



ABUNDANCE
Of
G O D

BOAZ ADHENGU





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Of
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PREFACE

At a tender age during my early twenties, much effort was within me to change the perceived sense of being; that the life experienced within me was not the ordained plan for a future with God, there had to be a way to make things better and in so knowing, much emphasis brought me to books and through diligence and passion, I excelled to become. All this while, temptations to forget from whence God has brought me has always persisted and in bitterness was I consumed with rebellion for the life my childhood father prescribed to me, a sad view of child that if not for God, my path would be damned in lost. To my memory, academics lifted me to be the youngest published African author of philosophical books at an age of twenty six, making me a distinguished fellow to stand with many noble professors who disbelieved that a man so young could think so old. But greed to pursue this etiquette of the self has brought me to relate with other societies and in my own knowing, I started to rebel against God, subsequently promoting atheism while deep down in my heart, I knew the bad of it. This was wrong.

The culmination of this confusion was leaving religion and escaping from philosophy thereby isolating to solitude, a secular life that was filled with emptiness and a continuous search for meaning. Only now can I say that the true meaning of life is with God and through him, we can achieve all the abundance that our hearts desire; *seek ye first the kingdom of God and all shall be added unto you.*

In this recent past, after my mind brought me to knees in repentance, I started to count most of these blessings God has enabled me and quest to associate with the church has come to my heart; mostly so, through my son, Jahwar Amber who consistently insisted on his need to attend Sunday school just like other children in neighbourhood do; it is this taking him to church and bringing him back home, a process that resulted into a greater urge to join in worship and today am that Christian who never misses a church service. Am indebted to serve in my church.

To this end, much thanks to Bishop Pius Tembu and Rev. Elvis Irungu whom am always eager to discover in their life touching sermons; my specific pew at the church has become a comfortable seat and each Sunday am urged through conscious to embrace in habit. But interesting enough, and as I quest to make this book a historical piece from an African author, I must continuously thank Chaplain Margaret Kihoro who lent me her ears to listen to the deep side of my story, my lamentations and longing for a Godly life and through constant participation in a forum, her motherly encouragement has seen a blossom of hope and this light I will continuously shine. Indeed there exist other people with larger problems than whatever my sorrows at the time of calling would equate to; but there is nothing in this world bigger than the love of God and no obstacle so difficult that our God cannot move. Am grateful to have found this peace.

As a member of the Men's Fellowship Ministry at my community church, am continuously in mission to become

that useful person and through my past may a new future be seen and may God continue to bless us abundantly through His everlasting touch.

A book like this won't be easy to write and as many would agree, being a dedicated Christian is also never easy. We require to continuously trust in prayer and build up our faith; and as such, am currently pursuing a course towards becoming a pastor, perhaps even work in a church setup. I intend to shine God's light and this book is just but the beginning of one such great effort towards a path of enlightenment. It is in my deep prayer that it achieves the goal that God had for it when this horizon of having this title published tickled my mind. In this past, I have done a lot of things for the world; I have written many other books for development, philosophy, commerce, policy, the arts and even pioneered the African publication on *Creative Economy*. All these achievement are a sign of Gods love working in me and on this occasion, I choose to write for God and promote this goodness that am feeling through his mighty hand.

May you as a reader of my work be blessed and share with others so that the light might keep its shine. Amen!

CHAPTER ONE

awareness

“What is necessary to change in a person is to change his awareness of himself”

- Abraham Maslow

When I arrived, my car was up on flames and my home had been scattered, the windows were all broken, the doors broken and most of my young trees that made a garden had been cut. I had been travelling from Kisumu unaware of what to expect. Was I conscious?

Arriving at my chaotic home meant that I was aware, when my mind gains attention of a myriad of contents displayed to it, regardless of how vivid or ordered, brought a connection to me, the proprietor of my mind and in so doing, some feelings developed.

We all have free access to consciousness within our minds whenever we chose, because without consciousness, we wouldn't know that we exist, let alone who we are or what we think. Consciousness makes our mind subjective thereby gaining memory and reasoning which has always been perfected with the evolution of language. Without subjectivity, there can be no knowing and no one to take notice. Simply put, there cannot be history of what creatures did through time and consequently, no culture.

It becomes difficult for many to discuss consciousness because it is overtly part of our daily living through its majestic flows that it becomes a bliss to really enquire as to what this consciousness is made of. But since we cannot be conscious without having a mind, what is this mind made of? The fact no one can see the mind of others, conscious or not, is especially mysterious. We can only observe their bodies or their actions, what they do, say or write and from

such make informed guesses about what they think. Some intellectuals argue that the mind is located inside the brain; others think it is part of the body contours and as such visible. Differently, my inference would be that the brain constructs the *mind* yet to understand how the brain makes this mind work is all within the scope of this book.

In the past twelve or so years, my focus has been culture and this book that am writing is a new beginning. I have previously written about religion and morality in scientific journals and other books but I have grown dissatisfied with account of the problem and a deep reflection of my livelihood has changed my views. This book is an attempt to discuss the current views and explicitly share what it means to be within the abundance of God.

Consciousness is not merely about images in the mind. It is, in the very least, about an organization of mind contents centered on the organism that produces and motivates those contents. But consciousness, in the sense that reader and author can experience anytime they wish, is more than a mind organized under the influence of a living, acting organism. It is also a mind capable of knowing that such a living, acting organism exists. To be sure, the fact that the brain succeeds in creating neural patterns that map things experienced as images is an important part of the process of being conscious. Consciousness will therefore depend upon the brains subjective realisation of the self, that feeling that pervades the images we experience subjectively, the owning process.

It is arguable that cultures and civilizations would not have come to pass in the absence of consciousness, thus making consciousness a notable development in biological evolution. And yet the very nature of consciousness poses serious problems for those attempting to elucidate its biology. Viewing consciousness from where we stand today, mindful and armed with a self, can be blamed for an understandable but troubling distortion of the history of mind and consciousness studies. Viewed from the top, the mind acquires a special status, discontinuous with the remainder of the organism to which it belongs. Viewed from the bottom, the mind appears to be not just very complex, which it certainly is, but also different in kind from the biological tissues and functions of the organism that begets it.

Organisms make minds out of the activity of special cells known as neurons. Neurons share most of the characteristics of other cells in our body, and yet their operation is distinctive. They are sensitive to changes around them; they are excitable (an interesting property they share with muscle cells).

Neurons are largely concentrated in a central nervous system (the brain, for short), but they send signals to the organism's body, as well as to the outside world, and they receive signals from both. Minds emerge when the activity of small circuits is organized across large networks so as to compose momentary patterns. The patterns represent things and events located outside the brain, either in the body or in

the external world, but some patterns also represent the brain's own processing of other patterns.

Open a standard dictionary in search of a definition of consciousness, and you are likely to find some variation of the following: "consciousness is a state of awareness of self and surroundings." Substitute knowledge for awareness, and own existence for self, and the result is a statement that does capture some essential aspects of consciousness as I see it: consciousness is a state of mind in which there is knowledge of one's own existence and of the existence of surroundings. Consciousness is a state of mind—if there is no mind there is no consciousness; consciousness is a particular state of mind, enriched by a sense of the particular organism in which a mind is operating; and the state of mind includes knowledge to the effect that the said existence is situated, that there are objects and events surrounding it. Consciousness is a state of mind with a self-process added to it.

When my car was bombed and my house reduced to ashes, my thoughts of wanting to understand whatever had transpired consumed a better part of my mind. In my own reflections, accepting my fate and blaming upon those responsible, I beget what it means to be betrayed by those whom one wishes to relate to as family. My coming to this world cannot be expressed as my own doing or rather is it to my wish to blame whatever facts that made me be; I remain

my father's son and a product of an affair my mother had in a certain stage of her marriage. To the eyes of many, am that normal child in a promising household but in my internal bewilderment, the pain that brings this suffering of accepting that am never the same as my other siblings will always zero my existentialism to be that solitary effect that perhaps reminds another of a mistake. In any way, my mother raised me well and due to me she has perhaps suffered for reasons beyond my need to share in explaining. One sure thing, she quit her job when issues of fidelity were at the verge of breaking the family apart and on such a consequence, our general upbringing would never be the same, for we witnessed struggles of what a loving parent could do just to maintain a status. My father who has continuously attempted to reject my presence and worthwhile attempted several times to become a polygamous Christian, thanks to the church elders who stood upright and refuted such lustful whims and as if not to acclaim that his own advancements towards having similar affairs resulted to no effects, I would be a cheat but the truth remains that perhaps elsewhere beyond and without my need to know, am with siblings not born from my mother's womb.

A week before the incident of my attempted extinction from this reality that I now narrate, I was having trouble with my neighbours and pestering relatives, some of whom I share no acquaintance of. Little did I know that my father who had raised me as part of his own wanted me incapacitated; I had risen beyond what the *cultic* traditions fantasied by his

ancestral advisers required. Perhaps, it wasn't right for me to own a home, not at all. As a child born from an affair, I wouldn't expect any better treatment and this event was just a culmination of a long road towards a resisted darkness. My biological father died way back when I was seventeen years young and as such, did not cast a foundational stone in a place that thyself, as his son could inherit as my space. Without such worries, I occupied my thoughts in purchasing a similar space elsewhere, not a distant much from my ancestral brothers but nevertheless, a space of my own liking and openness. This aggravated my childhood father and he continued his serious pursuit towards my turmoil. All this while, my son had been living under his protection and the bravest imagination was that am a rich inheritor of unknown wealth that was perhaps willed to me by my biological father. If I should die, then my son, blood of my blood, will inherit whatever material possessions I might have gathered and truth be told, I had wealth, however not much, but it was better and in much quantity than my assassin father held.

