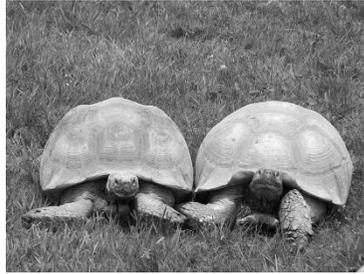
Every one of this world’s religions teaches against this lie!

## God Who?

### Ethnocentrism

Ethnocentrism is just a fancy word describing how birds of a feather stick together.

Or, if you prefer, turtles and us silly humans as well.



The word is related to ethnicity but has little to do with race or culture.

Ethnocentrism goes far beyond race or culture.

Fans of certain football teams often “hang together” as do people who enjoy square dancing or lawn bowling.

Anywhere people share a common interest or common view of the world around them, they “clump” *ethnocentrically!*

It’s part of being human.

And, there’s usually not much harm in it.

*But!*

When it comes to religion, ethnocentrism causes divisions as people with similar views, similar doctrines, similar ideas about how to dress, how to eat, how to pray, whether to sing or dance, whether to gather for worship on Saturday or Sunday or another day, what to read, how to greet each other, and how to deal with people who disagree ... *by peaceful dialog or violence.*

Ethnocentrism makes people cluster around leaders who promote ideas they share.

Take Jim Jones who in 1978 convinced nearly 1,000 men, women, and children to drink Kool-Aid laced with cyanide, or Adolf Hitler who convinced a nation to make war on the world.

People like Jones and Hitler are not the problem.

## Ethnocentrism

*Ethnocentrism is!*

If people did not follow Jones and Hitler, there'd have been no Jonestown Massacre, no German invasion of Poland.

Most people are followers, not critical thinkers.

They huddle with others of like mind, cling to leaders.

Give a man something to huddle about, and he will huddle.

Racial ethnocentrism is the most obvious and possibly the most harmless. Asians tend to live in neighborhoods with other Asians. African Americans seek the company of other African Americans. The same goes for the Poles, Italians, and Irish.

It's part of human nature to want to be around others with whom you share your ideas and values.

*But!*

Religion is unique!

Religion touches every part of our lives.

Even atheists are affected by what they *believe about God!*

Religion decides our political views, economic theories, and what kind of government we want to rule us.

When religious followers make war against other religious followers, bad things happen for us all, financial upset, political unrest and, increasingly in this age of terror, open violence.

For what?

Differences of opinion so captivate people they cannot (or will not) see the common ground where God is.

People argue over minor religious issues, casting aside all hope of peaceful dialog by which they might learn to accept the minor differences in favor of the peaceful Truths every religion shares about God.

## God Who?

So what if one man believes God wears a crown and another does not? Is that reason to hate each other?

So what if one man believes God gave prophet Mohammad directions to write the Koran and another believes Mohammad made it all up. Is that any reason for those two to make war on each other?

Who will ever know?

What does it matter?

The Koran says what it says, and whether God or an angel or a voice in the back of his head told Mohammed to write the book is certainly no reason to kill innocent women and children ... *yet the killing continues!*

So what if one man believes Jesus walked on water and another is quite certain that feat is impossible?

Does the truth of God change in any way by opinions?

What if we all hung together by agreeing God (as defined in the first chapter of my book) exists and that we can rejoice as God directs us, guides us, counsels us, and gives us life to live?

That would be ethnocentrism at its finest!

Why not?

## Language

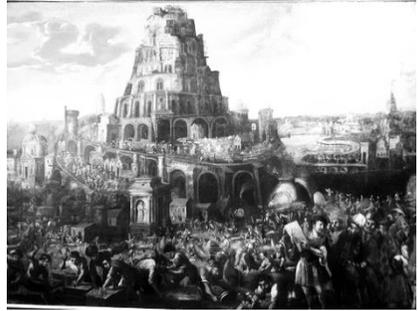
### Language

The Tower of Babel.

All religions agree there was such a tower built by men bound together by a common language.

All men could work together sharing the same language.

But the work was displeasing to God.



The tower was being built by foolish men seeking to reach up to be God's equal, so God confounded their language so they could no longer understand each other, and the work stopped.

Before the Tower, humans had a single language

After the Tower, they were separated in groups that could no longer communicate with each other.

Each could only communicate within their own group.

Separate groups could not talk to each other.

Once the world had one language, as all religions agree.

Then, in the blink of God's eye humanity was thrown into verbal turmoil.

We see the sad result today: nation against nation, mankind against mankind, walls and boundaries where there should be love and cooperation.

What a fantastic world if we all spoke one language.

But we don't.

So we think we are *different* from others.

And we clump.

## God Who?

Then we believe what our clump believes.

We separate ourselves from members of other clumps who don't believe as we do.

We conclude they are wrong and possibly dangerous.

God remains unchanged.

If only we all wrote and spoke one language. Who knows? Perhaps we would begin to think the same things about how the universe got here, what makes magnets attract each other turned one way and repel each other when reversed, and what we might do together to make this world safer for our children who have no choice but to inherit the consequence of our failures.

We have technology today that allows Vietnamese to speak directly to Germans through apps available for free on our cell phones, and it won't be long before simpler devices are created to transfer thought directly from one mind to another regardless of language barriers! So, it is inconceivable that humanity with all its inventive talent will not soon bridge the language gap in ways that will astound us all and, we hope, secure peace and understanding such as the world has not yet known.

In the meantime, we can read translations of religious books of other beliefs and discover the truth of what *this* book claims.

The world's religions *all* view the primal God (the one Jesus called "Father", the one Sikhs know as the Unspoken Name, the one Jews believe singled them out as "chosen people", the one held in highest regard by Buddhists and Hindus alike).

*All identically the same!*

Language barriers get in the way.

Yet "bibles" of every religion are readily available online translated into every known language of the civilized world.

Let the age of peace begin!

## Language

We can hold onto our differences about “particulars” of our individually chosen religion while we agree we all worship the same primal God ... the One who hung the stars in space.

We can continue to use different names and different stories to embellish our separate particular views.

However, a shared view of God should be our goal ... not the predominance of any particular sect or schism ... of which there are already far too many separating and dividing us!

Many paths.

Far too many!

While *all* religions agree, “There is but One God over all!”

## Children's Fables

Grumpy, Doc, Sneezzy, and the loveable Bashful aren't real, though children raised with this endearing fairy tale remember Snow White befriending the little fellows as if they were real and not imaginary.



When I was a small child, my dear Mother told me not to fear the roar of thunder, assuring me the rumbles overhead were merely God moving furniture.

I believed her and was certain Grumpy was the embodiment of one of my cantankerous uncles.

To little boys and girls, God is imagined as someone kind, immensely powerful, and “up there” somewhere. We were all taught God is someone “up there” looking down on us.

So, it's no stretch for a small boy to believe God has chairs and tables “up there”. I never thought to ask why God waited for thunderstorms to move His furniture.

We were told by parents and priests, “God is ‘up there’.”

And later as adults the most serious sermons indicated God was still “up there”, running the show from heaven (though we had no idea where that might be), calling the shots, watching out for bad little boys with slingshots and bad older men and women who did naughty things that make God angry.

That's what we were told.

That's what many are *still* told.

And, that's what most believe!

God is “up there” ... wherever “up there” might be.

## Children's Fables

Millions are led to believe God is a very old man with a very long white beard, as Michelangelo's vision appears on the dome of the Sistine Chapel at the Vatican in Rome. Christian Sunday School books portray God as a very old man with a long white beard residing "up there" high above us all.

Many religions say God created *us* in His image, so it's not difficult to imagine God with legs, feet, hands, nose, and a very long white beard.

*But!*

When we were told God makes flowers grow, moves stars and planets around, causes rain and earthquakes, makes snow, paints evening skies with lovely sunsets, *we had a problem!*

If God is one old man living "up there" somewhere with a long white beard and only two hands, it's inconceivable He can be in charge of absolutely *everything*.

Yet, that's what millions are told.

And, that's what millions struggle as adults to believe.

So, the world has a problem, because we were taught a lie!

When I meet a man who says, "I don't believe in God," it's easy to understand why. Who in their right mind can imagine an old bearded man with only two hands and feet like the rest of us finding time to steer stars across the sky, paint sunsets, cause flowers to grow, keep every one of our billions of hearts beating, and do all the other things we were told God does?

Why weren't we told the truth?

Why weren't we told what every religion agrees about God?

Why weren't we told God is the Great Ordered Doing, the Creator as well as Creation, the All in whom we live and move and have our being?

## God Who?

That's what God *is!*

Instead we were taught theological traditions and doctrines approved by the high-ranking leaders of the *business end* of the organizations that build temples, pay priests, and train the young who aspire to preach their chosen "religion".

The truth about God (on which every religion's books agree) is clouded with opinions and interpretations that create walls and divisions between us ... unnecessary walls and divisions!

If God is "in our image" (the unavoidable corollary of what many are told) God must have a difficult time keeping track of all the puppy dogs, jungle parrots, polar bears, palm trees and coconuts, sunsets, sunrises, earthquakes, and tornadoes, while keeping more than seven billion human souls alive.

Even Santa Claus needs helpers to get ready for the all-night trip from house-to-house delivering toys!

Does God have helpers to paint sunsets, make flowers grow, and put smiles on babies?

We were never told so.

Not being told the truth about God (on which *all religions agree* in their official writings) is making atheists of some and terrorists of others.

We are lost in traditions and fables.

We can build bridges of peace by beginning to acknowledge fundamentals on which we can *all* agree ... without abandoning any of our separate ideas, doctrines, theologies, and traditions.

Children fight.

"My Dad is bigger than your Dad!"

"My dog is smarter than your dog."

"My God is better than your God."

## Children's Fables

And so it goes.

And with it the destiny of mankind.

## God Who?

### Inebriation

There's not a single religion on this planet that does not teach that God communicates with all of us in one way or another.

All religions agree, "God talks to us."



If we have ears to hear!

Men and women (who aren't so in love with their own ego that they hear only their own thoughts) sometimes "hear" God's counsel, God's approval, God's wisdom, God's guidance, God's comfort, God's Truth.

The noise of "self" crowds out the still small voice of God.

Self silences Truth so self can be god and have its own way.

When Truth breaks through in disaster and disappointments that side-track self's plans and schemes, self seeks other ways to shut God out lest self be discovered naked and alone.

Self uses many ways to silence the voice of God.

Self hides in darkness.

### **Drugs**

If you smoke marijuana or eat psychedelic mushrooms and listen for God's voice, you *will* hear voices that aren't your own. You may believe God is talking to you. The more you listen, the more you'll hear.

Listen closely and you'll soon discover they are not friendly voices. The deeper you go into the darkness, the more you will think you're discovering a hidden reality never before known.

Then reality will take a wolfish turn.

## Inebriation

Those voices from the darkness will eventually trouble your soul and, if God shows mercy, they will frighten you away from the drugs. The voices become more menacing. Threatening faces appear. What seemed like fun becomes a nightmare.

God is not in that darkness.

You'll want to escape. Drown out the voices with music or distracting conversation. Run around the block. Throw water in your face. Anything to get free of the taunts and accusations.

