

Life Goes On

Evidence for Reincarnation

That Makes Sense to

Christians

&

Open-Minded Skeptics

Stephen Hawley Martin

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Preface

Most people do not begin questioning life after death out of curiosity alone.

They begin because something unsettles them. It may have been the loss of a loved one. It may have been an unanswered prayer. Perhaps it was a quiet sense that the explanations we are given—however sincerely offered—do not fully account for the depth of human experience. For many, the question is not whether faith matters, but whether it fully explains the human condition.

This book was written for those readers.

I have not written *Life Goes On* to persuade, convert, or to challenge anyone's beliefs. I have written it for thoughtful people who sense that there may be more to life than we are typically taught, yet they may be hesitant to explore that possibility because they value reason, tradition, and spiritual integrity.

I believe that the idea of reincarnation is often dismissed too quickly—not because evidence of it is lacking—as you will see, there's evidence that it can and does happen—but because it has been poorly presented. It is commonly associated with foreign religions, mystical practices, or speculative philosophies that feel alien and disconnected from Christian faith and everyday life. As a result, many truth seekers never examine the subject at all, having pretty much dismissed the possibility out of hand.

This is unfortunate, because when approached calmly and carefully, the idea that life continues—and that the soul may grow and evolve across more than one lifetime—can resolve questions that otherwise remain unanswered: questions about justice, suffering, spiritual growth, and what often seems to be the extreme randomness of fate with respect to what different individuals experience in a lifetime.

This book does not ask you to accept anything on authority. It does not assume belief, and it does not require agreement. Instead, it invites you to consider evidence—historical, experiential, and logical—that challenges the assumption that consciousness begins at birth and ends at death.

Along the way, you will encounter ideas that have been quietly present within Christian thought at various points in history, as well as insights drawn from near-death experience [NDE] research and carefully documented cases that suggest continuity of identity beyond a single lifetime. These are presented not as proof beyond doubt, but as reasonable considerations deserving thoughtful reflection.

Let me add that if you are skeptical, that is entirely appropriate. Skepticism, when honest, is not an enemy of faith but a safeguard against fear-based belief. If you are religious, you are not asked to abandon your convictions. And if you are simply curious, you are welcome exactly as you are.

Life Goes On is meant to be a beginning—an opening to a more expansive worldview. It is by no means meant to be a definitive conclusion. The result could be that you may finish this book with more questions than answers, and that is perfectly acceptable. What matters is whether those questions feel less frightening, less forbidden, and more open to calm exploration.

If life does continue beyond death, then this life matters deeply—not because it is the only chance we have, but because it is part of a longer, more meaningful journey. And if that possibility brings even a measure of comfort, clarity, or peace, then this book has served its purpose.

I invite you to read thoughtfully, patiently, and without haste.

How I Became Interested in Exploring the Unknown

When I was in my twenties, something happened—an experience I’ve recounted in other books that baffled me and raised doubts in my mind about the materialistic worldview I’d been brought up to hold. I became fascinated with metaphysics as a result, and in 2007, I took the opportunity to be the talk show host and producer of an Internet radio show, which today would be called a Podcast, called *The Truth about Life*.

For three years I read and interviewed authors and researchers engaged in quests for truth. Among them were medical doctors, parapsychologists, metaphysicians, quantum physicists, near death survivors, theologians, psychiatrists, psychologists, and all manner of researchers into the true nature of reality. What I learned led me to what I think is as accurate a view of reality as any normal human being can have at this time in world history.

At the same time, I also attended Church regularly as I had been doing with my wife and family for the prior twenty years—even though I was not then a professed Christian. Things our preacher said in his sermons began to click, and during that three-year period I accepted Jesus as Lord, was baptized, and became an official member of Richmond, Virginia's First Baptist Church.

Let me say it's not that I came to believe that all the teachings of the Christian Church at this time in history are to be accepted without question. On the contrary, what pushed me over the edge and into the baptistery was that I came to believe that Jesus had known and espoused the Truth with a capital T. In other words, his teachings and proclamations are based on an accurate view of reality as I'd come to understand it, and what he said we should do as a result not only made perfect sense to me, His message seemed inspired to say the very least.