Before the incident, I had been having sleepless nights, a month before, I had been having a feeling in need to reconnect with God and for luck of a church space, I used to visit funeral services just to listen to the sermons, doing this without regard of being strange to the bereaved family. And it helped me, for I felt the hate planned for me by my relatives, my conscious was not at peace and it refused to immerse such thoughts of giving up. On the eve of my attempted extinction, I went to church for prayers and when

on my way back, am shocked to discover that there were hooligans hired to make me historical through death. In my mind, and deep inside my heart, the power of God transcended my future and all my entire reflections to this past that I avoid to see always resonate factual know that God has always been with me and in guide of my destiny.

Having succeeded in living through my dreams of fame, hope and luxury, am reduced to nobody at the time of this writing; but without regret, am still grateful that my understanding of reality only makes me better and stronger for all blessings come from God. It is now that am eager for deeper involvement with God and continuously am in quest to unfold the process that helps my mind to accept and express the Godly conscious defined as righteous to us humans and proclaimed as moral by many.

CHAPTER TWO

fatherless

Continuously sing to God! Sing praises to his name. Prepare a road while singing for him who is riding in the deserts! His name consists in JAH, and continuously exult before him! Father to the fatherless and a judge for the widows, (is) God in his holy habitation.

—Psalm 68:4–5

Understanding my past has always left me grappling in awe of what future this life has to offer, and never in my history has a chance to regret begotten my purview of thoughts. My mother, to the best of my imagination, has always been a Christian but such a Christian who still holds on to some myopic traditional African beliefs. To a modern mind, his Christian association would be *cultic* or of not a globally recognised religion. She grew in a family that till this date practices such a religion and we call it *Legio Maria*, a tribal inclination by the *dholuo* speaking people of Kenya and a deep religion that has its origin during the colonial oppressiveness of the *nyanza* natives. As such, it is an orthodox of Catholicism. Am not so interested to research into the basis of such a religion but would base my story from experiential know as observed, whether such consequences were emanated from such a church, it's less of my concern, but to my truthfulness, I hated most of what I witnessed.

My brother whom I follow by birth from my mother's womb was born epileptic, and for many years I watched him become incapacitated, suffering in pain as his abilities dwindled towards paralysis. With pride, my father walked and even offered this precious brother as a medical experiment to many doctors who came from overseas. He would later benefit perhaps in fame of being assisted or whatever whims they offered him. Myself, am a fifth child from my mother's womb, born out of an affair my mother was forced to have as proclaimed by her religion. It is a trial to reconcile my mind to understand that a child born of

epilepsy was a sign of evil, and cleansing could only come from within the family, perhaps a younger brother to the husband, a manly figure not yet married. The product is myself, a miracle child born normal and without any medical defects. This result of existence would later haunt me to become that meek person; curious to understand why my life was shaping the way it unfolded.

We used to play with my brother, normal games including football but as we grew older, his convulsions persisted and for lack of necessity, medical options became the least of priorities to my mother, she focused on her religion, the church that she believed had advised her well and her womb had been cleansed. We would occasionally see these prayer persons dressed in colourful robes, mostly pink or yellow, walking with big sticks as if on exodus and prophetically speaking to culminate in a *pentecostal* tongue that warranted deeper belief. For no reason, my mind refused to indoctrinate into this system and my stubbornness rescued me, for the herbs provided, I disliked with passion.

My epileptic brother followed through birth, our elder brother and these concoctions were a must. I saw him being immersed into herb consumption, and prayers were a norm; and in no time, he started developing asthma and other respiratory problems associated with inhaling fumes that were medically poisonous but religiously powerful. In this witness, I decided to abstain from anything religious and the only connection I shared with God was during my school studies where they taught Christian religious education, later

on, for the love of basketball, I joined the *Church of Christ*, a newly established mission at that time and their urge was to be part of a boys club where we were inducted into ways of worship and christened existence. I found this awesome and not in contradiction with my school teachings. Mostly so, I enjoyed playing basketball.

As the days progressed, my brother became paralysed on his left side and soon he could not walk; he started drooling and further, he could not chew. He became a vegetable.

Being the immediate child born after him, there was some sibling attachment and it saddened me how chaotic my family was transforming to become. My father was a proud man and decided to hide this fate from the public eye, and this would affect me psychologically. I shared the same bed with my paralysed brother but not until I started to understand what this life meant.

In my deeper reflections, I remember attending a school function somewhere around Uhuru Park; my father gladly took me there. The worst part is that he claims to have forgotten to pick me up and being a child, ten year old, I had to beg strangers to show me my way back home, for it was a long walk. I remember waiting for my dad not until I felt it's better to start the journey, and this thought came later, almost at the verge of sunset and the dusk was creeping. All I could imagine were the routes of getting to the school function and from such a memory traced my way back towards origin. At times, I got lost and had to cry, plead

with a stranger to show me the correct road to a destination that they felt was not mine. And yes, I walked for five hours on foot, with wonders that my mother still try's to understand, I knocked at the door and my feet were sour. It was the first time I saw her pray without rituals, a prayer that I understood was genuine. On the other edge, my father was not even grateful, he looked bothered. It would be after my epileptic brother passed on that I started to understand the reasons why so much hate was being passed towards me; why a person am blessed to call father is casting me away.

I was fifteen years young when my epileptic brother passed on. He died while asleep and this demise transformed my thoughts, I felt empty and actually realised that death was real. Most people talked about it and most friends looked at me differently, but then I was almost finishing my eighth grade. To wonders, I passed better than any of my other siblings did. A few months passed and as accustomed with Kenyan education, February is the month of admission for form ones. My father knew all along that I was to attend school but come this day, am not with uniform, not that he couldn't afford. My mother was just that housewife who depends upon the husband for every penny. With no better option, I borrow a trouser from my eldest brother and a blouse from my sister; the uniform was white shirt and grey trousers. The only things that were new in me was the tie and that pair of cheap socks, things that am grateful my mother bought out of her own volition.

By playing basketball at the church, I had made new friends and I was also honest in my bible studies and one summer, this missionary requests to meet my parents. To his mind, I was that poor child but upon reaching my neighbourhood, he is surprised, but persistent he is and a must he will meet these folks. Luckily, my mother is around and he manages to gather all the information that made him help me. However, before his help, I suffered a lot.

In form two, being a day scholar at a prestigious school, I was only equal when am at home, sleeping in my bed. At school, my classmates looked down upon me because I couldn't afford bus fare back home, I had to trek a long distance back to *buruburu* from south B, perhaps thirty kilometres. In this very time when am in my form two, my dad started passing insults to me, telling me how much a product of infidelity I was. Things that a child in a loving family shouldn't listen to and to make it worse, he went ahead and abandoned the entire family in his quest to get married to a woman she had met; my father wanted a second wife. We didn't see him for almost eight months and all these while, no money for bills and no money for food. My mother was forced to start a shop, and in her pain, I saw life as God wanted me to see it. I remember coming back home and just sleeping because there was no food, and each day, just waking up to trek that long mile knowing that this would be a routine. Then out of a deeper blue, a sponsor came, the missionary father who chose to take me like his own. His name is Barkely Hackett and he had been worried why I was not attending church or playing basketball; he

had managed to trace me back to my home of residence and with much bitterness in my heart, I spoke the truth and things changed for the better. I reconnected with God and in my deeper heart, God was the only father I could turn to for help. Endlessly, I prayed for my family and mostly, for wisdom, for God's guidance in this life that I knew nothing of. At school, I started improving in studies, bought a lot more uniform than my classmates expected me to have and I afforded bus fare still. I was no longer arriving in school tired and hiding to wash my armpits. No! I was confident, changed and brightened. The school administration noticed and in good emphasis, made me a prefect and this even motivated me to do more good. At the finish of school, I once again excelled but the worst evil happened. My father approached the missionary and issued threats of law suits; at least this is what the secretary told me and on such grounds, I was left alone. God had given me a chance to prosper and gifted me with good grades; I would not relent to the devil.

At a silent discussion with my mother, in her soliloquies of lamentation, I noticed that my biological father had always tried to reconnect with me but for fear of shame and open secrets, he kept distance. His family was younger than ours and my father always had ways of threatening others. And so, connecting all such dots that my conscious could allow, it was a pity on what my existence had caused and in my memory, I attempted to commit suicide just to end this suffering that my mother was experiencing. Nothing seemed to work towards my favour and the hate that I gathered from

my dad made me want to live in heaven, I wanted peace and perhaps death would have been the answer.

Having failed in my attempts to commit suicide and having benefited from gracious talks from those who cared, I decided to let go of my Kenyan life and connect with my missionary father abroad. It would be a travel to the United States of America; I had good grades from high school and an invitation from these church blessers wouldn't be trouble. And so, I applied for a University admission and several institutions approved my request but all that was needed was a parental consent. I remember reading something like below twenty one year olds are required to have signed documents consenting their travel and stay abroad; and without my father accenting to these, my visa application process wouldn't be a success. Once again, without my expectation, he frustrated my quest. Later on, I would come to understand that he envied my pursuit, I was not directly his creating and my other brothers weren't so good in ambition or behaviour. They were spoilt, my sisters had children from wedlock and here I was playing saint. This disturbed him proper.