Or, you may dive deeper into the darkness and go blind as well as deaf to God.

### ***Alcohol***

If drugs are not your thing, have a few drinks and listen for God's voice.

Self will soar to prominent preeminence in self's own eyes, the place where self is most content, and God's voice will not be heard.

Self expands in alcohol.

The ears of the soul go deaf.

Don't believe it?

Go on the wagon for a few days, totally sober (no drugs, no alcohol) and go to a quiet place to think how much you have to be thankful for and listen for God's comfort.

Now toss back a few ounces of rum and see what happens.

Within seconds your God connection will dissolve!

Try to keep on praying as you drink more.

Try it, and soon you'll forget all about God.

Alcohol blocks God's voice.

## God Who?

It amplifies self.

### **Food**

Food in large or frequent quantities can do the same thing.

That's why all religions encourage fasting, going without food for a time to open the soul's ears so God can communicate past the self and become real to your soul.

Some carry fasting to extremes, thinking there's goodness in going without food that will gain God's favor, that the sacrifice will gain will some spiritual prize.

That's not what it's for at all!

We fast to hear God's voice ... not to win a separate favor.

Hearing God's voice is favor enough.

There is nothing half so wonderful as hearing God's voice guiding you to do the right thing, calling you from something dangerous to you or others, encouraging you to step toward a new adventure, or simply assuring you in times of trouble, "It's going to be ok. I'll be with you through it all."

That joy is denied to those who use drugs, alcohol, or food to dull their sensitivity to God's presence in their lives. Indeed, drugs, alcohol, and overmuch food cause us to believe what is not good for us and ultimately draw us to destruction of self or others.

Drugs, alcohol, and overmuch food are spiritual "noise".

They prevent us from experiencing the greatest joy of life, knowing God in a personal, intimate way deep within us.

God speaks to us through silence. The saying, "Be still and know I Am God," is fundamental in all religions.

## Personification of Satan

Satan is God's opposite.

Since God is all that really *is*, satan is all that really *isn't*.

But, you were taught that satan is real!

You were taught that satan has power, as if darkness could drive light away.

That's what is taught.

And many believe!

Where light is removed, darkness invades. Indeed, darkness has no choice but to invade where light is not.

But, darkness has *no* power to drive away the light, just as lies cannot destroy truth.

Only by believing lies do we give them power.

That which is "not" has no power over that which "is".

Darkness has no power over light.

Lies have no power over truth ... *unless we believe them!*

Those who teach otherwise do so to keep their flock in fear. They act either out of pure self-interest or sheer ignorance.

Fear satan if you choose.

Fear the devil and the minion demons.

However, fear can drive you to do terrible things, to yourself as well as to others.

Children fear darkness. We are adults! We know better.



## God Who?

Darkness has no power.

Fear God!

Fear losing God's light.

For as sure as night follows day, darkness destroys lives as soon as God's light disappears.

While God is with you, within you, at your ear, teaching and guiding you, there's *nothing* darkness or satan can do to you.

Darkness (i.e., satan and the lies we foolishly call demons) will kill those you love if they are turned from God's light by false teachers who teach us to fear that which is not real.

It's loss of God's light that hurts us, not satan's "power".

To fear what is only real in one's imagination is foolish.

It is the root of clinical insanity.

Give *no* power to darkness, fear, or falsehoods!

Flee from them, and they will flee from you.

So say *all* religions on this planet ... *all of them!*

Fools declare, "The devil made me do it." In fact whatever wrongs we do result from foolishly turning our back and closing our ears to the counsel and guidance of God, filling our life with the noise of drugs, alcohol, and other noise that blocks the voice of God, choosing to let one's ego sit on the throne of life.

The devil doesn't make anyone do anything.

Turn darkness on a daffodil to see what happens. The flower will wilt and die, but it's not darkness that kills the flower. It is the absence of life-giving light.

It's time for all of us to stop blaming the darkness and take a look at our selfs ... collectively as nations and as individuals.

## Personification of Satan

It is true that religions throughout the world teach there is a demon force (for lack of a better term) that works to destroy the lives of men and nations. But, every religion knows the force that destroys life is not a supernatural “being” or “beings” but the consequence of believing lies, allowing darkness, removing light, giving in to fear, making choices driven by ego without regard to foreseeable consequences, and deceit of self-interested leaders who refuse to teach that satan so-called is nothing but the personification of darkness, ignorance, and unfortunate tendency of man to run from Truth so self can be its own god.

The choice to engage in extra-marital sex, drink rum like a sailor, snort lines of cocaine, cheat on taxes, and lie in business, results not from some external force of darkness compelling us to destructive behavior but from our individual choices to listen to and believe lies.

Demonic influences abound and have their bad results.

There’s no denying it.

But they have no power of their own.

Rum cannot make you drink it.

A beautiful woman cannot make you leave your wife.

Cocaine cannot get up your nose without your effort.

If you cheat on taxes or lie in business, it’s your own choice.

Satan is a lie, but lies seem “real” to those who believe them and act on them.

When humans believe lies, we always pay a bitter price.

When nations believe lies, they collapse!

God Who?

## **Ideas not Men**

Who leads you?

Other humans?

Persuasive rhetoric?

Or are you led by ideas that you independently believe on your own?

Are principles your compass?

Or preachers and priests?

Are you swayed by public opinion, what others think of you, which way the political wind is blowing, or what your “spiritual leader” proclaims as “truth”?



Do you dare to think for yourself?

Or, are you a sheep in someone else’s sheepfold, trusting in the strength and courage of others to protect you from the wolves?

I hope you think for yourself.

I hope you question everything you read and hear.

I hope you make decisions based on principle tried and true, and not what others tell you or fables you were taught to believe as a child.

God does not change.

All this world’s religions agree!

God is truth.

God is reality.

God is reliable.

## Ideas not Men

God can be trusted.

Men and man's ideas about truth cannot be trusted.

Wise persons seek truth by revelation from God.

It is not a rapid process. Most of us stumble along the way. We get lost in the darkness of opinions, our own and those of others who seek dominion over us.

Yet, gradually the light of truth is revealed as God prepares us to receive it.

A wise man wrote long ago, "When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child, but when I became a man I put away childish things."

There is no bogey man hiding in your bedroom closet ready to jump out and grab you by the throat when the lights go out.

There is no gain in alcohol, illicit sex, drugs, or anything else that closes your ears to the voice of God.

There is no gain in making choices to please your "friends".

Truth should guide us ... not what other people say or do.

When we weigh ideas in the light God gives our minds, the truth comes out and principles emerge.

Principles never change.

Principles never lie.

Principles never lead you down the path to destruction.

God is not a matter of men's opinions!

The fact there *are* so many opinions about God ought to tip us off to the undeniable fact that they can't *all* be right!

In the long run God is God.

## God Who?

Eternal, unchanging, everywhere pervading, alive, and deciding destinies of both individuals and nations by principles that never change!

We can find those principles and hold fast to them.

They are not hiding from us.

They are clearly in front of us.

But, so long as we listen to others and allow public-opinion or the current “political correctness” to numb our minds until nothing matters but paychecks and how to spend them, the principles we need to guide our individual lives and the lives of our nations and of this world our children must soon inherit will avail us nothing.

We’re prospectors mining for gold in fields of diamonds. We see only what we want to see, seek only what we want for ourselves, while the great value we truly need is nearer than hands and feet.

God.

Reality!

We are like rats led by the music of the Pied Piper’s flute, willing to be deceived by whatever entertainment attracts us.

In the late 1930’s, even through the end of World War II, men and women willingly believed the lies of Adolf Hitler!

Jim Jones convinced nearly 1,000 followers to drink Kool Aid laced with cyanide killing men, women, and children!

Hollywood and TV entertainment has taught you there’s no harm in being sexually intimate before marriage.

The United States Supreme Court has convinced many that marriage may be other than union of one man and one woman, and we haven’t heard the end of that lie yet.

## Ideas not Men

Do you think for yourself, seeking truth from God alone, or do you prefer to seek acceptance from the crowd, tag after the Pied Piper's rats, go blind like the German people under Hitler, end up lost in drugs and divorce along with the Hollywood stars, and believe that whatever courts say is moral about marriage and abortion somehow changes truth?

We live by choices.

We die by choices.

Which will it be?

God the Truth, as seen by all this world's religions?

Or a child's game of follow-the-leader, letting others decide for you and your family what truth is?

Whatever truth might be, it isn't changed by men's opinions.

Truth is Truth.

God is God.

The sooner we start seeking the wisdom *all* religions have been teaching for thousands of years, the sooner we will begin to see peace and prosperity flourish on our planet.

Or, we can continue being ignorant followers and perish.

God is not fooled.

God decides our future based on what we decide today.

Every religion agrees on this.

Only fools deny it.

God Who?

## Small Grace

Many religious organizations cash in on bigger crowds and more money in the passing plates by teaching “grace”.

Most teach “small grace”.

Most have no idea of greater grace.

None teach grace for what it is.

Grace is God’s sovereign mercy.

Some teach, “Grace is unmerited favor,” but it is not “favor” at all. It is *mercy!*

God’s mercy.

And, when one reads the official writings of every religion on our planet (including the Christian Bible) they all agree that is exactly what grace is: *mercy*, not favor!

Grace has nothing to do with favor.

It has everything to do with God’s “intent”, what God wants to be and what God wants to happen.

God decides.

God decides on whom He will grant mercy and from whom He will deny mercy. That’s why we call it grace.

It’s entirely up to God. God chooses, not us.

Most Christian denominations teach, “You are saved by Grace,” encouraging followers to believe they are safe from hell and secured in an eternal home in heaven because Jesus died on that Roman cross and rose from the grave.

That’s where they leave it.

Small grace.



## Small Grace

*But!*

Grace goes far beyond that simple view.

The laity is not taught the pure sovereignty of God, because many Christian denominations aim at teaching the laity “how to live their lives to gain God’s favor”. It’s a contradiction!

If Grace is Grace and God is purely sovereign, then how we live our lives does *not* alter God’s intention.

All the world’s religions teach there are two paths to life: the path you make for yourself and the path God guides you upon.

There are men and women whose self-will controls them.

They say they are free ... free to do as they wish.

*Wrong.*

Within the complex concept of “free will” is God’s decision to grant us the grace to choose wisely or to allow us to wander in self-will apart from God’s gracious direction.

People guided by self-will apart from God’s will encounter the consequences of God’s will. End runs are never successful (though they may seem so in the short run).

God’s sovereignty cannot be escaped or evaded.

Else God is not God!

We may think we have “free will” to run our lives as we please, but in reality grace kicks in ... the grace that is *not* the pleasant “favor” spoken of in Christian churches.

God wants what God wants.

We want what we want.

When the two are in conflict trouble follows.

Every religion teaches this.

## God Who?

God has mercy on whom God has mercy.

It is God's decision ... not ours.

Otherwise grace is not grace.

If you're prompted by God's voice to do a good deed today, that prompt and the resulting deed is by God's grace and mercy, not your "free will".

The only "free will" you have is to ignore the prompting or to joyfully follow with faith in the anticipated good outcome for all concerned.

We are not the author of our goodness.