Even though I didn't think that everything was one hundred percent accurate that the Church historically has taught, I was able to join First Baptist with a clear conscience because Baptists do not require members to believe a fixed set of tenets. Rather, they adhere to a doctrine known as "The Priesthood of all believers," which is based on the idea that all who believe in Jesus as Lord and Savior are priests, and that each believer-priest can and should read and interpret the Bible for him or herself without religious officials dictating what to believe.

The Exodus from Mainstream Christianity

Many people today are leaving mainstream churches. According to a Google search I just conducted, the population identifying as Christian has dropped from approximately 90% in the 1990s to between 62% and 66% in 2025. It seems to me one reason is that their faith has been shaken by new revelations about reality. The old nineteenth and twentieth century worldview based on materialism is crumbling. People are realizing that behind, supporting, and indeed forming and informing physical reality is an intelligent ground of being that connects every one of us, that as mystics—even Christian mystics—have been saying for millennia, "All-Is-One."

The bottom line is that God is not "out there" somewhere sitting on a cloud. He is in us and around us, He is over there,

in our friends, in our enemies, in the football team on the other sideline—there is no place where He is not.

Read ahead and you will learn what I have learned about the true nature of reality and what life is about—your life included. Before we get started, however, let me state a caveat. I don't pretend to have every little detail just exactly right, but I am convinced that what you will read here is as close as anyone can get to the truth at this point in the twenty-first century. If it were a presidential poll, my guess is that it would be within the margin of sampling error of one conducted by *The New York Times*, Fox News, or CNN, i.e., plus or minus three or four percentage points.

Stephen Hawley Martin

Chapter One: Fact Versus Tradition

Reincarnation can be a touchy subject. Many people refuse even to consider the possibility because reincarnation doesn't fit into what is now traditional Christian canon. You see, the leaders of the Christian Church decided at the meeting of the Second Council of Constantinople in A.D. 553, in what reportedly was a close vote, to delete it from Church doctrine. From the point of view of most Christians, this is the crux of the problem with looking into this subject. A vote took place more than five centuries after Jesus died, almost 1500 years in the distant past, that made consideration of the possibility by Christians off limits.

If you research the Second Council of Constantinople you are likely to find articles and writings by those who believe this act was politically-motivated and heavily influenced by pressure from the emperor Justinian and his wife, rather than motivated by a desire to get the facts right. I will not take space here to go into that, but I will point out that many historians tell us that most people in the ancient world took reincarnation for granted—as is the case today in India and many other places. Moreover, a number of passages of Scripture indicate Jesus and his followers believed in reincarnation. For example, John the Baptist was supposed by many to be the prophet Elijah reincarnated. Jesus himself seems to have said this was so.

(See Matthew 11:14.) Once, Jesus asked his followers who people thought he (Jesus) was. They replied that many believed him (Jesus) to be one of the prophets—presumably reincarnated—since the last prophet had died about 400 years earlier. Also, consider the story of Jesus restoring the sight of the man who had been born blind, as recounted in John 9:1-12, in which Jesus’ disciples ask him if the man’s sins caused his blindness, or if the sins of his parents had caused him to be born blind.

Since the man was blind from birth, the only way his own sins could have caused his blindness was for him to have sinned in a former life. Jesus did not tell his followers this was impossible. To the contrary, he seems to have assumed it was possible, although he gives another reason for the man’s blindness, saying, “Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but this happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life.”

According to Kevin Todeschi, Executive Director of the Association for Research and Enlightenment [A.R.E.], whom I interviewed on my radio show in 2007, there are many references to reincarnation in the Bible. He told me that he has counted eleven such references in Matthew’s gospel alone. But believers overlook or misinterpret them because they have been conditioned to think of reincarnation as a topic that’s taboo. Take for example resurrection of the body, which for many is essential

Christian doctrine. The apostle Paul declared, “[I]f the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised. If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished.” (1 Cor. 15:13–18)

Obviously Paul thinks those who believe in and accept Jesus will be raised from the dead. But would anyone who gave it a few seconds of serious thought really think a body that has been lying in a grave for ten, twenty, or even a thousand years is going to resurrect? That very body? A skeleton with some decayed skin hanging off? Of course not. So how are Paul’s words going to manifest? It seems to me, reincarnation is the only logical, non-magical way.