Having been the only one in this family with the best grades, and realising that my American dream was a hoax, I decided to focus on the stitch in time, this letter to join University of Nairobi. They required a substantial amount of money and perhaps my father could help. And on the occasion of admission, the same history that teared me apart in form one attempted to repeat itself. My father had no

money to admit me to the campus and as a child, I only had my mother to cry on to. These would be my last tears for she gave me twelve thousand shillings and insisted that that was all she had, yet I left the house knowing that God was with me and should I ever return, it wasn't going to be that tomorrow, perhaps another day. And as fate dictates, I started looking for a job and in such a process, met a woman who changed my life for the better. This lady loved me for real and introduced me to her father within a short while. With her as my love and in mutual happiness for a future, my school fee was not a trouble any more. I moved to Karen, a different neighbourhood from my Buru-Buru childhood space; and from this neighbourhood, my day schooling continued. I worked at their family business around the city centre, and in motivation to study, I joined several student association clubs. For no better reason, I refused to pursue business courses and chose development oriented training. My option was philosophy and political science; a path that would change my way of thought.

It would be obvious that I hated my father for not accepting me as legitimate and the irony was that I felt no remorse for my mother who many felt was the cause of all these. It was not until early spring of that year when I was almost completing my first degree that I decided to visit home. It would be a tour of hope to see if by my absentee membership from this family I love, things would have been better. Always, I felt a deep association with the misfortunes that my siblings were facing; and worse still, the hate and abuse from my father induced them to attempt the same on

me. It would therefore have been better if they were at peace without me, and that wasn't the case. Life was not even as usual, things were gloomy and my mother was stressed. This time, she had not managed to refute her husband's quest for a wife, to much of a guess, other siblings were being created elsewhere and the family was growing. This meant one family had to suffer at the expense of another.

The tension affected my psyche and I made it a routine to visit my mother to help out whichever way I could; it would not take me a day but maybe several months to change the environment. I didn't have much to spare but with the little I gathered, I changed the look of things. It would be making the kitchen look homely and much of the items at the living room needed to be disposed and replaced with a fresh look. All these, in my doing, I didn't care to share with my partner and in my late arrivals she developed a misrepresentation of reality that perhaps I was cheating on her until her delusion confused our entire relationship when she followed me to *Buru-Buru*, not knowing that that was my childhood home. Coming back to Karen, it was hell and I found myself alone. My future wife was not with trust for me anymore and time to explain was not available. And so, after graduating from the university, I was once again a child in my home. This wouldn't be comfortable and each day I longed to reconnect with my spouse. I endlessly prayed, joblessness crept to occupy my life and financial constraint would be a life to adopt.

One evening while attempting to look for jobs online, I stumbled into a website that had articles written in a philosophical language, the website represented an organisation that claimed to promote science and freedom of inquiry. This organisation was also expanding and in Africa, they had only but one contact, this was in Nigeria. To my persistent exchange with the resource person, am accepted to lead the Kenyan chapter and on we progress towards incubation or later in the program, a probation period before am accepted to be a director. Am promised a stipend and a continuous library of books from their head office located in New York.

The organisation turned not to be only promoting science but a geared organisation towards championing for atheism, and in reading most of their materials, am developing a rebellious attitude towards God and deeply so, hating my childhood father for such mistreats that I have gathered in his favour of dislike. In a quest to prove my worth, am proclaimed to be a lead figure in atheist endeavours within Kenya, a role that would later haunt my psyche as I leave this organisation for a better quest of peace and honesty with God. Nevertheless, working for the Center for Inquiry, as this organisation is known, opened my eyes to realise that God is real and also real was the evident racial discrimination from other continents of the first world. Having suffered at the hands of my father and lost a bride who had given me hope, my rebellion had some basis of justification, I wanted to blame God and to do this, I would be a disbeliever. I hated the hypocrisy of my father who

prided himself as a Christian for the public to see but a family devil inside our home. I wanted to blame God for everything negative in my life and this rebellion persisted, and the more I rebelled the deeper my troubles became.

I ended up doing research online, I wanted to become a Jew, perhaps having a religion that is biblically mentioned would reconcile me to God. The only synagogue I knew was located next to the university and to my admitting, my gut was scared. Religion was becoming a confusing norm and for many years, I lived without religion, not until 2016 when I finally reconnected with my childhood church.

As much as subjects of religion remain areas to be discussed, atheism must be seen as a personal reflection of the psychology of those particular people who propagate it; thereby receiving much support from social, economic and cultural forces surrounding our existence. This owes to the fact that many of these people advocating for atheism, have been considered as the leading intellectuals of our time including Sigmund Freud, Friedrich Nietzsche, Bertrand Russel and Jean Sartre. Their peculiar psychological needs have always been advocated in such books that we use to solve our livelihood problems and without knowing, we might become influenced by such ideologies that support scientific truths and are therefore facts of knowledge.

Many atheists are famous for arguing that the religious congregations suffer from illusions, from unconscious and infantile needs and from other psychological deficits. This is not rational at all. Atheism remains an instinct that can never be generalised to equate an event, it is inclined to personal confessions of its proponents who merely write from the unconscious memoirs and this impedes their ability to believe. Nevertheless, we all have a free choice to reject or accept God and this began since the fall of Adam from the *Garden of Eden*.

Notably, Sigmund Freud is popular for elucidating that most religious ideas have arisen from the same needs seen as facilitative elements towards achieving civilisation; from the necessity of defending oneself against crushing superior force of nature. Therefore, religious beliefs are illusions, fulfilments of the oldest, strongest and most urgent wishes of mankind. And just like helpless children, fear aroused the need for protection through love that was often provided by the father. This argument suffers from a weak conjecture that cycle's autonomy of falsehood. Mostly so, Freud insists that man is accustomed to project his nature into the world outside himself before he finds it in himself thereby living in a projected dream of images or wish-fulfilment. Such advocacy as propagated and sustained by the godless persons who identify with atheism is blatantly untrue and full of ignorance. The power of God is evident to all of us who want to visualise and experience it but as persons of love, we must forgive their conscious and strife to instil ethical etiquette as biblically instructed.

We must agree that there is much research showing that a serious and committed religious life is associated with greater physical health and psychological well-being; and this means the religious man is a conscious person, not submerged in periods of illusion as Freud and Bertrand Russel would make believe. Not only them but many other intellectual atheists who tend to equate the Christian honour of God as father to many subjective orientations; with imaginations of laws that protect mankind as documented in the bible. Atheists tend to view God as that jealous father who creates cultural taboos for his own children without presumption that his sons will grow to develop sexual desires; a father who wants to keep all the women to himself and in such desire to fulfil such a prohibition, his sons gang against him and in freedom they do what they would rather have suffered to desire. Meaning that through science, a group of humans discover what God has been hiding to them, some sweetness of nature; perhaps the pscychological orientation of Sigmund Freud who is the origin of such misuse of self, must be put at check.

Modern atheism has often attempted to replace our heavenly father with man, to dissociate the source of goodness and power in the universe into a central whim of man, not God. To a Christian, this atheistic interpretation of God must be seen as wrong and unwarranted; mostly so, unconscious and wishful.

Freud's theory widely cited as *oedipus complex*, argues that once a child or youth is disappointed in or losses respect for

his earthly father, belief in heavenly father becomes impossible. That a child's psychological representation of his father is intimately connected to his understanding of God thus an atheist's disappointment or resentment of his father will unconsciously justify his rejection of God. Notably, the relationship was defective because either the father was dead, abusive, weak, or had abandoned the children; but nevertheless, such absentia affects the general upbringing and intellectual development of this child. No matter what our family background, we are still responsible for the choices we make. Growing up in an unloving home does not excuse us from rejecting God, but it does explain why some people reject God. That there may be a psychological component to their commitment to atheism, that they are expressing dissatisfaction with their past and want to blame God. Through atheism, they express such rebellion.

Most atheists have deficiency of morals when family units are concerned and rebellion is outright to them. A good example is Fredrick Nietzsche the German philosopher who is widely known for advocating that "*God is Dead*". Nietzsche was fond of his father, Pastor Ludwig of the Lutheran church whom he spent most of his time with and was apparently even allowed to his study. Ludwig was to later die of a brain disease making Nietzsche orphaned at a tender age and to be brought up in a house full of females; to his lamentations, Christianity was a woman's religion and being a pastor was the greatest mistake by his father; he later joined into a pagan religion to compensate for his

social deficiency and search for masculinity. Other well-known atheists who fit the pattern include David Hume whose father died when he was two and there was no subsequent substitute father, Bertrand Russel whose father died when he was four and was raised by a puritanical grandmother whom he nick-named the *deadly nightshade*. She was by birth a Scottish Presbyterian, and by temperament a puritan. Russell's daughter Katherine noted that his grandmother's joyless faith was "*the only form of Christianity my father knew well.*" This ascetic faith taught that "*the life of this world was no more than a gloomy testing ground for future bliss.*" She concluded, "*My father threw this morbid belief out the window.*"

Ludwig Feuerbach was a prominent German atheist who was born into a distinguished and gifted German family. His father was a prominent jurist who was difficult and undiplomatic with colleagues and family. The dramatic event in young Ludwig's life must have been his father's affair with the wife of one his father's friends. They lived together openly in another town, and she bore him a son. The affair began when Feuerbach was nine and lasted for nine years. His father publicly rejected his family, and years later Feuerbach rejected Christianity. One famous critic of religion said that Feuerbach was so hostile to Christianity that he would have been called the Antichrist if the world had ended then.