There's not one religion that teaches otherwise.

We can struggle to be good and kind and generous, however our choice to make that struggle, just as our degree of success in the attempt, is according to God's grace and mercy.

There is no escape.

We are not the author of our salvation. God is.

Those deceived by dualism who think God is "up there", outside them, ready to lend a hand when called upon, just don't get it. They are trapped in the lie that they are sovereign beings who decide their future by what they do today, believing with the poet Henley they are "captains of their souls".

Entire societies and cultures are deceived this way.

After all, it "seems" we *are* making our own decisions, but God's grace and mercy always decide the result of our choices.

Our ability to make choices is by God's grace and mercy.

So say all religions.

Small grace leaves people believing they are in control of their lives. It is a powerful lie, because it appears to be so true!

## Small Grace

Only by grace is Truth revealed.

Only by God's mercy can we understand this mystery.

Yet the world's religions teach, "If you do anything "good" it is God's sovereign will working work *through* you by God's sovereign mercy and grace."

God *is*, after all, the ultimate and eternal Sovereign, not us.

Hard this is to accept until God reveals His greater grace.

Small grace is pabulum fed to babies, trinket religion to draw in the masses, something the masses desperately want to believe, teaching that tickles their itching ears.<sup>8</sup>

Greater grace puts us under God's control in *everything!*

The self-willed man merely wills himself to ultimate sorrow and destruction.

The God-led man choosing to hear and act on God's Spirit wooing him from deep within finds contentment, joy, and every form of genuine success this life can provide.

Greater grace is deep, unfathomable, beyond understanding.

Greater grace is the reality in which we live and move and have our being!

Greater grace triggers genuine thanksgiving, as we realize we are entirely at the mercy of an unseen God and that whatever success we find is truly a gift.

Such awareness of God we are blessed to obtain is by grace and grace alone ... not long hours of study or self-sacrifice.

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<sup>8</sup> 2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy 4:3

## God Who?

I pray God is revealing this truth to you, for by its nature (as all religions teach), you will know it *only* when by God's grace and mercy it is revealed to you by God's Spirit *within* you.

This is the wisdom that changes minds and saves souls, but it is received only when God grants His glance of grace.

So long as a man or woman stands resolutely believing he or she is in control of his or her life, this mystery remains hidden. The smaller grace they hear from lost leaders satisfies them. It scratches their itching ears.

God is in control of *everything!*

This is what one learns about God by studying the official writings of *all* religions.

Every religion has novice initiates, beginners eager to learn and too soon believing themselves to have attained the greater knowledge that makes them wise and eternally secure.

Those who live long discover they are not wise, not good, not *anything* ... but by God's mercy and grace.

This is the greater grace we need to learn and accept.

Small grace is for small people.

Greater grace is wisdom never fully attained by anybody in this limited space of time we call life.

But it can be partially understood.

It does change lives.

It *will* bring world peace when God reveals it to us all.

## Multitheism

### Multitheism

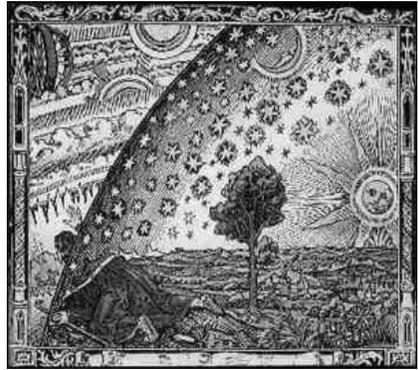
Don't many religions have more than one god?

They do.

Some have thousands.

Gods with a little "g".

Study their official writings and see that each has a *supreme* deity, their primal God, the One God above all others.



One God identical to the One God of all other religions.

Different names.

Same character, same characteristics.

Same eternal Reality.

Same Truth.

In fundamental Hinduism, for example, there are many gods, but only one *supreme* God, whom they call *Brahman* or ultimate reality, the cause of all that exists, the essence of truth that binds us all as one.

This is not one bit (other than the name) a different God from that of Muslims, Jews, Christians, Sikhs, Plains Indians, or any other of a host of religions that teach the unity of all that is.

While it's true that Hindus (like members of many other religions) consider many *lesser* gods (some even worshipping certain advanced humans as "gods" or "gurus"), it remains so that everyone agrees that Reality is God, and God is Reality.

God is Truth.

## God Who?

We are all part of that Truth.

And that Truth is inexorably part of us ... whether we admit it or not!

Being self-centered and ego-driven, we create “decorations” to adorn our religious traditions: theologies, doctrines, historical tales of how previous followers of our chosen religion struggled with God, Truth, and the inescapable Reality that confounds us.

We are so blind.

Our “decorations” are important, fables, histories, traditions and doctrines – all are valuable to perpetuate, give purpose, and punctuate our individual faiths with unique colors and contrasts that fit our culture.

In context, seen through the windows of official writings or bibles, these “decorations” and *ways of thinking are valid.*

Your religion and mine may vary wildly, however we both know (or should know) the primal God of our faith is none other than the God of all faiths: Truth, Reality, Cause of Causes.

Imagine a world where we all wake one morning and realize the God we seek, the God on whom we hang all our hopes for life in whatever form it may take both now and beyond this body we occupy, is the *same* God.

I don't worship the sun, moon, or stars ... but I worship the God that made them what they are ... and so do 99% of people with whom we share this planet.

The only ones who don't are fools we call atheists, fools that refuse to recognize the Great Ordered Being, fools in reasonable inability to accept that old man in a long white beard controlling absolutely everything with puppet strings from “up there”, like stupid self-interested religious leaders teach!

I don't call God *Brahma, Zeus, or Hashem.*

## Multitheism

To hundreds of millions of others these are God's names.

No matter what name we choose, we'd be wise to remember it is just "our" name or a name we've been taught by others to use when referring to the All that is beyond names, beyond naming, beyond all that is, ultimately indescribable.

So, an ancient shepherd tending his flocks by night might look at the moon as it illuminates his fields and think of that apparent source of light as god-like, but he would also recognize the life blood sustaining his sheep as god-like, and when the sun drove away the darkness every morning he would see the sun as god-like and give thanks for its warmth, the river, the wind, and all beyond his comprehension.

But he would also know that beyond these things there is a power that makes every one of them what they are, gives them motion, and even gives him the ability to think of them as the majesties they are.

Our ancient shepherd gave thanks to that One, though he never entered a temple nor heard a single sermon!

Were it not for false teachers we might sooner come to the same wise conclusion. Were it not for men and women who claim to know what *by definition* is beyond knowing we might all begin to see we are, indeed, the children of that One.

Wars might cease.

Peace would thrive where now we have division and war.

Occasionally, I hear men who want to be seen as wise make fun of people from other lands who reportedly worship rocks and trees, not seeing their own ignorance, for God is in each of those rocks and trees ... or God is not God at all!

We need to stop to smell the flowers and examine them for signs of God.

## God Who?

I have never seen a flower or a tree or a mountain or a forest stream that did not show forth my God and yours ... the God we could be seeking today as one people.

We can search with our unique telescope but always looking higher for that greater Truth that binds us and promises peace for every little boy and girl, every man and woman, every soul who shares with us at this hour the certainty of a moment when Truth will come upon us suddenly as we leave behind our lives, loves, and all chances we had to work together for something better.

## Doctrine

### Doctrine

How I hate that word.  
We're not like you!  
You're not like us!  
Like the word "division".  
You're not good enough.  
We're better than you!  
I believe one thing.  
You believe another.



We must hate each other!  
How monstrous it is!  
We are so blind to what we already believe in common.  
Doctrine creates sects.

Doctrine creates separateness.

Doctrine blinds us to God!

Doctrine separates us into camps where we each pitch our tent in a circle centered on an always somewhat imperfect truth.

We end up worshipping our doctrine and missing God!

We promulgate our doctrine, gather in groups to share our precious doctrine, shutting out everyone who disagrees.

If any single doctrine was the only *perfectly true* doctrine, why are there so many separate factions or sects each with their own doctrine?

They can't all be true!

## God Who?

Let's search for the portions of the many disparate doctrines in which we can agree and build bridges that so need building.

Two young girls look at clouds on the horizon.

“Oh, Suzy. Do you see that funny rabbit with the big floppy ears in that cloud over there?”

“I see a silly monkey hanging from a tree, Betty.”

Same cloud!

Two old men look at their ancient books.

“Aashif! Do you not see we are nearer to knowing God than ever before in the history of time?”

“My dear, Benjamin. The sea and sky are still one as ever.”

A Zen tradition says a certain monk named Bodidharma had a persistent follower who wished to know the secret of life. This sad man could not find happiness, while Bodidharma seemed to enjoy even the rain and times of hunger and pain. For years this follower tracked in the footsteps of the Buddhist monk.

One day to rid himself of the persistent interrogation, the old monk entered a cave to meditate, leaving his follower outside.

This gloomy follower, at his wits end in search for the truth of happiness he hoped one day to learn from the monk, cut off his arm and carried it into the cave as a token of desire to learn.

“What is the secret, oh great one?” he asked.

Bodhidarma turned to the man and said, “Nothing much.”

Life is forever a mystery.

As is God.

No doctrine can contain that mystery.

Nor reveal it completely!

## Doctrine

Why argue among ourselves over what cannot be known?

Is it not time we concentrate on finding what we can believe together?

## Eschatology

Eschatology is the study of that which by definition cannot be known *until it happens!*

It is study of what religions “think” will happen *someday*.

What amazing fascination it holds for those who make religion their hobby, studying day and night to discern from their writings what cannot now be known!

People naturally want to know what happens when they die, what will happen when the world ends, when time stops, when the final bell is tolled.

Can’t blame anyone for wanting to know.

If we *could* know, we certainly should *want* to know.

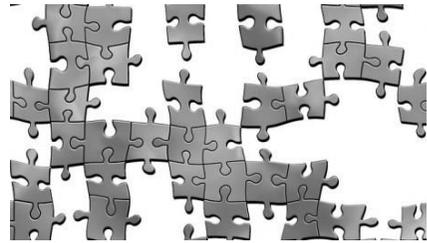
But trying to know or professing to know what will happen in some distant future is typical of those who don’t know God as the wisest leaders of this world’s religions know God.

Only God knows!

That will never change (poser priests’ propositions to the contrary notwithstanding).

TV preachers quote from the book of Daniel and John’s Revelation and profess to *know* things they cannot possibly know, claiming obscure verses say what they want them to say so they can mesmerize followers who hang on every word and send their money in to finance bogus “ministries”.

I started to read a popular book some 50 years ago written by a prominent “Christian authority” highly respected in some circles of Christendom so-called. The book was about the final battle of Armageddon.



## Eschatology

The author accurately quoted scripture so one might tend to trust what he had to say, since the Bible seemed to back him up.

But, in an early chapter he mentions a bottomless pit out of which smoke ascended “as from a great furnace”, and with the smoke came locusts that had power like scorpions to sting with their tails. Thus says the Book of Revelation in the Christian Bible.

So I read on.

But then, this well-known author who has TV shows (as of this writing) teaches at a seminary, and has written more than 20 books, stated that the locusts *were* modern attack helicopters.

He did not say they “might” be helicopters.