If after reading what I have written above your mind is not open to the possibility—if the Second Council of Constantinople’s narrow vote settles the issue for you—please stop reading now, and forget what you read so far. And please follow the Golden Rule. Refrain from going on Amazon and trashing this book by giving it a one-star rating. I’ve had that happen by people who actually had the gall to admit in their review they hadn’t read the book they were trashing. I can only guess those folks didn’t agree with what they thought I was going to say.

Think for a moment. It takes a lot of effort to write a book and only a minute to write an ugly, uninformed review

that will cause people on Amazon to move on to the next title. If you believe the apostle Paul's words, "A man reaps what he sows," (Galatians 6:7) you will not play such a dirty trick.

If, however, you are a seeker of truth and are willing to follow truth wherever it leads, then, as Jesus said, "The truth will set you free." (John 8:32) I am absolutely serious, and certainly Jesus was. Once you know who you are, once you know the purpose of life and the true nature of reality, and once you know what has a chance of making you a happy person, you will be in position to create a wonderful life for yourself, for your family, and for everyone around you.

In other words, you will be in position to bring heaven to earth, which it seems to me was an important part of Jesus' mission—perhaps the most important part.

A Case of Rebirth That's Hard to Refute

Okay, let's get started with a case of reincarnation that seems pretty ironclad. The story begins on May 1, 2000. Imagine you and your wife [or husband] are sound asleep. Your two-year-old son James is in his crib, asleep in the next room. Suddenly you are jarred awake.

You hear your son scream, "Plane on fire! Airplane crash!"

You rush into his room, and there he is on the bed, writhing the grip of horror, kicking and clawing at the

covers as if he is trying to kick out of a coffin.

Over and over again, your child screams, “Plane on fire! Little man can’t get out!”

What happened that night was not a single occurrence. Traumatic nightly scenes like it became the norm. The nightmares became even more terrifying, and James started screaming the name of the “little man” who couldn’t get out of the plane. It was “James,” his own name. Other words he spoke out loud included: “Jack Larsen,” “Natoma” and “Corsair.”

James’ father, Bruce Leininger, could not think of what to do. Eventually, in an attempt to find an answer to his son’s troubled nights, he embarked on a research project, armed only with the names and words his son had been shouting while in a disturbed sleep.

A devout Christian, the answer Bruce found was not the one he wanted. He came to believe his son James was the reincarnation of a World War Two fighter pilot whose plane had been hit and downed by anti-aircraft fire—a pilot named James Huston who had died in 1945 after his plane suffered a direct hit and crashed.

James’ mother, however, was the first to suspect the truth. At the time, James was having five nightmares a week, and his mother, Andrea, was worried. At a toy shop, Andrea and little James were looking at model planes.

“Look,” Andrea said. “There’s a bomb on the bottom of that one.”

“That’s not a bomb, Mommy,” James said. “That’s a drop tank.”

The child was two years old. How could he possibly have known about the auxiliary gas tank used by aircraft in World War Two to extend their range?

As the nightmares continued, Andrea asked, “Who is the ‘little man’?”

“Me,” he answered.

Bruce asked, “What happened to your plane?”

“It crashed on fire.”

“Why did your plane crash?”

“It got shot,” James said.

“Who shot your plane?”

“The Japanese!” he said.

James said he knew it was the Japanese because of “the big red sun.” He was, of course, describing the Japanese symbol of the rising sun painted on their warplanes.

Andrea began to suggest reincarnation. Wouldn’t that explain it? But Bruce reacted angrily. He thought there must be a rational explanation, and reincarnation was definitely not a rational explanation in his mind.

Bruce questioned his son further. “Do you remember what kind of plane the little man flew?”

“A Corsair,” two-year-old James replied without hesitation. It was a word he had shouted in his dreams.

Bruce knew a Corsair was a World War Two fighter plane.

“Where did your airplane take off?” Bruce asked.

“A boat.”

“What was the name of the boat?”

James replied with certainty, “The Natoma.”

Bruce did some research. He was amazed to find the Natoma Bay was a World War Two aircraft carrier. Bruce rushed to his office, where he had a dictionary of American naval fighting ships. Natoma Bay had supported the U.S. Marines’ invasion of Iwo Jima in 1945.