The lack of stability from a father's care appears to leave a void that a discredited God cannot fill, and that instead

requires the search for a new principle of order and flourishing, most of these intellectuals buried their dissatisfaction in books, to produce theories of life and to date, despite being atheists, their works still solve human problems but we must continuously reject their rebellion. In mathematics, we have Bertrand Russel as the leading theoriatian; for existential philosophy, its Jean Sartre and in other sectors we could list Adolf Hitler, Stalin or others who have rebelled and dehumanised the world through their ideologies. The list is endless.

In a fallen world, every father fails in some degree to reflect and interpret the fatherhood of God, and yet many children implicitly or explicitly reconcile that gap with trust in the providence and faithfulness of God. Fatherlessness is the most harmful demographic trend of this generation of our time; and while divorce and unwed pregnancies are still the leading causes of fatherlessness in some countries, poverty, violence, and disease are the root causes globally.

Additionally, radical feminism has done much to render fathers superfluous in developed countries, as well as challenge traditional interpretations of *God's Word*. Fatherlessness has helped usher in the pervasive popularity of a feminist hermeneutic in reading *God's Word*. Those precious children who have been on the receiving end of the pain of fatherlessness will have a negative outlook toward the God who calls himself, "*Father*"—thus the feminization of God who now becomes "*Mother*."

The Bible teaches that husbands/fathers are to be the spiritual leaders in the home (*Deut. 6; Ps. 78:1–8; Eph. 5:21–33; 6:4*), yet husbands/fathers are becoming increasingly rare in the twenty-first-century culture of *divorce-on-demand* and unwed births. In America, “60 percent of all rapists, 72 percent of adolescent murders, and 70 percent of long-term prison inmates come from fatherless homes.”

Across time and cultures, fathers have always been considered essential (*and not just for their sperm*). Marriage and the nuclear family --*mother, father and children*-- are the most universal social institutions in existence. In no society has the birth of children out of wedlock been the cultural norm. To the contrary, a concern for the legitimacy of children is nearly universal with women tirelessly championing for compensation or other allowances that associate with a child being born from a manly intercourse.

Few people doubt the fundamental importance of mothers, but what do fathers do? Much of what they contribute to the growth of their children, of course, is simply the result of a mother being that second adult in a home. Bringing up children is demanding, stressful and often exhausting. Two adults cannot only support and spell each other; they can offset each other's deficiencies and build on each other's strengths.

Fathers also bring an array of unique qualities. Some are familiar, for example, that of being a protector and role

model; teenage boys without fathers are notoriously prone to trouble.

The pathway to adulthood for daughters is somewhat easier, but they still must learn from their fathers, in ways they cannot from their mothers, mostly so, how to relate to men in their future. They learn from their fathers about heterosexual trust, intimacy and difference. They learn to appreciate their own femininity from the one male who is most special in their lives. Most important, through loving and being loved by their fathers, they learn that they are love worthy.

It's sometimes said that fathers express more concern for the child's longer term development, while mothers focus on the child's immediate wellbeing (which, of course, in its own way has everything to do with a child's long-term wellbeing). What is clear, is that children have dual needs that must be met. Becoming a mature and competent adult involves the integration of two often-contradictory human desires: for communion, or the feeling of being included, connected, and related, and for agency, which entails individuality and independence. One without the other is a denuded and impaired humanity, an incomplete realization of the human potential.

In response to this crisis of fatherlessness, congregations need to love fatherless children and single mothers, thus thanking God that they choose to attend church. There are other sundry places they could be each Sunday, yet they

choose to worship and serve God in a local church. These broken families are not burdens, but blessings. Let Christians show these hurting children/families the infinite love and grace of Christ with no strings attached. Congregations could offer free, biblically-based counselling to families including fatherless children. Pastors must proactively engage fatherlessness to prevent future generations from making the same mistakes of the past. Fatherhood must be taught and vividly modelled for fatherless children.

Just as cultural forms can be discarded, dismantled and declared obsolete, they can still be regenerated. In order to restore marriage and reinstate fathers in the lives of their children, we are somehow going to have to undo the cultural shift of the past few decades toward radical individualism. We can't return to the so-called Boaz and Ruth, *breadwinner - housewife* family of the fifties; that time has passed. And no one wants to return to loveless marriages held together only by economic interdependence. But there are ways to strengthen the institution of marriage; and thereby the husband - wife nuclear family that stays together and actively and responsibly raises its children in a Godly manner.

And so am continuously consoling myself into a righteous path, understanding that my past inclination towards atheism was a rebellious act catalysed by an imposed

deficiency of a father figure, an oppressive loveable that refused to mantle his own roles as that other parent. My survival, as I now see it, has been the falling towards the correct path of accepting that am but a child of God, and He is my heavenly father who will never forsake thee. Am at peace knowing for sure that the constraints approached towards my bewilderment are nothing compared to such everlasting love I can gather from religion.

When my house was burnt to the ground and my car torched in an attempted assassination related to forced inheritance as presumed from a document that I didn't even have, the would be beneficiaries were my immediate relatives and my life mattered not to them. I have always been that obstacle yet in my path of struggle, am visualising some horizon of hope. It has been a long way back to God and in my bitter escapism relating to the oppression I experienced from my family, am transformed from Christianity to atheism and later, attempting the Islam faith only to reconcile into a sincere agnostic. My doubt was not satisfied and the curiosity to experience such abundance with God only came when I lost all that my mental paradise had accumulated in terms of material wealth. A series of misfortunes bandwagon my life until a religious advisor cautioned that evil is real and to seek the ways of the church must be a priority to myself. And ever since joining into fellowship with my community church, am not worried.

In my struggles with hope, my love relationship hit a black end and each of us separated into different directions. My

depression was so severe that out of mercy, my spouse volunteered to leave me with my son whom am proudly raising as a single father. In such turmoil's and never understanding what evils prompted my separation, am always reluctant to establish in another relationship but continuously my trust in God has blossomed and my hopes for a new beginning keep rejuvenating my young psyche that all is not lost. Am blessed to be back into worship and God is my *father*, the one who never classifies anyone as a grandchild but *thee child*. We are all children of God; fear no evil.

CHAPTER THREE

conscious living

*I will not let anyone walk through my mind with their
dirty feet.*

- Adhengo Bueuz

I take it that God, the transcendent source and destiny of reality, manifests “His” creative power in the reality that we experience and those that the sciences explore; God also manifests “His” benevolent intentionality in the proclamation of the *Word of God*, as gleaned from the biblical tradition which emerged and evolved in ancient near eastern history as part of the evolution process witnessed by the cosmos as a whole.

While the transcendent God is beyond human observation, explanation and prediction, the intuition, notion or concept of God is part of immanent reality which can be described, analysed, critiqued, transformed or abandoned. The biblical faith is persuaded that transcendent God uses these immanent processes, however problematic and provisional they may be, as a means to disclose *His* creative power and *His* benevolent intentionality to humans. The task of theology therefore is to find the most appropriate notion or concept of God, the best possible under any given set of circumstances.

According to biblical faith, God has power; God has a will; God acts; God speaks; God hears; God responds; at least for us *Christians*, God exists in a dynamic relationship with humans and reality as a whole. In terms of biblical tradition, it would be counterintuitive to dispense with the personal concept of God. We have to concede that, when speaking of the transcendent, we have to speak in metaphors. This cannot be avoided since we have no language for something

that might or might not exist beyond the range of our observation and comprehension.

Modern neurology dictates that all human knowledge is located in synaptic networks and processes of our brains. God consciousness cannot possibly be an exception. Spirit is further structured and oriented as individual and collective consciousness. Synaptic networks come about through the interplay of genetic predisposition, early life conditioning and the ongoing flow of information into the brain. This is the scientific explanation!

The neurological mechanisms of the brain cannot distinguish between information derived from fantasy, conjecture or speculation, on the one hand, and information derived from sensual experience on the other. If God consciousness is located in the synaptic networks of the human brain, the question is how it got there. In view of the great variety of convictions, it seems clear that God consciousness is not produced by our genetic endowment, but by the inflow of cultural information. The biblical faith agrees that faith in God is the creation of the proclaimed *Word of God (Romans 10:14-17)*. However, the human species has a need for some kind of beyond, because we experience ourselves as derived, dependent, vulnerable, mortal and accountable beings. The information that responds to this need will define the content of our consciousness of the transcendent. Perhaps this is easy if we use the development of foetus into an infant as an example.

For the first time in its *post-foetal* life, the infant experiences need (*hunger, thirst, cold, discomfort*) and responds by crying. The warm body, the breasts and the hands of the “*mother*” offer a much needed relief. Screaming triggers comfort and care. The cry-response pattern repeats itself again and again, forming a synaptic structure that suggests something like a causal mechanism (*crying delivers the goods*). But this impersonal sequence of events is soon superseded by the experience of *mother* as a person. It is often believed that this is the root of the synaptic infrastructure for what may later manifest itself as prayer. Looking up upon and expecting results.