He said they *were* helicopters.

I stopped on that page and tossed his book in the trash.

If he had said the Revelation prophecy of locusts with stings in their tails *might* be attack helicopters, I probably would have kept on reading. After all, at the time of publication it was hailed as a non-fiction best seller.

However, you and I have no time to waste reading books of non-fiction that propose as “fact” what cannot be known.

Yet that is exactly what eschatology is, predicting the future in great detail from vague scriptural materials.

Eschatology, well presented, can bamboozle a large crowd and make the eschatologist seem a very wise person.

So can a hot tip at the race track.

## God Who?

### Fear

God drives fear into hiding.

The more we know about God (that part of knowledge shared by *all* the religions on our tiny planet) the less we fear.

Even death loses its sting as we realize we are *already* part of God as God is part of us.



The one-ness we begin to experience in this life is complete when our body releases us from its temporary prison.

While we live, God's guidance defeats fear as we stay on the path God shows us and resist the urging of "self" to dive off that path toward new adventures.

Once we hear God's "still small voice" (what the Sikhs call the Great Guru) we are guided from error, re-directed from our mistakes, and return to the path of peace.

God's counsel is real. Every religion recognizes its reality.

Every religion praises the peace it brings to those with ears to hear and willingness to listen and be changed by God's will.

### ***Fear Drives Reason to Hiding***

Willingness to listen is a choice.

Many scoff at God as "unreasonable", not knowing God as we defined the Great Ordered Doing earlier in this book. They hold to children's views of a great old man trying to manage all the bees, flowers, song birds, and mighty waterfalls.

It isn't "reasonable" to believe in such a "god".

So they don't.

## Fear

Such people are victims of the teachings of religious leaders who either don't know the truth (shared by all religions) or have self-interested reasons to keep the secret so their sheep remain seated quietly in their pews and pay their tithes and offerings to support the false teachers and their families financially.

Atheists who say they don't believe have enough knowledge of the massive intricacies of our universe to know there *must* be a willing intelligence that created it and keeps it all going, but having no knowledge of the Great Ordered Doing that *everyone* can believe in, they live their lives in desperation, knowing that death is certain with no God to turn to.

They turn instead to drugs, alcohol, sexual perversion, or the blind intellectual pride they preen themselves with, thinking they are wiser than the foolish who believe.

They hide until that ultimate day when Truth will find them.

Fear compounds itself.

### ***Fear of Reason***

Some are afraid of reason, so they seek God in Ouija boards, Tarot cards, palm readers, or entrails of dead chickens in search of the mysteries of life and what lies beyond.

Not knowing the *reasonable* and *believable* view of God we present in this book (the view shared by all religions' official writings) they are prey for charlatans of every possible kind and end up believing the *ridiculous!*

They seek answers from astrologists who claim the answers to life's questions can be discovered by the ever-changing positions of stars and planets in the sky above.

Many seek answers from mystics who claim to see and hear what the rest of us cannot see nor hear, believe the mystics have

## God Who?

supernatural powers, and deny the supernatural God in whom they live and move and have their being!

Why?

Because they fear the God in whom they refuse to believe. They innately know their lifestyle is self-directed, egocentric, and in many cases illegal.

### ***Profiting from Fear***

Some prey on the fear of others, profiting by payment they receive for performing what seem impossible feats or teaching what reasonable people refuse to consider.

They hold “séances” in which they claim to communicate with spirits of the dead.

They use trickery to levitate themselves or bend spoons with no force other than the power of their minds.

In far too many “churches” they coerce people to “believe” or “repent” to escape eternal damnation.

Wiser, loving leaders know “belief” is a gift from God (as *all* religions agree) and “repentance” is the result of heartfelt sorrow for past deeds (as *all* religions also agree).

Goodness motivated by fear of punishment isn’t genuine.

None were ever frightened into faith nor ever will be!

## Disunity

### Disunity

So we stumble.  
Mankind in disarray.  
No certain signposts.  
Human hodgepodge.  
Clumps here and there.  
Hiding from each other!



All because we've not yet seen that God is real, ineffably so, and that we are (whether we choose to believe it or not) all in the same boat.

Clump leaders disagree, of course. They must. For if we all knew there is truly only One Clump that includes us all, we'd not flock to our favorite teacher to get our ears scratched with a doctrine or theology that allows us to live as we wish.

If we smoke cigars, we choose a clump leader who teaches that God has no problem with cigar smoking. If we like to dance to loud music, we choose a clump leader who assures us God is not averse to that behavior. And so it goes.

There's a clump for each of us.

And boundaries that keep us securely in our own clump.

Divided.

At odds with all who disagree.

Willing to fight.

Unable to come together.

Unable to set the world straight.

Unable to find peace.

## God Who?

Disunity is our enemy.

Every religion teaches in its official writings that there's no difference between us in the ultimate sense. We come into this life naked. We leave naked. We take nothing with us. We know far less that we profess to know. And, we are more alike than we are different.

How that flies in the face of our ego!

Self wants to believe it is different, better, kinder, wiser than others ... even when the soul knows this is not true!

Clumps want the same.

Every religion believes it has the *only* truth.

Therein is the Great Lie that keeps our planet at war.

Though at heart, in the official writings of every religion, we find amazing agreement as to the nature of God, the will of God, the method by which God communicates with mankind ... there remains the Great Lie.

Each religion believes all others are wrong!

It's absurd.

While all fundamentally agree about God, each disagrees in particulars that ultimately have nothing to do with God!

How to worship.

Whether to stand, kneel, or lie prostrate on one's face when praying to God.

What to eat.

When to fast.

Where the most holy city might be.

How often to pray.

## Disunity

What leaders to follow.

What books to read ... and which to be sedulously avoided, banned, or burned.

Whether babies should be circumcised.

Which day of the week to assemble for worship.

What kind of music to enjoy or refuse to hear.

What to wear, women and men, head covered or not, etc.

These things become flags defining borders.

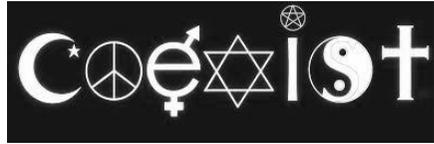
They have little or nothing to do with God.

They have everything to do with separating us, defining us as different, pitting one against others, fomenting dissent, and establishing barriers to prevent our coming together as humans sharing this spinning sphere where peace seems unlikely while we regretfully remain in disunity.

## God Who?

### Religion Itself

This word does not mean what modern man has taken it to mean.



The word derives from an ancient Latin term meaning *to bind to vows*.

To be “religious”, therefore, means to be bound to what you promise to believe, chained to ideas created by others, tied to a set program of practices, dedicated to doctrine designed to make you behave in accordance with the shared views of others.

Baptists, for example, take vows to “join” a Baptist church. They are provided a list called “The Statement of Faith”, and to be accepted as members of a congregation they promise to abide by and encourage others to believe what’s included in that list.

Other Protestant faiths pronounce at every assembly what is called “The Apostle’s Creed” that goes something like this:

*“I believe in God the Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, God’s only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; he descended into hell. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.”*

## Religion Itself

This creed, with a few denominational differences, is one's initiation to what we call the Protestant Religion.

Failure to take this vow by repeating these words excludes one from fellowship with other members of the congregation.

Little children are required to recite it right along with the elders, though few if any of those children understand what they are saying or come anywhere close to grasping the meaning.

The Creed says very little about the essential nature of God in whom we'd *all* believe had we not pledged to stick to those vows we took when we chose to belong to a "religion".



The Creed is a pledge of faith to a "religion".

It is a promise to abide by a set of beliefs set out for us by men and women long ago passed away.

Once we make the pledge then, if we remain faithful to our vows, we are said to be "practicing our religion".

Religion is performance ... not faith.

It is a duty to share a particular set of beliefs with others and to defend that set of beliefs against all challengers or innovators who would disagree or adulterate the pledge.

Hindus have a creed or statement of faith.

Jews have a creed or statement of faith.

Muslims have a creed or statement of faith. Indeed, in many sects of the Islamic community, failure to state the creed can be punished by death.

In all religions, failure to follow their creed or statement of faith results in automatic expulsion from fellowship.

## God Who?

To say one is a “religious” person, therefore, is saying nothing more than that one has bound himself to a set of vows, doctrines, or creeds.

It is only what he *says* he believes.

It is only vows he pledged himself to defend.

It has nothing to do with what he truly believes.

## Astrophysics and Cosmology

When man started looking out at the distant stars, he saw what he believed to be impossible!

Man does not like impossibles.

So science went to work with mathematics to define reality in a new way, a way that fit with what man saw.

In the late nineteenth century science found itself at a crossroads.

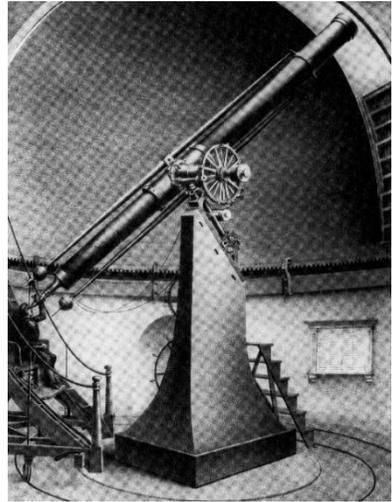
Albert Michelson and Edward Morley tried to measure the speed of light. They set up an elaborate apparatus to measure the speed of light coming from a particular star when earth in its orbit was traveling *toward* the star. Six months later when earth was on the other side of its orbit traveling *away* from the star they repeated their careful measurements.

The speed of light appeared to be the *same!*

Moving toward the star or moving away, the speed of light coming from the star was constant.

Imagine two bicyclists, one pedaling *into* the wind and the other pedaling in the opposite direction, i.e., *away* from the wind. The first experiences the wind blowing much faster than the fellow pedaling away from the wind.

This is what Michelson and Morley expected, that when our planet was moving *toward* a star the light would blow past their instruments faster than when the planet was moving *away* from the star ... just as bicyclists experience different wind pedaling toward and away from the wind.



## God Who?

Instead, the wind of light blowing past our planet from that distant star seemed to blow at the same speed whether Earth was moving *toward* the star or *away* from it!

Impossible?

Yes.

But, that measurement has been repeated thousands of times in thousands of ways, and the results are always the same!

No matter how fast *we* move and no matter what direction we move, the speed of light beaming past us remains constant.

It makes no sense.

But, that's what we measure ... time and again.

So scientists made a predictable ego-driven mistake. Rather than consider the error was "apparent" and not real, they stood common-sense on its ear mathematically speaking.

Men like Einstein, Planck, Heisenberg, and Schrödinger took science into what they themselves admitted was *uncertain* territory.

What they "saw" could not be true.

So they invented new math that would "fit" what they saw with their measurements, new math that would "explain" light and its peculiar behavior ... never doubting their measurements.

Nothing since has been the same.

God is Light, but science determined not to believe anything was beyond their ability to measure and explain.

God was dead.

### ***Anti-Newtonianism***

It was not always so.

## Astrophysics and Cosmology

Before the late nineteenth century Isaac Newton, Michael Faraday, and James Maxwell formulated ideas about light that were common-sense, *intuitive*, and “believable”.