Andrea, meanwhile, had become convinced James was reincarnated. She contacted Carol Bowman, the author of *Children’s Past Lives: How Past Life Memories Affect Your Child*. Bowman confirmed Andrea’s views, saying that the common threads were there with James, including his age when the nightmares began and his remembered death.

Bruce kept investigating. He decided to see if he could find someone named Jack Larsen, a name James had shouted repeatedly during his nightmares. Bruce was successful in finding someone who fit the time period and place. It turned out Larsen’s friend James Huston had died when his plane was shot in the engine and caught fire, just as had been described by two-year-old James Leininger.

Bruce also found Huston’s name on the list of 18 men killed in action on the Natoma. The discovery finally made him realize his son might actually be the reincarnation of James Huston. But he kept investigating, anyway, and

everything he found served to confirm that conclusion.

One day, little James unnerved his father when he said, “I knew you would be a good daddy, that’s why I picked you.”

“Where did you find us?” asked an incredulous Bruce.

“In Hawaii, at the pink hotel on the beach,” James said, and went on to describe his parents’ fifth wedding anniversary, which had taken place five weeks before Andrea had gotten pregnant. James said that was when he “chose” the couple to bring him back into the world.

Something new emerged almost every day. On a map, James pointed out the exact location where James Huston’s plane went down. Asked why he called his action figures “Billy,” “Leon” and “Walter,” he replied, “Because that’s who met me when I got to heaven.”

Eventually, the family received a phone call from a veteran who had seen Huston’s plane get hit. The man had kept his knowledge to himself for more than 50 years. He described seeing the aftermath of Huston’s crash on the sea below.

“He took a direct hit on the nose. All I could see were pieces falling into the bay. We pulled out of the dive and headed for the open sea. I saw the place where the fighter had hit. The rings were still expanding near a huge rock at the harbor entrance.”

And so it was as James had said. His plane was hit in the engine and the front exploded in a ball of flames.

Another Case History

The story of James Huston and his reincarnation as James Leininger is only one of many documented cases. Suppose, for example, you were changing your son's diaper—let's say he was just beginning to talk and was quite verbally adept at the age of 18 months—and he looked you in the eye and said, "When I was your age, I used to change your diaper."

What would you think?

If your father happened to be deceased, would you possibly think your son might be your father reincarnated? That would make him his own grandfather.

Can something like that happen?

I spoke with someone on my radio show in March 2009 who seems to think so. His name is Jim B. Tucker and he's not a wild-eyed Looney Tune. He's a Phi Beta Kappa graduate of the University of North Carolina, a medical doctor, and a board certified child psychiatrist who at the time I interviewed him was serving as Medical Director of the Child & Family Psychiatry Clinic at the University of Virginia School of Medicine. Dr. Tucker had been studying this possibility in a serious and scientific way.

The University of Virginia Medical School—in what is now known as its Division of Perceptual Studies [DOPS]—has been researching the subject of children's memories of past lives since the 1960s. Much of this work was done by,

or under direction of, the late Ian Stevenson, M.D. [1918-2007], who wrote a shelf full of books on the subject, having compiled more than 2500 such cases. About 1700 of these cases have been verified—what DOPS personnel refer to as, “solved,” meaning that the person referred to by the child has been identified based on names, dates, occupation, manner of death, and so forth—and entered into a computer database along with the information collected while researching each case. This has been sorted into about 200 different variables, allowing researchers to comb through and cross tabulate the data to spot trends as well as to categorize and compare the similarities and differences based on various factors and characteristics.

Dr. Stevenson was a methodical and meticulous researcher who graduated first in his medical school class at Canada’s McGill University. He never actually claimed reincarnation as fact, but rather, he said that his cases were “suggestive” of reincarnation. His often-cited first book on the subject was published in 1966 and entitled, *Twenty Cases Suggestive of Reincarnation*.

The cases that Dr. Stevenson studied came from all over the world. When he began this research, they were easiest to find in places where people have a belief in reincarnation such as India and Thailand. This may be because parents were not as likely to think a child was imagining a past life, and because they are not likely to be embarrassed to talk

about it. Nowadays, however, people in the United States are not as reticent as they once were. Dr. Tucker told me that since the University of Virginia set up a web site on this subject, he and his colleagues hear from parents “all the time” about their children’s memories of past lives.