The face and the utterances of the mother, thus, act as the mirror through which the self-identity, self-consciousness and self-expression of the child begin to develop. This is highly significant for the emerging God concept. It can be argued that there is an intimate connection between self-awareness and God-consciousness, with God-consciousness correlated negatively with the empirical self and positively with the authentic self. Because of her perceived infinite superiority, mother becomes the yardstick for what can pass as the authentic self, long before external cultural influences impart assumptions, values and norms. The intrinsic good is considered authentic because is within the mind, we have it.

In time, the attitude and behaviour of the mother and other handlers suggest a difference between what is acceptable and what is not acceptable. The infant experiences the potential terror of disapproval, anger, potential rejection and

abandonment. Acceptance and belonging are no longer self-evident. They must be earned through conformity and achievement. One has to play by the rules, and the rules have to be learnt and internalised. This is the foundational experience of a discrepancy between the moral dimension of what ought to be and what ought not to be. As we go through infancy, childhood, adolescence and maturation, reality proves to be greater – *infinitely greater* – and infinitely more complex than mother.

All humans are, consciously or subconsciously, aware of their derivation, dependence, vulnerability, mortality, obligation and accountability. They are also in need of meaning, identity, acceptability, belonging, authority and direction. Perhaps this gaping void is the fertile soil into which the seed of a spiritual message is thrown and where it can either germinate or perish, depending on whether and how it responds to these needs. Christian theology believes that God becomes “*real*” for us when God speaks to us through the *Word of God*, proclaimed in the authority of God and in the power of God’s spirit and when this Word hits home in our consciousness as the demand and the offer of an authentic human existence in fellowship with God. This Word is a *verbum externum*, a Word coming from the outside of the human psyche, gleaned from the biblical tradition and proclaimed by a community of believers.

The authentic self that Christ represents, in which we are invited to participate, uproots and replaces the empirical self in a process of constant confrontation and transformation.

Or as Paul formulated it, dying with Christ to the flesh, we are enabled to participate in the authentic life of the “risen Christ” (*Romans 6*). Without a personal God-consciousness it is impossible for humans to deal with the impersonal aspects of nature and society in a personal way. This again is indispensable if we are to regain a sense of the dignity of the non-human world. Only if we accept that reality has been entrusted to our care, and that we are accountable to a higher authority, will we refrain from absolutising our autonomy, mastery, ownership and entitlement.

Intuition is a spiritual faculty high above the reasoning mind, but on the path is all that you desire or require. Misfortune is due to failure to stick to the things which spirit has revealed through intuition.

The way of abundance is a one-way street. You are either heading for lack, or heading for abundance. The man with a rich consciousness and the man with a poor consciousness are not walking on the same mental street. Change your thoughts, and in the twinkling of an eye, all your conditions change. Your world is a world of crystallized ideas, crystallized words. Choose your words carefully!

Words being bodies or forces which move spirally and return in due season to cross the lives of their creators. People who are always talking lack and limitation, reap lack and limitation. Never voice lack or limitation for "*by your*

words you are condemned." You combine with what you notice, and if you are always noticing failure and hard times, you will combine with failure and hard times. Simply said, you cannot enter the *Kingdom of Abundance* while bemoaning your lot.

My subject is related to the parable of the wise and foolish virgins. *"And five of them were wise, and five were foolish. They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them. But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps"* --Matt. 25:2-3. This parable teaches that true prayer means preparation in words and spirit; a quest for faith in wisdom.

The lamp symbolizes man's consciousness. The oil is what brings light or understanding.

"While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. And at midnight there was a cry made. Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him. Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said unto the wise, give us your oil; for our lamps are gone out."

The foolish virgins were without wisdom or understanding, which is oil for the consciousness, and when they were confronted with a serious situation, they had no way of handling it.

That imagination is man's workshop, the scissors of the mind, where he is constantly cutting out the events of his life! The superconscious is the realm of inspiration,

revelation, illumination and intuition. The superconscious is the realm of perfect ideas. The great genius captures his thoughts from the superconscious. This is what we call wisdom, the proof of abundance, the conscious life.

Jesus Christ said, "*And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive*" (Math. 21:22). "*Therefore I say unto you, what things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them*" (Mark 11:24). In this parable he shows that only those who have prepared for their good (thereby showing active faith) will bring the manifestation to pass.

God is the *Supreme Intelligence* devoted to supplying man's need; the explanation is that man is God in action. Man only lacks when he loses his contact with God, his *Creative Principle*, which must be fully trusted, for it is *pure intelligence* and knows the way of *fulfilment*. Your dawn of success, happiness and abundance is sure to come.

If you ask for success and prepare for failure, you will receive the thing you have prepared for. If you are convinced that you are a failure, you will be a failure, until you impress the subconscious with the conviction you are a success. Jesus Christ said, "*By your words you are justified and by your words you are condemned.*"

Every day choose the right words, the right thoughts! Let us imagine ourselves rich, healthy and happy. Imagine all our affairs are in divine order, but leave the way of *fulfilment* to

Infinite Intelligence. The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall never want. Seek ye first the kingdom of God and all things shall be added unto you. This can only be achieved by a state of consciousness. Do not magnify obstacles, magnify the Lord - that means, magnify God's power.

Psalm 77 says, "*What God has done before, he now does for me and more!*" This is a good thing to say when you think of your past success, happiness or wealth. All loss comes from your own vain imaginings, fear of loss crept into your consciousness, you carried burdens and fought battles, you reasoned instead of sticking to the magic path of intuition. In the bible, the arm of God always symbolizes protection. The writers of the bible knew the power of a symbol. It brings a picture which impresses the subconscious mind. They used the symbols of the rock, sheep, shepherds, vineyard, lamp, and hundreds of others. It would be interesting to know how many symbols are used in the bible. The arm of God also symbolizes strength.

"The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms, and he shall thrust out the enemy from before thee and shall say, destroy them."

Who is the enemy "*before thee*"? The negative thought-forms which you have built up in your subconscious mind. A man's enemies are only those of his own household. The everlasting arms thrust out these enemy thoughts and destroy them.

Your good precedes you; it gets there before you do. But how do you catch up with your good? First and importantly, you must have ears that hear, and eyes that see, or it will escape you. God's power is invincible, (though invisible). *"Call unto me and I will answer thee, and show thee great and mighty things which though knowest not."*

Isiah 43:19, we read, *"Behold, I will do a new thing: now it shall spring forth; shall ye not know it? I will even make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert."* Mostly so, is that in this 43rd chapter of Isaiah, we find many other wonderful statements showing the irresistible power of *supreme intelligence*, coming to man's rescue in times of trouble.

No matter how impossible the situation seems, *Infinite Intelligence* knows the way out. You are in a wilderness or desert, when you are out of harmony (*when you are angry, resentful, fearful or undecided*). Indecision is the cause of much ill health, being unable to make up your mind. No man gives to himself but himself, and no man takes away from himself but himself.

Infinite Intelligence is what we call *God's Conscious* which is intrinsic to our authentic self. We need to resist the empirical self through constantly praying and being prepared through wisdom; only then is our abundance guaranteed.

CHAPTER FOUR

phenomenal mind

*Great minds discuss ideas, average minds discuss events
and small minds discuss people.*

- Marlene Andiwo

We could begin from the inference that the world is an illusion, but it is an illusion which we must take seriously, because it is real as far as it goes. We have to find ways in which to detect the whole of reality in the one illusory part which our *self-centred* consciousness permits us to see. We must continually be on our watch for ways in which we may enlarge our consciousness. We must not attempt to live outside the world, which is given us, but we must somehow learn how to transform it and transfigure it...one must find a way of being in the world while not being of it. A way of living in time without being completely swallowed up in time; the quest for that authentic conscious away from the empirical of life

The psychologist proceeds on the assumption that for his purposes there are two kinds of worlds, two kinds of reality; the natural world and the psychic world. One aspect of (*mental*) health is the ability to live in both of these worlds. To live in God's conscious we have to live consciously of our universe, the world around us. Discovering the *Mind of God* is NOT an intellectual exercise. Being a genius may be in fact a hindrance. The access to the world of imaginary time is by stopping thinking and just being. That there is no bad way of reaching the good and there is no evil way of reaching the Godliness. Time is what keeps the light from reaching us. There is no greater obstacle to God than time. And not only time but temporalities, not only temporal things but temporal affections; not only temporal affections but the very taint and smell of time. It's all about time!

It would be natural to draw the distinction between conscious and unconscious states in terms of awareness. In ordinary discourse, we often use '*conscious of*' interchangeably with '*aware of*'; in many contexts, the statements '*he's conscious of the tree*' and '*he's aware of the tree*' register no difference in meaning. This might lead us to think the distinction between conscious and unconscious states to be that conscious states involve awareness of some object, whereas unconscious states do not. This might not be true because we can think, feel, will, and remember, and we could also *act* in every sense of that word, and yet none of all this would have to enter our consciousness.

Conscious thinking occurs in words, which is to say signs of communication thus the development of language and the development of consciousness go hand in hand. Words signify concepts and in similar underpinnings, there can be no words without concepts, for words are just but expressions of concepts. Nor can there be concepts without words: 'concepts are possible only when there are words.'

Accordingly, the distinction between conscious and unconscious states is coextensive with the distinction between mental states which have conceptually articulated content and mental states which have nonconceptual content.