Space had three dimensions, length, breadth, and depth.

Time had one: forward.

Space and time were not the same in any way, as every schoolchild knows.

The universe was easy to measure.

Time is time ticking away, measured by the movement of hands on a clock, sand pouring through an hourglass. It has no physical dimension.

Things were measured by their mass and physical size. You could carry them around in a bag, if you had a big enough bag. They had physical dimensions, length, breadth, and height.

But, after Michelson and Morley “proved” the speed of light was constant *no matter which way one was moving relative to the source of light*, science had to re-write reality, so they turned to their new math and invented the new anti-Newtonian model of the universe in which space and time are equivalent.

They declared time to be the same kind of thing as physical dimensions. They created what they call space-time ... a totally *new* dimension.

*But!*

The farther along this path science seemed to advance, the more complex and ultimately inscrutable their math became. To hold fast to their space-time view of God’s creation they found it necessary to invent “virtual” particles, “imaginary” numbers, and a host of other impossibles.

The math worked at predicting *apparent* behavior of stars and sub-atomic particles, but it only made sense within the math.

## God Who?

Henry Margenau<sup>9</sup> called mathematics an island universe, within which all things are possible but not necessarily true.

The goal of science was no longer to *understand* reality.

The goal became *predicting* and *measuring* its behavior.

Light refused to behave as they wanted it to. Very tiny sub-atomic particles were unruly, and there seemed to be an edge of space out there some billions of light years *beyond which there is presumably nothing* ... or, perhaps, an alternative universe or multiple universes.

All this may seem to have little to do with God, but for the fact that God no longer fit in the math and (as scientists are still loath to admit) *the math was no longer constrained by reality*.

For example, in order to explain what science was observing as it looked out at what appeared to be the edge of everything, and as they looked within at what appeared to be the tiniest parts of everything, a new requirement was foisted upon them. They were required to consider existence of things that *by definition* could not possibly exist and yet were necessary to explain what the laboratory measurements seemed to be proving.

To consider that perhaps not all things can be known by the tools of science and ordinary mathematics was off the table. The new science was and is determined to know even that which can never be known!

At the date of this writing, late 2015, science is able to send men and machines to far away outposts of our solar system and probe the tiniest workings of matter too tiny to see, but they are doing it by magical math ... because, as many of them say, God cannot be real.

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<sup>9</sup> 1901-1997

## Astrophysics and Cosmology

Rather than admit the nature of God permeating what we call the universe, science has painted itself into a mathematical corner where all is chance, what's real must be explained by the existence of matter that cannot "exist", and our universe has an edge with nothing beyond it but into which it is expanding at an accelerating pace!

Why mentioned in my book?

Because mad science is accepted as fact, while the reality of God is increasingly denied.

Atheism gains the approving imprimatur of science.

Humanism with all its horrors flourishes.

Mankind divides itself increasingly into warring camps.

Scientists may attempt to debunk my book but, dear reader, they will be compelled to do it with virtual particles, uncertainty theory they call quantum mechanics, and proud pronouncements that they see with their telescopes the very edge of everything!

It is their mantra.

It is the religion of science.

There is no room for God.

Meanwhile caterpillars wrap themselves in silk cocoons and emerge as colorful butterflies.

Mockingbirds outside my window sing song after song with what seems an unlimited repertoire.

The sun will rise on schedule, march across my Florida sky with predicable regularity, disappear below my western horizon, and leave a masterpiece no Matisse, Monet, Pissarro, Degas, or Renoir could begin to create on canvas.

My little Yorkshire Terrier will jump up on my lap, crawl up my chest, and lick my nose first thing this morning, before going

## God Who?

about her important business of chasing balls and barking at the pelicans and big blue herons that land on our seawall.

Flowers will proudly display their colorful blossoms.

Life will go on in large part as it has for thousands of years, as it did before Michelson and Morley “proved” the speed of light is constant.

I choose life without the uncertainties of quantum physics.

I choose life with a playfully predictable God that orders things as they are, as they appear to be.

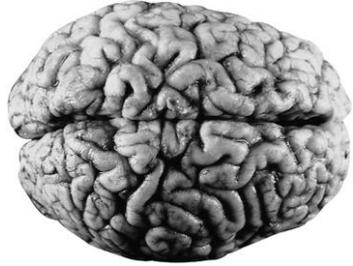
Which do you choose?

## Neurology

I am not my brain.

You are not your brain.

You can choose to believe (as science insists) that all your fond memories of the backyard where you grew up, your first kiss, the girl next door, the time you fell off your bicycle and skinned your knee, the people who lived across the street, what you had to eat the last time you went to a restaurant, and your first grade teacher's name are stored in three pounds of tissue within your head charged with the daily responsibility to keep you breathing, make your heart beat regularly, and move your feet in the direction you want to walk when you move about.



I don't.

I've been working with computers since I built my first one using a soldering iron and oscilloscope 40 years ago. There just isn't enough room in three pounds of human tissue to store all those images, names, events, and ambitions.

According to some scientific reports, there are 100 billion neurons in your brain. The computer I use to write this book contains ten times that many memory locations, each capable of 9 quintillion different words or images.

9,223,372,036,854,775,807 is a large number.

100,000,000,000 by comparison is not.

Science will tell you when your brain dies, *you* die.

Nonsense!

While it is certainly true your physical body will someday stop functioning, the part of you that is *you* will not.

## God Who?

The part of you that is *you* is the life of God *within* you, just as every religion on this planet believes.

You are not a biological mechanism.

Think about all your memories, ideas, thoughts, and actions.

Close your eyes and watch the images from your past appear one after another. I remember catching bees and lightning bugs in jars, picking honeysuckle flowers and sucking the nectar from its delicate petals, hitting a baseball over the fence, sled-riding down the hill in snow, visiting a friend's family farm where they had a crank on their telephone to ring up the operator, learning to drive on a red International Harvester tractor, skating on the pond out by the children's home east of my hometown, my first fist fight, an old man who used to come into my grandfather's store driving a homemade wheel chair propelled by a Briggs & Stratton engine, making sodas and ice cream sundaes for customers stopping by when the bus from Wheeling came to town, the horse-drawn wagon that hauled ice from house-to-house for those who did not yet have one of the fancy new refrigerators, the light switch in my Grandmother's kitchen that you turned on by rotating a little black knob, her fudge and home-made pickles, the last time I kissed my mother's forehead as she lay silent and cold in her coffin, the golden cross I placed in her folded hands.

It's all there, and I could fill ten-thousand pages with more and not begin to scratch the surface.

While foolish scientists tell us it's all contained within three pounds of flesh!

Rubbish!

Your brain controls your body.

You are not your brain.

## Neurology

You are not your body.

Every religion agrees.

Every religion knows we are souls.

When our bodies cease to function, we are joined once more with the One who created us in the first place.

We do not die.

But, humans like to measure things and claim to know what can't be known, so they dissect cadavers, measure brain waves, compare brain size to intelligence, name brain parts, dabble with brain chemistry ... and conclude we *are* our brains.

Ridiculous.

## Politics and Law

There's a great misunderstanding gap about the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

The *first* words of what we call our "Bill of Rights".

One might with certainty say the First is also our *most important Amendment*.<sup>10</sup>

### *Amendment I*

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.

The misunderstanding arises in the clamor of vote-getting.

That's what politics is: *vote-getting*.

The weak link in an otherwise wonderful plan.

The American system of government offers its people great protection of their lives and liberty, but at the cost of a corrosive system by which its leaders are elected to office.

Vote-getting!

### **Ambition**

If all who seek public office put country first and ignored their own self-interest and that of party, our system of law would be the best imaginable, and we'd have far fewer problems with other nations (too many of which have lost faith in us as we've lost faith in that which once united us).

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<sup>10</sup> Fools at Yale are currently raising a hue and cry to abolish the First Amendment as part of this modern world's determination to engineer society according to their godless view of the universe.

## Politics and Law

Ambitious politicians pander to the public who elected them and offer their only hope of re-election.

They tell the public what they think the public wants to hear.

They give the public what they think will woo the public to vote for them.

Instead of leading by principles, they buy votes!

Self-interest overpowers their sacred charge and undermines the fundamentals by which good government may be established and maintained.

The consequence in these critical times is that a rising force is determined to remove God and the wisdom that seeks God's favor from every aspect of our governing bodies, all because no politician has the wisdom and courage to tell the public that *the First Amendment says nothing about God!*

The "Great Ordered Doing" is not a religion!

The word "religion" was examined earlier in my book.

Religion is not a synonym for "God".

Religion is the practice of adhering to a particular view of God and obligating oneself to others similarly persuaded.

The word is from the Latin root *religare*, "to bind".

Men and women "obligate" themselves to a particular view of God and to the practices of those similarly persuaded.

*This* is what religion is!

*This* is what the First Amendment protects, the right of each of us to choose our particular view of God, to associate with others of similar persuasion, and to exercise our choice through actions such as wearing certain clothing, eating certain foods, meeting on certain days, attempting to persuade others to a view of God consonant with our own, i.e., to *practice* our religion.

## God Who?

Fools that don't yet know what this book explains have not imagined the unacceptable consequence of removing God from our legal system for our government is founded and predicated on the principle that *God is!*

Jefferson wrote it in our Declaration of Independence.

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*“IN CONGRESS, July 4, 1776.*

*“The unanimous Declaration of the thirteen united States of America,*

*“When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the **Laws of Nature and of Nature's God** entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.*

*We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their **Creator** with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.--That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, --That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government,*

## Politics and Law

*laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shewn, that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed.*

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If we are to be a truly free people permitted by The Rule of Law to claim protection of the “rights” government purports us to possess by its first official writing, then we are fools to ignore that the birthdate of our nation is 4 July 1776 with the signing of our declaration by which we became an independent nation, and not 12 years later on 17 September 1776 when our Constitution was officiated.

The Constitution did not create our nation.

Our Constitution’s signature clause reads:

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*“Done in convention by the unanimous consent of the states present the seventeenth day of September in the year of **our Lord** one thousand seven hundred and eighty seven **and of the independence of the United States of America the twelfth.**”*

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Our nation was already 12 years old, predicated on a single document and its dependence on “the laws of Nature’s God”.

## God Who?

The Constitution is merely an architecture for a government bound by the tenets of its predecessor and initial document.<sup>11</sup>

### **Political Correctness**

Enter the denizen of “political correctness” and the ignorant belief that God and “religion” are one and the same!

I say *denizen*, because political correctness is no *citizen*, no friend of independent thinking nor of liberty’s independence for, without individual independence, liberty is an empty word.

Political correctness reared its venomous head long before it achieved its present dangerous popularity. It likely began (as the reading of appellate court decisions throughout the history of our nation reveals) as early as the first quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century when mankind was devastated by the horror of World War I and the greater horror of technology’s promised escalating ability to more efficiently destroy human life in future years.

Prior to that time judges were guided by decisions of their predecessor judges that balanced interests of competing parties entirely as between the parties, but as the terror of unthinkable global violence waged by increasingly effective methods tore its way into the terrified minds of legal thinking, a new variable insinuated itself.

The justices and legal scholars called it “public policy”.