But what is it for a mental state to have conceptually articulated content? First, a word on contents. Contents have conditions of adequacy or correctness. These conditions are fulfilled when the intentional object of the mental state has the properties that the content represents it as having. Now, to claim that a state has conceptually articulated content is to make a claim about the kind of content that the state has. In particular, it is to make two claims about this content: first, the content is composed of simpler parts, namely concepts; second, these concepts are structured or composed in a certain way in order to constitute the content. For example, consider the belief that the card is blue. The content of this belief appears to be conceptually articulated; the content appears to be composed of two concepts, CARD and BLUE, which are structured in a certain way, namely in a subject-predicate fashion, in order to form the belief. Meaning, one concept reinforces the understanding of the other ; without which there is no correlation formed towards making inferred understanding of a planned perception. We must first understand the *card* in itself, and also understand what it means to be *blue*, and then in conjoining these two concepts, we create an inference that brings meaning to our minds. These concepts must exist in our state before they make any useful sense; without their existence, we cant perceive.

Therefore, to say that a state has conceptually articulated content, then, is to say that the state's content has concepts as constituents, so that entertaining the mental state requires possession of the relevant concepts. To say that a mental

state has nonconceptual content is to say that the state's content does not have concepts as constituents, so that entertaining the mental state does not require possession of concepts. Perhaps it will get easier as I explain procedurally.

The movement from an unconscious state to a conscious state is the process of *conceptualization*. That is, a state becomes conscious once its content has been *conceptualized*. So an unconscious perception becomes a conscious perception once the perceptual content has been conceptualized. Conscious perceptions involve a classifying awareness and this is done in words, whereas unconscious perceptions involve only a discriminatory ability, only a perceptual sensitivity to features of the environment, this is mostly in mental imagery.

Conceptual vocabularies and individual concepts are not primarily designed to correspond to the world with a high degree of accuracy, but are instead designed to facilitate social interactions. More so, even if we wished to make our concepts correspond more accurately to the world, we would encounter problems with *perspectivism*. It might be true that we could refine our conceptual vocabulary, so that it would be better attuned to its objects, but concept acquisition is a pragmatic matter, and in general we have no need for concepts which are maximally attuned to the features of the world; indeed, maximally specific concepts might even hinder consciousness' social function. Meaning, it is impossible to have universal concepts for activities, concepts adapt to the timings of their events as perceived.

Conscious states causally interact with unconscious states, altering the unconscious states in a variety of ways; but, since the conscious states are already simplified versions of the unconscious states, this alteration of the unconscious states often results in unconscious experience coming to portray the world in inaccurate ways.

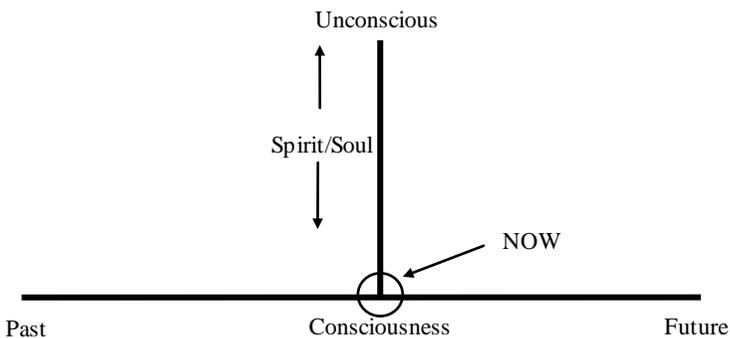
Having said all these and still in quest to understand the conscious, what could we infer by the vocabularies of mind or in a vivid sense, what is the soul? Perhaps there is nothing new to add other than express them as semantical connotations, terms already discussed in our analysis of the unconscious and its conceptualisations.

In the soul is the awaking of consciousness: consciousness sets itself up as reason, awaking at one bound to the sense of its rationality: and this reason by its activity emancipates itself to objectivity and the consciousness of its intelligent unity. This is what others have defined to be “*mind*”. Thus, the natural function of the soul is to remain in place between individual consciousness and the *Collective Unconscious* exactly as the persona acts as a sort of stratum between the ego consciousness and the objects of the external world. The soul should function as a bridge, or a door, leading to the images of the *Collective Unconscious*, as the persona should be a sort of bridge into the world. The collective unconscious symbolizes the abundantly unknown ideas that are within us; but there is a process to tap into this infinite

idea, the Godly way. But how does this mind accomplish itself, how do we develop in mind?

The mind is at first – (a) in its immediate natural mode – the *natural soul*, which it is as itself. (b) Secondly, it is the mind which feels, as individualized, enters into correlation with its immediate being, and, in the modes of that being, retains an abstract independence (the mind belongs to a certain self). (c) Thirdly, its immediate being – or corporeity – is moulded into it, and with that corporeity it exists as actual mind (the mind and the corporeal self hosting it).

The word '*mind*' (spirit) – and some glimpse of its meaning – was found at an early period: and the spirituality of God is the lesson of Christianity. It remains for philosophy in its own element of intelligible unity to get hold of what was thus given as a mental image, and what implicitly is the ultimate reality; and that problem is not genuinely, and by rational methods, solved so long as liberty and intelligible unity is not the theme and the soul of philosophy.



In other words, the development of mind (spirit) is in three stages:

1. In the form of *self-relation*: within it, it has the ideal totality of the idea – i.e. it has before it all that its notion contains: its being is to be self-contained and free. This is *Mind Subjective*.
2. In the form of reality: realized, i.e. in a world produced and to be produced by it: in this world freedom presents itself under the shape of necessity. This is *Mind Objective*.
3. In that unity of mind as objectivity and of mind as ideality and concept, which essentially and actually is and forever produces itself, mind in its absolute truth. This is *Mind Absolute*. (Subjective + Objective)

Mind is the *infinite idea* (which elsewhere is called collective unconscious), and finitude here means the disproportion between the concept and the reality – but with the qualification that it is a shadow cast by the mind's own light – a show or illusion which the mind implicitly imposes as a barrier to itself, in order, by its removal, actually to realize and become conscious of freedom as its very being, i.e. to be fully manifested. The several steps of this activity, on each of which, with their semblance of being, it is function of the finite mind to linger, and through which it has to pass, are steps in its liberation. In the full truth of that liberation is given the identification of the three stages – finding a world presupposed before us, generating a world

as our own creation, and gaining freedom from it and in it. To the infinite form of this truth the show purifies itself till it becomes a consciousness of it.

The notion of mind has its reality in the mind itself. If this reality in identity with that notion is to exist as the consciousness of the absolute idea; then the necessary aspect is that the implicitly free intelligence must be in its actuality liberated to its notion. Mostly so, if that actuality is to be a vehicle worthy of the notion in discussion. The subjective and the objective spirit are to be looked on as the road on which this aspect of reality or existence rises to maturity.

One of the best loved Christian mystical books is *The Cloud of Unknowing*. Written anonymously by a late fourteenth century monk (anonymous because his skin wasn't fireproof), it is still in print and quoted widely today. It is written as though the author was addressing a novice. The opening words of Chapter One read:

Spiritual friend in God, you must understand that, to my simple perception, there are four levels and forms of Christian life: Ordinary, Special, Solitary, and Perfect. Three of these can be begun and completed on earth, while the fourth can by Grace be begun here, but it will last for ever, unendingly, in the blessedness of heaven. And just as you see them set out here in order – first Ordinary, then Special, next Solitary, and last Perfect – so, in the same order and sequence, it appears that our Lord in his great

mercy has called you and led you to him by the desire of your heart.

Therefore, an abundant life is life with God. Abundant life is that intimate relationship with God that we can all confidently claim together. It all starts by understanding our conscious processes and thereby putting our minds as sacred temples of God. Only then can we invite abundance to be in part of us. The mind is a complex state but its also the most essential element in our relation with God.

As we look ahead to getting inspired from this book and more, remember the life of Martin Luther King, Jr., I would like to end this chapter with an extended quote from Dr. King, words from a sermon he preached in January of 1956 (one month into the Montgomery bus boycott). The sermon is called “Our God is Able.” In some ways, it sums of the idea of “abundance” far better than I ever could:

At the center of the Christian faith is the conviction that there is a God of power who is able to do exceedingly abundant things in nature and in history....This ringing testimony of the Christian faith is that God is able.

Admitting the weighty problems and staggering disappointments, Christianity affirms that God is able to give us the power to meet them. God is able to give us the inner equilibrium to stand tall amid the trials and burdens of life. God is able to provide inner peace amid outer storms. This inner stability of faith is Christ's chief legacy to

his disciples. He offers neither material resources nor a magical formula that exempts us from suffering and persecution, but he brings an imperishable gift: "Peace I leave you." This is the peace which surpasses all human understanding.

Let this affirmation be our ringing cry. It will give us courage to face the uncertainties of the future. It will give our tired feet new strength as we continue our forward stride toward the city of freedom. When our days become dreary with low hovering clouds and our nights become even darker than a thousand midnights, let us remember that there is a great benign Power in the universe whose name is God, and God is able to make a way out of no way, and transform dark yesterdays into bright tomorrows. This is our hope for becoming better people. This is our mandate for seeking to make a better world. Amen!

CHAPTER FIVE

Pursuing God

Seek ye first the kingdom of God

Quietness of soul, the fruit of truly seeking God, is seldom found in twentieth-century Christians. Far too many have come to accept turbulence of soul as their norm and have ceased to seek God with their whole hearts. Some have fled the cities to cloistered retreats in the hope of finding this quietness, only to discover their hearts still restless. To seek God does not narrow one's life, but brings it, rather, to the level of highest possible fulfilment.