This was a cover-up intended to hide their secret intention to create a global socialist oligarchy patterned on humanist views described earlier in my book.

The rights of individuals became succursal to the perceived needs of a collective “public”.

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<sup>11</sup> Else all our pretense of legal proceedings under *stare decisis* is meaningless, the principle of “first mention” having none effect!

## Politics and Law

Legal architects mapped out a plan for their new world order by which they would create a world, free from divisive thinking, where religion could not pollute the courts' intention, and where eventually all nations would follow a comprehensive system of jurisprudence based on a new idea that had the world its grip.<sup>12</sup>

By the end of World War II and its bomb by which nearly 100,000 men, women, and children were vaporized in the blink of an eye, legal philosophy had shifted far from the foundation of God on which our nation was established, and farther from the purpose for which it demanded independence from the rule of Britain's monarch.

The peril of a hateful future was now clearly seen and with it the necessity to re-write history, removing history's "law of Nature's God" as an impediment to denigrating man's rights to government's imperious and irresistible aegis.

Paradoxically, religion is to blame at least in part, because the inability or refusal of the multiplicity of religions to admit their common ground and teach the Truth of God apart from debatable dogmas and divisive doctrines undermined the public faith in God, shaken as it was by the determined advance of a growing fear of war and the apparent nonchalance of deity.

As I write these words, we rapidly approach a climax that must suddenly be avoided: livid, festering global differences of opinion that threaten the doom of humanity if we are unable to agree at this late hour that God *is* and that the idea that has the world its grip is a *mistake!*

Now is the time to agree, if ever such time may exist.

The Great Ordered Doing determines the destinies of both men and nations. Those who ignore this Truth do so at their own

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<sup>12</sup> World in the Grip of an Idea, Clarence Carson (1925-2003).

## God Who?

peril but also at the peril of a world of innocent souls who deserve to know and must be taught this Truth at the soonest possible moment!

If ever we are to establish a state of global peace, it will be when we agree, as Jefferson wisely observed, that *every* man is entitled to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, heedless of government's perception of what's good for the "public".

We might wisely ask, "Who *is* the public, really?"

We must disagree with history's monsters who've justified their horrid deeds by claiming, "The means justify the ends."

The means do *not* justify the ends.

The means determine and decide the end results.

But, doing wrong can *never* bring about what's "right".

*Every* child is entitled to live without fear, and *every* single soul is entitled to equal protection under the law.

For any government to secure those rights, it must agree that God *is* and that those rights are endowed in us by God, not men.

We *can* agree that God *is*!

We need not agree on all particulars of our several religions, but we *can* and *must* agree there *is* a Great Ordered Doing that created each of us and gave us a planet we may enjoy in peace as soon as we set aside our differences and embrace God as our Creator and our only hope for finding agreement without which peace is impossible.

God is *not* religion.

Religion is man's creation.

Pray it not be the cause of his destruction.

## God's Names

The most used Muslim name for God is Allah yet, according to the Koran, the same Allah is God of Jews and Christians alike, though Jews and Christians deny it!



Same God.

Different name.

Each of us is like a tiny insect hiding deep inside the petals of a flower. We see our flower's color, shape of its petals, and the intricate, delicate structures deep within.

Most, however, refuse to see the different colored flowers all around us or choose to declare those "other things" aren't flowers at all. We prefer to believe *our* flower is the only real flower.

We choose to believe what we see is the *only* truth.

Only our flower is *all* truth.

Indeed, to us clumpers, there *is* no true flower but our own, i.e., the one we're hiding in.

The wisest leaders of every world religion know it is beyond impossible for mortals to comprehend ultimate Reality, the One who is beyond as well as within the petals of our chosen flower.

There are many flowers in the world, from the tiny roadside Camphorweed to the giant Japanese Titan, just as there are many religions.

The same God is in each!

## God Who?

The wisest leaders of all world religions know that we and our chosen flower live within a garden created by God, unseen and yet pervasive, unknown yet knowing all that can be known.

We humans have our private views of God.

From each view we draw various names by which we try to capture the One who cannot be captured, to know the ultimately unknowable, to define what cannot be defined.

All our names refer to the same Reality, the same God of all.

The wisest leaders of *all* religions agree, however, that God is beyond every name, more than any single name can describe, and that God's True Name is beyond our ability to speak.

Yet, names are good.

Indeed, they are necessary so you and I and others can talk about the Everliving One who *is* All in All.

So, necessary as they are (yet, sadly, separating us in camps of differing opinions) here are a few, each referring to the same God that is and was and ever shall be, our Creator, our hope.

### ***Shintoism***

Principally, the religion of Japan, Shintoism worships *Kami* (a name both singular and plural).

This “plural singularity” of the name is similar to that of the gods of every other principal religion in the world (as you'll see further on in this chapter).

*Kami* may be thought of as the singular spirit or essence of all things combined or the individual spirit within a rock, a tree, or even a person.

*Kami* is the force of things, *all* things at once or *each* thing considered alone.

## God's Names

A Shintoist might at one moment “worship” the *Kami* of a mountain or volcano, and at another moment worship the *Kami* of a butterfly.

However (as with the God of *all* religions) wise Shintoists know *Kami* is pervasive in *all* things though observable in *each*.

Fledgling Shinto novices may in their early understanding of this religion believe their fellow Shintoists worship “things” like rocks and trees, yet as *Kami* is seen *within* rocks and trees, baby smiles, gentle rain as well as howling winds of typhoons, *Kami* is revealed as the God every other religion sees ... the ultimate Spirit, Creator, Life-Giver.

To the Shinto, *Kami* is the Eternal All in All.

Same God.<sup>13</sup>

### ***Jainism***

Found primarily in India, where some 4.5 million follow its teachings, Jainism is more a personal discipline of non-violence and self-control than a religion that worships any particular God, however Jains *do* recognize the God other religions worship and have their own name for God.

One must “look through” Jain doctrine to discover that they recognize what other religions call God, though their narcissistic view that reality is nothing but the battle of self to rid oneself of self blinds them to the One for which they, like other religions, have a name!

The Jain name for God is *Loka*.

*Loka* is the *self-sustaining* universe.

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<sup>13</sup> Shintoism is the smallest religion examined in this book. Though 80% of 127 million Japanese people *practice* Shintoism, less than 3 million identify themselves as “Shinto” – 0.07% of the total religious population of the world.

## God Who?

The irony of Jainism is their inability (or refusal) to see that the “self” sustaining their “self-sustaining universe” *is* God, who neither needs nor has any base or support, a view consonant with *all* religions!

Their 12<sup>th</sup> Century leader Hemacandra proclaimed their Jain doctrine, “The universe is not created nor sustained by anyone; it is self-sustaining, without any base or support.”

The wise view of God shared by all religions recognizes that there is no “entity” *outside* the universe by which All is created or sustained, but that the Creator and Sustainer *pervades* all that is, including the self of each and every Jain.

Jainism springs from the reasonable rationale that there can be no “being” that created itself along with all that is, because it would have to exist *before* it existed.

This is the impenetrable mystery of God, after all.

Jains do not deny what we’ve defined as God. Instead, they deny the childish idea that there exists some being *outside* the universe running the show!

Though Jains believe they deny the existence of any “god” *separate from* the universe who personally created or sustains the universe, they agree the universe is *self-sustaining*, eternal, and everywhere existing ... that which they call *Loka*.

According to Jinasena, author of Mahapurana, an essential text of Jainism, *Loka* is “uncreated and indestructible”, enduring “under compulsion of its own nature”, without beginning or end, abiding by principles of life and rest.

From this we outsiders can see that Jains *do* believe in God, without knowing it!

Their *Loka* is seen through a different “telescope”, but their description of *Loka* is our “Great Ordered Being”, uncreated and

## God's Names

indestructible, existing by God's own will and compulsion and not by any *outside force!*

Though by superficial examination they would seem to deny the existence of God, in fact what they wisely deny is the idea of any person-like entity beyond their *Loka* who created or sustains their *Loka*.

“Right on!” we might say to this!

If you have occasion to meet a follower of Jainism, ask him or her to, “Describe *Loka* for me.”

Great Ordered Doing.

Same God.<sup>14</sup>

### **Confucianism**

Confucians believe in a self-existing order and one-ness in all things and seek to be unified with the One they call *Tian*.

Like Shintoists, Hindus, and many others, Confucians seem to worship a multiplicity of gods, for which they are considered “heathen” by those who think themselves wiser.

But, true wisdom knows that in all things where Confucians see what they call “gods” they also see *Tian* by which all “gods” and Confucians themselves were created and from which they receive life and are sustained.

The One Above All.

Confucians believe *Tian* is the source of all wisdom and gives wisdom to those whom *Tian* alone decides to make wise.

Primarily Chinese, originating in the teachings of Confucius (551-479 BC), Confucianism has adherents in Korea, Japan, and Vietnam, however followers of many other religions, such as

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<sup>14</sup> Jainism comprises one-tenth of one percent of Earth's religious population.

## God Who?

Shintoism, Buddhism, Islam, and even Christianity are to great extent influenced by this ancient way of thought.

Confucius and Solomon agree that wisdom “is the principal thing” and that getting it is life’s second highest goal.

The only higher goal is *understanding* by which one may transform bare wisdom into positive action for good.

*Tian* to the Confucian is the “Great One”, the All.

Same God.<sup>15</sup>

### ***Bahá’ism***

Bahá’ism holds firmly there is only one God without equal.

The Bahá’í God *is* the One All in All, source of everything that is, wisdom, and the universe around us.

Bahá’ís agree the ultimate God of all religions is, in fact, the same God, whom they call God, Allah, Yahweh, Brahma, and many other names ... knowing all refer to the same deity.

Bahá’ism began in Persia with the revelations of Bahá’u’lláh in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century but quickly spread to other countries after the persecution of its leader, who taught cultural and racial variants of lifestyle are valuable to human life, but the best world is one in which all people are united in the Truth ... created equal and as such brothers and sisters regardless of culture, race, language, or other social barriers to unity.

In spite of efforts by leaders of other religions to silence its “unity of religion” teachings (that would disrupt the self-interest of those leaders) Bahá’ism is found throughout the world.

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<sup>15</sup> There are some 6.4 million Confucians (approximately one-tenth of one percent of Earth’s religious population).

## God's Names

Bahá'ísm is a growing faith guided by the same concept of God that other religions profess yet enthusiastic about tearing down the same walls this book is written to destroy.

Same God.<sup>16</sup>

### ***Judaism***

Jews have many names for God, the highest of these being *Elohim* ... a word both singular and plural.

In English translations of the Bible, we read in the first book Genesis and in the first chapter and 26<sup>th</sup> verse, "Then God said, 'Let *us* make man in our image.'"

This plurality is also seen in the Koran (see below) and is a fundamental of Christianity (see below), though in *all* religions the apparent plurality disappears when one investigates the texts more closely. This apparent plurality is both true and at the same time untrue, depending on the telescope through which one tries to find the truth. In the search for an answer to this mystery one discovers the deeper things of God understood by all those who are adepts in their individual walks of faith.

God is both one and many, as every religion on this planet proclaims.

The impenetrable unity of God, the Infinite Self, is too far beyond the grasp of our mortal minds, so God is presented as many in One so we can approach the truth though never see it perfectly for what it is.

Judaism emerged some 3,500 years ago (though the story of Adam and Eve dates back 6,000 years) and endures today, in spite of centuries of persecution, in large part because its texts

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<sup>16</sup> Bahá'ísm has an estimated 7.5 million adherents, a bit less than 1% of Earth's religious population.

## God Who?

are among the first ever *written* stories of humans struggling to deal with the exigence of life in all its forms, depicting God as Eternal and Unknowable, yet occasionally communicating and interacting with humanity directly, in speech and battle.

Some say the ultimate name of God in Hebrew is יהוה, a word read backwards (as Hebrew is), “Yod He Vah He” or, as English theologians insist, “I Am That Am”.

Since this word lacks tense (it is past, present, and future) we must agree the Jews’ God is the *same* as that of every other religion ... eternal, all-powerful, all-knowing, creator of all that is or ever was or ever will be, the knower of every heart.

Traditions differ. Doctrines differ. Teachings and trappings of dress, food, and worship differ.

*But!*

The Jews’ God is the *same* God as the God of every other religion: the Great Spirit, uncreated, unending!

Same God.<sup>17</sup>

### **Sikhism**

Most Sikhs praise God as *Waheguru*.

Though a few other names are used, this name speaks to the Sikh understanding of God as their Wonderful Teacher who is in all things, made all things, and reveals Himself as Truth to those whom He chooses to enlighten.

Sikhs know intuitively that this word is only their response to their God’s gracious, mercy in their lives, believing that God is so beyond our understanding that no “name” can be given to

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<sup>17</sup> Judaism claims some 15 million followers (about two-tenths of one percent of the world’s religious population).

## God's Names

fully and accurately describe the One in whom they live and have their being and from whom they derive all things.

They see their God as the “revealer of truth”, but with the understanding that God gives understanding only to those to whom God *chooses* to give understanding.

Their *Waheguru* in this sense is not unlike the Holy Spirit of Christian faith, the knower of all hearts, the revealer of all truth, the One who has mercy upon whom He chooses to have mercy.

*Waheguru* is their chant of praise more than a name of God.

It is roughly translated as “Wow! Teacher of Truth!”

The Sikh God emanates God's Spirit (the Great Guru) who is God Himself. When one reads their “bible” (the Guru Granth Sahib) it may seem God Creator and God Teacher are separate, but Sikhs understand All are one and that God is *within* us all as well as pervading everything now and forever.

The Sikhs call those whom God chooses to guide *Gurmukhs* and those guided only by their self-will *Manmukhs*. One cannot become *Gurmukh* other than by the ineluctable will of God who chooses who will be enlightened and who will not. In this sense they see human effort (such as ceremonial ablutions, visiting sanctuaries in search of wisdom, wearing certain clothing or eating certain food, etc.) as a foolish waste of time. The way to win God's “glance of grace” is through introspection, praise, chanting “*Waheguru*” ... “Wow! Wonderful Teacher!”

The religion was begun by Nanak, an early 16<sup>th</sup> Century Punjab adept who taught the grace of God, the omnipotence of God, and the foolishness of those who believe they can obtain enlightenment or freedom from the consequence of eternal death by an act of their own will.

The Guru Granth Sahib is a collection of writings by Nanak and some of his successors, preserved in a sacred book kept at

## God Who?

the Golden Temple in Northern India. By this book Sikhs share their view of God, same as the God of every other religion, seen through a different telescope.

Seeks see the self-will efforts of Jews, Muslims, Christians, and others as stifling the joy and wisdom that comes by God's Grace to those *purely* guided by the Great Guru, who *is* God.

God inhabits the mind and heart of those who by great good fortune are becoming *Gurmukh*.

According to Sikhism, one who by this great good fortune is blessed by God's Grace to discover the God *within* himself is by that Grace divested of ego, hatred, and desire ... not by act of will but by God's grace.

In later years Sikhism became corrupted by traditions and practices at no place mentioned in the Guru Granth Sahib texts. As with *all* religions, followers choose an easy path, following human leaders rather than seeking for the wisdom that comes *only* by direct revelation from God and study of the writings of those who've personally experienced that direct revelation.

In Sikhism revelation, if it comes, is by God's will alone.

Same God.<sup>18</sup>

### **Buddhism**

Buddhism was founded by a man named Gautama Buddha, who lived and taught in India during the 5<sup>th</sup> Century BC.

Buddha is said to have been seated under a fig tree when he received what Buddhists call enlightenment or *Nirvana*.

Buddhists agree *Nirvana* cannot be grasped by the will. It is received only by those open to receive it, willing to let go of the

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<sup>18</sup> There are more Sikhs than Jews, 25 Million, 0.4% of Earth's religious population.

## God's Names

struggle to achieve it that Buddhists see as a barrier to receiving it.

The essence of *Nirvana* is in seeing that some things cannot be seen and accepting it, embracing nescience as an inescapable condition of human life.

Buddhists release the struggle to grasp and hold reality with the mind, knowing that the ultimate essence of reality is beyond our ability to grasp.

Ceasing the struggle, one is enlightened.

Buddhists do not deny reality's existence, i.e., the existence of what other religions call God but, rather, that reality cannot be captured in the mind any more than the sea can be captured in a raindrop or a sunset recorded forever in one's memory.

This *was* Buddha's great enlightenment under that fig tree.

Struggle brings misery.

Surrender brings joy.

Buddha's awakening offers much for the contemplation of other religions that seem intent on describing God by traditions and doctrines that can never begin to pierce the eternal veil nor contain God within a theological box.

Though some consider Buddhism a nontheistic philosophy, as opposed to a religion seeking connection with a God creator and sustainer, Buddhism in its highest form is a *practice* aimed at seeing past illusion to discover self as part of everything.

Advanced Buddhists intuitively understand the "reality" we "perceive" is only our perception, illusion imprisoned within a constantly changing chain of instantaneous moments. To truly understand it all would be like holding back the wind with an open hand or tearing apart the petals of a rose to find its beauty.

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We are unable to comprehend that in which all things are, including ourselves and our eternal souls. This ultimate reality is, of course, God, the seat of cosmic law and order. Buddhists call *Dharma*, impossible to be seen, hidden within all things, too wonderful to hold fast as a child may grasp a toy ball and call it his own or as an adult may sit in the comfort of his home and say his possessions “belong” to him.

By letting go *Nirvana* is found.

Grasping only brings sorrow.

Buddhists may seem to worship bronze statues of Buddha in whose lap they sometimes burn incense or place flowers, but the advanced Buddhist sees his religion’s founder at rest, free of the worry that plagues, the struggle that wearies, the mortality that is so easily wasted away by seeking to acquire what cannot be kept and to know what cannot be known.

The images are temporal reminders of the incomprehensible reality that all religions see as God.

Here the uninitiated gets lost, giving rise to false opinions of what Buddhism truly is, whether religion or philosophy, but *all* religions are belief systems structured on a philosophy by which followers live their lives.

Buddhism begins with philosophy that leads to recognition that *Dharma* is beyond knowing and yet *is* and its edicts cannot be avoided.

God enlightened Gautama Buddha under that fig tree when the man realized his own mortality and decided to live happy.

Buddhism is simple in its essence.

It is incomprehensible in its realization.

It is in Buddhists’ not seeing God that they see God!

## God's Names

To adherents of other religions this seems like meaningless nonsense, yet the heart of it is Buddha's recognition that all we perceive as "reality" is in fact only our perception of it and not the "ultimate reality" that it is, the reality transcending time and space, God.

What we see with our eyes, hear with our ears, contemplate with our minds, is never more than a tiny microcosm of Truth and, since not *all* Truth, *not Truth at all*.

By not-seeing, the Buddhist "sees".

By not-knowing, the Buddhist "knows".

What advanced Buddhists see by not-seeing and know by not-knowing is none other than what every other religion holds as God, the unseen, unknowable "ultimate reality", what some call the "Supreme Soul".

Buddhists recognize a Self that pervades all existence.

Buddhists worship the Unity that *is* the All of everything.

Buddhists know the Great Self is seen only when ego dies.

Buddhists know we are all part of a Supreme Soul, in whom we live and move and have our being.

The blindness of many novice Buddhists who write about its seeming paradoxes, lies in the many practical efforts undertaken by its adherents to "achieve" what Gautama Buddha "received".

Buddha taught others to strive to give up striving.

*Nirvana* comes only to those who seek but not by virtue of their seeking. It comes from a Source beyond our knowing, the incomprehensible ultimate Truth ... God!

This is the Great Mystery recognized by all who have begun to understand the nature of Reality, God, the beginning with no end, the Mind within us all, unawake but awakening, hidden and

## God Who?

yet seen by those with eyes to see, unreachable yet reaching out to each of us to embrace our mortality with peace.

Buddhism does not recognize existence of a sentient being *outside* reality, *creating* reality. Instead they see reality itself as the ultimate, unknowable Truth by which everything exists and by which our individual human destinies are determined.

Those having attained *Nirvana* know Truth is revealed, not apprehended. This state of liberation Buddhists seek is *received*, not manifested by actions of will (though action and will prepare the mind to receive it).

*Nirvana* is found by becoming one with *Dharma*, as a tiny falling flake of winter snow at last becomes one with the sea.

This they refer to as being *Paramatman*, self that is not Self and yet is!

Buddhists worship the unknowable Supreme Soul.

Same God.<sup>19</sup>

### **Hinduism**

Hinduism pre-dates Buddhism by nearly 1,000 years.

It is in large part the base out of which Buddhism arose.

Hindus recognize Supreme Soul as Ultimate Self in which we are all One.

In the principal sects (there are many) this One is *Brahman*.

Sayings from their essential texts, the Upanishads, include such statements as these:

“All things are in me but are not I.”

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<sup>19</sup> Buddhism has some 374 million followers, 6% of Earth's religious population.

## God's Names

“Them that worship me with love, I love. They are in me, and I in them.”

“They who have a true conception of God are never separate from Him. They exist in Him, and He in them.”

The goal of Hinduism is to see the One hidden by duality.

“His form is not to be seen. None sees Him with the eye. He is perceived by the heart, by the intellect, and by the mind. They who know this become immortal.”

We are not separate from God, nor are we separate from any created thing, living or non-living.

This apparent separation is the cause of human sorrow and isolates the individual from the ultimate truth that God truly *is* within us, and we within God.

Love springs intuitively from this awareness, seeing God in others.

Same God.<sup>20</sup>

### ***Islam***

The word itself describes the religion, “Submission to the Will of God and obedience to His law.”

The official text of Islam is the Koran, a collection of 114 chapters or *sutras*, written by Muhammad from the year 609 to 632, the year of his death.

Followers of Islam are called Muslims.

One becomes a Muslim and remains so by agreeing there is no God but *Allah* and that Muhammad is God's Prophet. This is

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<sup>20</sup> Hinduism is followed by some 850 million, 13% of Earth's religious population.

## God Who?

called the *Shahada*. It is used by extremist Muslims as a test for those who may be murdered by refusing to so testify.