Within the fold of conservative Christianity there are to be found increasing numbers of persons whose religious lives are marked by a growing hunger after God Himself. They are eager for spiritual realities and will not be put off with words, they desire God above all. They are athirst to taste for themselves the "*piercing sweetness*" of the love of Christ about whom all the holy prophets did write and the psalmists did sing.

To great sections of the church, the art of worship has been lost entirely; and in its place has come that strange and foreign thing called the "*program*." This word has been borrowed from the stage and applied with sad wisdom to the type of public service which now passes for worship among us. The Bible is not an end in itself, but a means to bring men to an intimate and satisfying knowledge of God, that they may enter into Him, that they may delight in His Presence, may taste and know the inner sweetness of the very God Himself in the core and center of their hearts.

We pursue God because, and only because, He has first put an urge within us that spurs us to the pursuit. “*No man can come to me,*” said our Lord, “*except the Father which hath sent me draw him*” (John 6:44), that the impulse to pursue God originates with God, but the outworking of that impulse is our following hard after Him. All the time we are pursuing Him we are already in His hand: “*Thy right hand upholdeth me.*”

The modern scientist has lost God amid the wonders of His world; we Christians are in real danger of losing God amid the wonders of His Word. We have almost forgotten that God is a person and, as such, can be cultivated as any person can. It is inherent in personality to be able to know other personalities, but full knowledge of one personality by another cannot be achieved in one encounter. It is only after long and loving mental intercourse that the full possibilities of both can be explored.

God is a person, and in the deep of His mighty nature He thinks, wills, enjoys, feels, loves, desires and suffers as any other person may. In making Himself known to us He stays by the familiar pattern of personality. He communicates with us through the avenues of our minds, our wills and our emotions.

This intercourse between God and the soul is known to us in conscious personal awareness. It is personal: it does not come through the body of believers, as such, but is known to the individual, and to the body through the individuals

who compose it. It is conscious: it does not stay below the threshold of consciousness and work there unknown to the soul, but comes within the field of awareness where the man can know it as he knows any other fact of experience. Being made in His image we have within us the capacity to know Him.

However, the shallowness of our inner experience, the hollowness of our worship and that servile imitation of the world which marks our promotional methods all testify that we, in this day, know God only imperfectly, and the peace of God scarcely at all.

When the Lord divided Canaan among the tribes of Israel, Levi received no share of the land. God said to him simply, "*I am thy part and thine inheritance,*" and by those words made him richer than all his brethren, richer than all the kings and rajas who have ever lived in the world. And there is a spiritual principle here, a principle still valid for every priest of the *Most High God*.

The man who has God for his treasure has all things in one. Many ordinary treasures may be denied him, or if he is allowed to have them, the enjoyment of them will be so tempered that they will never be necessary to his happiness. Or if he must see them go, one after one, he will scarcely feel a sense of loss, for having the source of all things he has in one all satisfaction, all pleasure, all delight. Whatever he may lose he has actually lost nothing, for he now has it all in one, and he has it purely, legitimately and forever. The way

to deeper knowledge of God is through the lonely valleys of soul poverty and abnegation of all things. The blessed ones who possess the kingdom are they who have repudiated every external thing and have rooted from their hearts all sense of possessing.

There can be no doubt that this possessive clinging to things is one of the most harmful habits in the life. Because it is natural, it is rarely recognized for the evil that it is. But its *outworkings* are tragic. We are often hindered from giving up our treasures to the Lord out of fear for their safety. This is especially true when those treasures are loved relatives and friends. But we need have no such fears. Our Lord came not to destroy but to save. Everything is safe which we commit to Him, and nothing is really safe which is not so committed.

God formed us for His pleasure, and so formed us that we, as well as He, can, in divine communion, enjoy the sweet and mysterious mingling of kindred personalities. He meant us to see Him and live with Him and draw our life from His smile. But we have broken with God. We have ceased to obey Him or love Him, and in guilt and fear have fled as far as possible from His presence.

The world is perishing for lack of the knowledge of God and the church is famishing for want of His presence. The instant cure of most of our religious ills would be to enter the Presence in spiritual experience, to become suddenly aware that we are in God and God is in us. This would lift

us out of our pitiful narrowness and cause our hearts to be enlarged. This would burn away the impurities from our lives as the bugs and fungi were burned away by the fire that dwelt in the bush.

Wherever we turn in the church of God, there is Jesus. He is the beginning, middle and end of everything to us. That there is nothing good, nothing holy, nothing beautiful, nothing joyous which He is not to His servants. No one need to be poor, because, if he chooses, he can have Jesus for his own property and possession. No one need be downcast, for Jesus is the joy of heaven, and it is His joy to enter into sorrowful hearts. We can exaggerate about many things; but we can never exaggerate our obligation to Jesus or the compassionate abundance of the love of Jesus to us.

The so called self-sins are self-righteousness, self-pity, self-confidence, self-sufficiency, self-admiration, self-love and a host of others like them. They dwell too deep within us and are too much a part of our natures to come to our attention till the light of God is focused upon them. Self is the opaque veil that hides the face of God from us.

As we begin to focus upon God, the things of the spirit will take shape before our inner eyes. *Obedience to the word of Christ will bring an inward revelation of the Godhead* (John 14:21–23). It will give acute perception enabling us to see God even as is promised to the pure in heart. A new God-consciousness will seize upon us and we shall begin to taste and hear and inwardly feel God, who is our life and our all.

One of the greatest hindrances to internal peace which the Christian encounters is the common habit of dividing our lives into two areas—the sacred and the secular. As these areas are conceived to exist apart from each other and to be morally and spiritually incompatible, and as we are compelled by the necessities of living to be always crossing back and forth from the one to the other, our inner lives tend to break up so that we live a divided instead of a unified life. We must practice living to the glory of God, actually and determinedly. By meditation upon this truth, by talking it over with God often in our prayers, by recalling it to our minds frequently as we move about among men, a sense of its wondrous meaning will take hold of us. The old painful duality will go down before a restful unity of life. The knowledge that we are all God's, that He has received all and rejected nothing, will unify our inner lives and make everything sacred to us.

CHAPTER SIX

Gods Plan

And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them.

- Romans 8: 28

The idea of natural knowledge of the divine can already be found in the Greek philosophies of nature as well as in the Bible and in the writings of many *Church Clergies*. The standard biblical proof text for natural theology has long been Romans 1:20: “*For since the creation of the world, God’s invisible qualities (his eternal power and divine nature) have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse.*” Acts 14:17 states that God “*has not left himself without testimony: He has shown kindness by giving you rain from heaven and crops in their seasons; he provides you with plenty of food and fills your hearts with joy.*” The universe and everything in it represents the true image of God, but through the biblical understanding, the wisdom of this image becomes part of our collective conscious, a unified knowledge that inspires the soul. There is no need to struggle into resisting through rebellion or bad science about what wonders God can do and has done. The bible tells it all!

The Bible is a book that is very famous, and yet many people do not know a lot about it. It remains a best seller even in the twenty-first century, and many people try to guide their lives by its message.

We understand that there is more to this world and to this universe than what we can see, hear, smell, taste, or touch, and that there is a power greater than ourselves out there. We can see the hand of a Creator in the splendour and complexity of the world around us (*Romans 1:19-20*), and

we may wonder if this Creator has provided us with any other messages. The basic message of the Bible is God's eternal plan (*Ephesians 3:11*). The Bible shows how this plan develops throughout time, after all, we were created in God's image; and this we must quest to understand.

The biblical material on the image of God is ambiguous, although it does provide ideas about the identity of this image of God. The Hebrew words *tselem* ("image") and *Demuth* ("likeness") are the words used in the Old Testament to describe the image and likeness of God. The etymology of *tselem* is ambiguous; but if it comes from an Arabic root word meaning "to cut," it could suggest the idea of "a cutting" or, more popularly, "a chip off the old block." The etymology of *demuth* is more straightforward, meaning "resemblance" or "likeness." Although some follow the analysis of Irenaeus (a Greek cleric who died in 202) in drawing a distinction between "image" and "likeness," the majority view is that these terms are used synonymously as an expression of the device of synonymous parallelism in Hebrew poetry. In the Septuagint (*Hebrew bible*) and the New Testament, the word "image" is rendered by the Greek word *eikon*, and "likeness" with *homoiosis*.

Based on the affirmations in Genesis. 1:26-28 and Psalms. 8:5-8, Old Testament scholars are nearly unanimous in interpreting the image of God to be expressed in human dominion over nature. Just as human kings placed their images or statues around their kingdoms to remind their subjects of the king's dominion, God has made human His

vice-regents or ambassadors to represent Him on earth. In this “*royal interpretation*” of the image of God, humans are appointed and authorized by God to serve as His visible agents or representatives on earth, ruling and administering the created world and its inhabitants. Christ is the perfect image of God and as such humans must be “*transformed*” or “*renewed*” to come into alignment with Christ. Thus, the image of God is the reflection/likeness/similarity of God’s essence which He created in human beings, and is reflected most noticeably in the personal, spiritual, relational, rational, volitional, moral, responsible, and emotional aspects of human life.

The Bible begins with the story of creation. God speaks all things into existence over a six day period and rests on the seventh day.