The rest is comprised of four essential practices:

1. *Salaah*, to pray five times each day at proper times;
2. *Zakaah*, to support others by charitable giving;
3. *Sawm*, to fast during the month of Ramadan; and
4. *Hajj*, to visit the *Kaaba* at Mecca at least once.

God to the Muslim is the All-in-All, Beginning and End, Creator and Sustainer, exactly the same as that of Christians, Jews, and all other religions ... but Islam takes issue with other religions it sees as either polytheistic or unbelieving.

In the very second *sura*, the Koran says, “Surely they that believe, including Jews and Christians, who believe in God and the Last Day and work righteousness, their wage awaits them with their Lord, and no fear shall be on them, neither shall they sorrow.”

The Koran then adds, “We<sup>21</sup> gave to Moses the Book, and after him sent succeeding Messengers; and We gave Jesus son of Mary the clear signs, and confirmed him with the Holy Spirit; and when there came to you a Messenger your souls had not desire for, you became arrogant, and some cried lies to, and some you killed,” continuing, “Why did you kill the Prophets of God in former time, if you were believers?”

And therein lies the immediate problem!

Why indeed?

Clearly, at least in times past, Jews killed their prophets.

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<sup>21</sup> *Allah*, God, in some places of English translations as first person plural pronoun and in other places as first person singular pronoun.

## God's Names

Clearly, the Jewish priests of the Sanhedrin plotted for the Roman Pontiff Pilate to kill Jesus of Nazareth by crucifixion.

And, just as clearly, during the Dark Ages priests and popes of the Catholic movement killed innocent people by burning at the stake, beheading, and other equally horrific ways.

If those murdering Jews and Christians had been believers, the Koran suggests, they would not have done as they surely did, but it is not the Jewish Faith nor the Christian Faith that *caused* these crimes against God but, instead, individuals who claimed to be Jews or Christians yet chose to defy the ordinances of God.

The Koran does not condemn those who believe in God and act in accordance with their belief by obeying God's Command. Instead it says, "Those who believe and do righteousness will inhabit Paradise forever."

As stated in the Christian Bible<sup>22</sup> and repeated throughout the Sikh's sacred writings, God has mercy on whom He chooses, and all others He hardens, according to God's own will and not the will of man. Islam agrees.

Apparently unknown to those who carry out terrorist acts in the name of Islam, the Koran condemns aggression and rewards mercy. "Fight in the way of God with those who fight with you," the Koran says, "but aggress not, for God loves not aggressors."

"Whoso commits aggression against you," it says, "commit aggression against him as he has committed against you."

There is no turning of the cheek, as Christians are taught but too often ignore to the peril of us all!

Islam teaches religion cannot be compelled upon a man.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Romans 9:18

<sup>23</sup> *Sura II.*

## God Who?

Islam teaches the Torah and Gospel were sent to us by God to guide us to Salvation.

In *Sura III* much is said about Jesus as Messiah, chosen by God to deliver a new message to Jews, setting Jesus' followers above unbelievers. It says Jesus was a Messenger to the Children of Israel, healing the blind and lepers, bringing life to the dead by the Power of God, confirming the Truth of the Torah.

Islam is not *against* Judaism nor *against* Christianity but is strongly committed against those claim to be Jews or Christians yet demonstrating by their works that they are not.

Repentance is accepted by the Koran, assuring believers that God is All-forgiving, All-compassionate, All-clement.

Muhammad is merely a messenger, according to the Koran. He is not the Messiah, nor does he claim to be anything other than a man.

In *Sura V* we read, "Let not hatred for those who bar you from the Holy Mosque move you to commit aggression. Help each other to piety and godfearing."

Yet recompense is permitted, even encouraged, so long as it is not unprovoked aggression. Recompense is an eye for an eye. It does not draw first blood, for doing so is forbidden by Islam.

The Grace of God is summed up in *Sura VII*, "Whomsoever God guides, he is rightly guided; and whom He leads astray is a loser."

In *Sura VIII* we learn what we might hope the terrorists of our day would read and learn for themselves (instead of being told what to believe). "Say to the unbelievers, if they give over He will forgive them what is past; but if they will not cease in their persecution, fight them until there is no persecution."

"God loves not the treacherous."

## God's Names

“If your enemy incline to peace, do thou also incline to it.”

*Sura IX* instructs, “If an idolater seeks your protection, then protect him so he may hear the words of God,” adding, “The Torah, the Gospel, and the Koran are promises binding on God.”

The Koran teaches that none is righteous, not one. “If God took men to task for their evil-doing, He would spare none.”<sup>24</sup>

The Koran confirms the existence of God's Holy Spirit in *Sura XVI* saying the Holy Spirit is sent down from the Lord in truth to confirm those who believe and to be a guide and good tidings to those who surrender,<sup>25</sup> and this same Spirit was sent to Mary, mother of Jesus.<sup>26</sup>

*Sura XXIX* condemns those who divide their religion into sects, and *Sura XXXIV* condemns those who take intercessors to stand between man and God.

*Sura LX* encourages Muslims to extend kindness and justice to those who have not fought against the faith, but forbids them from befriending those who fight against Islam and expel them from their homes.

*Sura XXIX* confirms the premise of this book (at least from a Muslim view) for the Koran states clearly, “We believe what has been sent down to us, and what has been sent down to you. Our God and your God is One.”

Same God.<sup>27</sup>

## **Christianity**

Christianity is the world's most popular religion.

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<sup>24</sup> *Sura XVI*

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>26</sup> *Sura XIX*

<sup>27</sup> There are some 1.3 billion Muslims, 20% of the Earth's religious population.

## God Who?

Christians inherited their names for God from the Jews.

Most Christians call God “God”, though “God” is no name but merely a descriptor. A few call God “I AM”. Some attempt to pronounce the Jewish Tetragrammaton, יהוה, in English as “Jehovah”, because read backwards (as Hebrew is) the letters are “Yod Heh Vah He”, meaning “I am that which is.”

Christianity sprang into being some 2,000 years ago when the crucified body of Jesus of Nazareth (a Jew persecuted by the high priests of Jerusalem) came back alive, arose from its tomb, and appeared to many who went out into all the known world to spread the amazing news.

Christianity is a radical departure from Judaism and all other religions, for it contains within it a great mystery that is not well known nor yet widely understood even in this modern age.

Unlike all other religions where goals are attained by effort, sacrifice, practice, meditation, study, and other actions of human will, hidden within the Christian Bible is what early Christians called “The Way”.

Individuals invite the Spirit of God to enter them, lead them, empower them, and work through them according to a mystery unknown to other religions (and, sadly, unknown to many who claim to be Christians today but are not yet “born again” by the Christ Spirit of God alive *within* them).

The true Christian is transformed by the presence of God.

The true Christian does not transform himself or herself as most other religions teach (and as unknowing Christian leaders also teach in their ignorance of what the Christian Bible calls the mystery of the gospel).

The Christian’s born again life is not the old life being made better by the exercise of will-power, wishful thinking, or a New Year’s resolution.

## God's Names

The born again life is *new* life. God's life living *within*.

Born again Christians (there is no other kind) know it is God who works *within* them, conforming their will to be God's will for their lives. With this transformation of desire, their behavior changes so they more often do what is pleasing to God.

This mystery is only beginning to be revealed to the world.

The power of Christianity is found *within* where the Spirit of God begins to replace one's ego-driven self with the same Spirit that worked in Jesus, the Spirit of God in man, the Christ Spirit.

As with the writings of every other religion, Christian texts make clear that God is in control of everything, granting mercy to whom He chooses or withholding it as He chooses.

This gives rise to Christians believing they are saved by the grace of God through their *own* faith, not recognizing that even faith is by God's grace and comes only by the indwelling Christ Spirit. Saving faith is God's work *within* the Christian believer.

All is a gift.

Nothing is won or achieved by human effort.

Grace is either *all* grace, or it's not grace at all.

Like every other "religion" there are many divisions, sects, denominations, doctrines, traditions, and theologies, but the God of Christianity is the same God as that of all the other religions we've examined in this book.

Jesus is famed for His teachings, healings, and the merciful acts He performed during His lifetime.

*But!*

What Jesus did was done by the power of the Christ Spirit of God *within* Him.

## God Who?

The power of Christianity is not found in the teachings, the healings, or any of the merciful acts of Jesus but in the amazing mystery of God's inner witness: the Christ Spirit who comes in to live through the born again Christian.

It is the Christ Spirit *within* by which men and women are changed into new creatures, not by their own effort, nor by much study or long prayers, but by the Grace of God working *within* them to transform them according to God's will.

The saved Christian is saved by God's mercy alone, not by any good he may believe he's done or ever could do on his own.

The born again Christian lives by God's presence *within*.

Though surely seen through a uniquely different telescope, the God whom Jesus called "Father" is the same God Shintos call *Kami*, Jains call *Loka*, Confucians call *Tian*, Bahá'ís call *Yahweh*, Jews call *Elohim*, Sikhs call *Waheguru*, Buddhists call *Dharma*, Hindus call *Brahman*, and Muslims call *Allah*.

Same God.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> There are some 2.1 billion Christians, 33% of Earth's religious population.

## Conclusion

### Conclusion

#### **A Call to Alms**

Wars *can* cease!

A bridge *can* be built!

The hateful “call to arms”  
*can* fall silent once for all.

We *can* replace violence with benevolence, embrace unity with a creative continuity of thought, and realize once and for all that *none* of us sees Truth with unblemished perfection.

We *can* dispense with our differences.

We *can* agree that Christian, Jew, Muslim, Sikh, Plains Indian, Hindu, Buddhist, and every other person who seeks the favor of our Unseen Benefactor, see God as the Ultimate Soul, the Giver, Truth, Reality.

We *can* agree.

We *can* end wars of religious intolerance.

We *can* seek God’s favor for us all!

God will remain forever a mystery to man, because God is beyond magnificent, unknowable, loving, perpetual, everywhere permeating, everywhere active and alive.

When we agree there is opportunity for peace.

Seen through our individual telescopes, God *seems* different to each of us because we view through different doctrines, men’s theologies, children’s fables, cultural or political ethnos, a host of other traditional biases by which we proudly but ignorantly claim, “My God is better than your God.”

God remains God, however.



## God Who?

My God.

Your God.

Their God.

Same God ... different names, different telescopes.

*We can* agree!

*We can* build a bridge of understanding to world peace.

*We can* learn what other religions believe about God.

*We can* learn without in any way giving up what we believe.

*We can* learn tolerance and forgiveness.

*We can* work for peace as brothers and sisters together.

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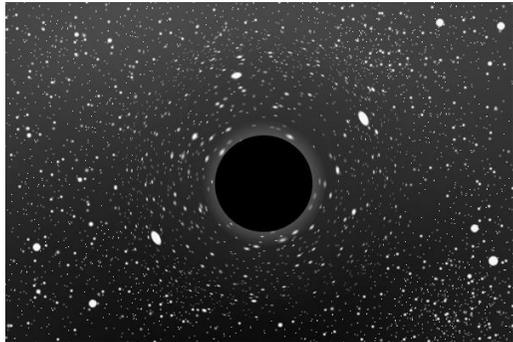
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