On the sixth day, God made man and woman in His image (Genesis 1:26-27), which means that human beings have souls (cf. John 4:24). The first man and woman, Adam and Eve, lived in the *Garden of Eden* and enjoyed an unbroken relationship with God.

God had one rule for them: they were not to eat from the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Eve was tempted and ate of that fruit, and gave also to her husband. Because of this disobedience, men and women were cursed with the sentence of death, were cast out of the Garden, and their relationship with God was broken by their sins. Adam decided to turn from the way of God. He chose instead to

begin living for himself. After turning from the *Tree of Life*, he began to live for the lust (*desires*) of the flesh, the lust (*desires*) of the eye and the pride of life. Man's center for living turned from God to self and thereby separated himself from the spiritual life of heaven.

After man became his own god, everything he did revolved around the little kingdom he began making for himself. This turning from God to self is what separated the race of Adam from the eternal life of God and left mankind with the emptiness of spiritual death. This was the *fall* of man away from spiritual heaven hence the "*sin nature*" that everyone has inherited from Adam because of the *fall*. It is a nature that continues to be centered on self because it is missing the indwelling presence of God. However, God's plan of providing spiritual life to man had nothing to do with the *fall*. "*He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world.*" (Eph. 1:4) From the beginning God had planned to have many children who would reflect His spiritual image by receiving their life through the Son. "*And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life (His life of perfect love), and this life is in His Son.*" (1 John 5:11)

While God's plan was temporarily delayed because of the *fall*, God has not changed His purpose. He still has a plan to provide a family of children who have been enabled to display His spiritual image in this world by receiving their life from the Son. While the fall interrupted His plan, Paul assures us that Christ's work on the cross has permitted God to go ahead with His original purpose. "*That in the*

dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ.” (Eph. 1:10). The abundantly full spiritual life that is now available from Jesus Christ is more powerful than the fallen life everyone receives from Adam. We are therefore expected to enter into His overcoming life in this world. In fact, according to the scripture, those who do not enter into the Lord’s full redemption and begin walking as He did in divine love, cannot expect to stand before their Maker with “*boldness*” on the *Day of Judgment*. (1 John 4:17).

When Christians first believe (agree to submit to God’s ways), they generally turn to God with their whole heart. They then are enabled to partake of His grace and receive the gift of His Spirit. The indwelling Spirit provides them with a real desire to follow the ways of the Lord. But this is only the doorway into a spiritual life in which God wants to become our All. The ultimate intention of salvation is to turn people from a self-centered way of life to a God-centered way of life.

God uses tribulations to separate His called-out children from their love for the world. He wants them to turn to Him as their only source of spiritual life. But as He takes them through a spiritual wilderness on the way to His life of promise, with the intent of teaching them to live by faith in Him alone, many begin looking back to the things of this world for relief.

There are many who take upon themselves the name of Christ but refuse to renounce the world. They seem to have found some broader, easier way than the way of the cross. But the Bible presents only one direct way to heaven, and that way is the narrow way of the cross. The Bible presents no route of going around the cross without getting out of the way. Jesus says, "*If any man will be My disciple, let him deny himself, take up his cross, (not try to go around it) and follow Me.*"

Those, therefore, who attempt to go around the cross instead of taking it up, get out of the way to heaven into the *by-path* that seemeth to be right, but the end whereof is death. And these are the many to which the Saviour refers when He says, "*Many will say to Me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy Name? And in Thy Name have cast out devils? And in Thy Name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you.*"...How evidently had these people died in their deception! And now they come to the very door of heaven, expecting admission, but the Saviour says, "*I never knew you.*"

Christ's true disciples will follow Him through the cross. "*So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has (from his self-life) cannot be My disciple.*" (Luke 14:33) These true believers in Jesus Christ stop living for themselves (they come out from the ways of the world). They deny themselves by offering their *flesh-life* to the cross, so they may enter into a life of *self-sacrificing* love as

Jesus did. (1 John 2:5-6) They will therefore begin saying with Jesus, “*My food (or spiritual sustenance) is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work.*” (John 4:34)

You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness. (*Eph. 4:22-24*). There is something Christians are to seek. But it does not include anything from this world. Christians, according to Jesus, are not even to focus their attention on the things they will need to eat, drink and wear. (*Matt. 6:31-33*). The primary concern of Christ’s disciples is to seek after the kingdom of God and His righteousness; in faith, they can rely on the Lord to be their *Sustainer*. In this process of seeking out the *Kingdom-life of God*, we need to be laying aside every weight that holds us back. (*Heb. 12:1*) We are responsible for pressing forward in our faith until we have received the promised “*abundant entrance*” into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. (*2 Pet. 1:10-11*)

The apostle John, in writing his first epistle, wanted to help his readers understand what it means to enter into the full stature of Christ’s spiritual life. To help distinguish the spiritual Christian from other less mature stages of Christian life, he separated all Christians into three categories. He said, “*I write unto you little children... I write unto you young men... I write unto you fathers....*” (1 John 2:12-14)

When referring to the little children, John says they are conscious of two main points: “*God is our Father*” and “*our sins are forgiven for His name’s sake.*” Their faith has enabled them to believe in a loving Father who takes care of them. They are also conscious of being reconciled to God and being at peace with Him. These little children possess a basic understanding about redemption. Through repentance they have turned and submitted to the Lord. But their understanding of what this implies is very limited. Only as the Lord is able to strengthen them in their faith and reveal His deeper truths within their hearts will they begin to realize the real nature of their calling.

Next, John describes Christians who have matured into young manhood. As *young men*, we are required to bring every facet of our life under the authority of Jesus Christ. But we can still only form pictures in our mind about Christ’s nature of love because His life of love surpasses knowledge (*Eph. 3:19*). These young men are Christians who no longer need milk. They are fully grounded in God’s word and committed to doing everything their Lord teaches. Through experience, they have moved from a position of defence to a position of offense. Instead of always running from the arrows of Satan, they overcome this wicked one. They have also learned to serve God by fighting against the powers of darkness through prayer and supplication.

The spiritual fathers have made their calling and election sure by permitting Christ to establish His Kingdom-life of

love within their hearts. (2 Pet. 2:10-11) Jesus said, *“He who has My commandments and keeps them (the “young men” who have fully responded to His way of the cross), it is he who loves Me...and I will love him and manifest Myself to him.”* (John 14:21) While they have had to go through some very severe trials to stretch their faith in the time of testing, they have continued to respond to the teachings of their Lord until He has established His Kingdom-life within their hearts. It is the “fathers” who have truly learned what it means to live by grace. They can say with Paul, *“By the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.”* (1 Cor. 15:10) This supernatural work of God’s grace enables these spiritual Christians to die daily to self and to live wholly for the good of others through the life they are receiving from Jesus Christ. They know their life has a source outside of themselves. *“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you.”* (Jer. 29:11-12)

Most people never enter into the perfect will of God for their lives. Because they are unwilling to die to their own will, they do not have an opportunity to discover the good and pleasing plans that God has made for them. Their independent walk also keeps them separated from the abundantly full spiritual life of the Son. This is why they never find true fulfilment. They end up going through life

always looking for another means to help them find an enjoyable spiritual life.

God has special plans for each of His children. He has already made plans for our lives. (Eph. 2:10) And the only way we will ever know His good, pleasing and perfect will is by waiting on Him to reveal each of our steps in life. Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on our own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths. (Prov. 3:5).

Christians cannot enter into a close and intimate fellowship with God until they are willing to share with the Son in His self-sacrificing nature. And to do this, they will need to have His way of the cross as an innate part of their inner nature. Only then can they be “made perfect in one.” (*John 17:23*) It is by entering into this participation with Christ in His divine nature, which includes His inwrought cross that His life of love can begin welling up from within and be reflected in everything they do.

When Adam turned from a God-centered life to a man-centered life, his human spirit lost contact with the life of God. God had said, “*For in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.*” (*Gen. 2:17*) While he did not physically die, self-will resulted in a loss of the Kingdom-life of God. Instead of being vitally connected to God and living under His heavenly government, man’s spirit was left lonely and self-centered. He began to experience spiritual death.

Many people wonder how they can change their lineage after being born into Adam's family. They think it is necessary to remain under bondage to the sinful nature they have inherited from Adam until they physically die. But, glory be to God, the Gospel tells of a Messiah who has come as the *Last Adam* to deliver His followers from this bondage.

We can now better understand God's purpose for sending a Messiah. The kingdom of God needed to be re-established in this world. Men and women needed to have His Kingdom-life established within their hearts so they would be enabled to manifest God's eternal life of love and fulfil His heavenly purposes here on earth as it is done in heaven.

Jesus Christ was crucified on the cross and laid in the tomb as the "Last Adam." All that was in the first Adam was gathered up and put to death in Christ. And so, if we submit to this death with Christ on the cross, the old life that is dominated by the desires of the flesh can also be put to death.

We have a choice of being connected to either Adam's family tree or Christ's family tree. If our source of life is to change, we must make a conscious decision to trade families.

Everyone who wants to become fruitful in furthering God's Kingdom-life of love here on earth must take the awful and awesome path of the cross. We can expect to be taken

through a real trial of faith after surrendering to the cross in our own *Garden of Gethsemane*. God takes us through a period of real darkness where everything from the old way of life begins to pass away.

During this dark night of the soul, it will be necessary to be reminded that God is faithful to His promises. It will be necessary to hold to our faith. God never forsakes those who are earnestly seeking Him. And He does have the power to raise the dead.

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