Edgar Cayce [1877-1945], whose psychic readings probably did more than anything to promote the concept of reincarnation in the West, was a devout Presbyterian and Sunday school teacher who read the Bible once through for every year of his life. At first, when reincarnation started showing up in his readings, he was baffled and confused. But he reread the Bible and satisfied himself it wasn’t anti-Christian.

As a follower of Jesus, myself, it’s my personal opinion that nothing about reincarnation is incompatible with Jesus’ message and, it seems to me, what that he set out to accomplish. Read the Gospels. What he was trying to tell us isn’t at all complicated. He put it succinctly in John 15:17: “This is my command: Love each other.”

Jesus’ main objective also seems clear to me. As previously mentioned, it’s to bring heaven to earth. He talked about this constantly and used parables to explain what heaven is. For instance, this verse (Matthew 13:44) indicates how wonderful it would be: “The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold

all he had and bought that field.”

Bringing heaven to earth is one of the main points of the prayer Jesus taught that practically everyone in Christendom knows by heart:

“ . . . Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on
earth as it is in heaven . . . ”

And how does one bring the kingdom of heaven to earth? By loving God first—rather than stuff like money—and by loving his neighbor as himself. By treating others as he would like and hope to be treated, as in the parable of the good Samaritan. Imagine if everyone did that. . . .

Wouldn’t it bring heaven to earth?

If we could do that, wouldn’t life be great? Then, you wouldn’t mind being reincarnated, would you?

The Child Who Is His Grandfather

In the case mentioned above—the 18-month-old child who said he had changed his father’s diaper when he was his father’s age—the child’s mother was the daughter of a Southern Baptist preacher. As you might imagine, she found what her son said to be highly unusual. I asked Dr. Tucker to describe the case when he came on my show, and he obliged.

The child’s grandfather had died eighteen months before the child’s birth. His first mention of having been his

own grandfather was during that change of diapers, but as time went by he made more comments about how he used to be big, and what he did when he was. His mother in particular became interested and began to ask the boy, whose name was Sam, questions. Sam came up with some very specific statements. For instance, she asked him if he had any brothers or sisters. He said he had a sister who was killed, and it was true that the grandfather's sister had been murdered sixty years prior.

The parents felt certain the child could not have known this since they had only recently learned about it themselves.

The child also talked about how, at the end of his previous life, his wife would make milkshakes for him every day, and that she made them in a food processor rather than in a blender. This turned out to be true.

When Sam was four years old, his grandmother—his wife in his previous life—died. Sam's dad traveled to where she lived and took care of the estate. When he returned, he brought some family photos with him.

One night Sam's mother spread out the pictures on the coffee table. Sam walked over and pointed to pictures of his grandfather and said, "Hey, that's me."

To test him she pulled out a class photo from the time the grandfather was in elementary school. Sam ran his

finger across the photo, which had sixteen boys in it, and stopped on the one who had indeed been his grandfather.

“That’s me,” he said.

The Reason Sam May Have Come Back

The grandfather may have come back as the son of his own son because of the relationship—or lack thereof—the two had had in his previous life. The grandfather had not had an open relationship with Sam’s dad. He had been a very private person. Sam’s dad felt that if his father had really returned as his son, his father may have decided to come back to try to develop a closer bond than had existed in their previous relationship. Dr. Tucker said this may be true. When he visited the family he could see that Sam and his dad were very close.

Those who hold the materialistic worldview that I grew up with—the view held by my family and many of my college professors—would say that reincarnation is impossible. Materialism holds that the brain creates consciousness and that memories are formed there and stored there. Therefore, when the brain ceases to function—when a person dies—awareness ceases to exist and memories cannot be formed.

In the next chapter, we will address this seeming paradox.

Chapter Two: The Science of Reincarnation

If reincarnation happens, it clearly indicates that our mind or soul—what Dr. Stevenson called the “reincarnating personality”—must be able to exist independently of the brain and body in some sort of mental space or discarnate realm. This indeed is the conclusion researchers at the University of Virginia Medical School have come to after more than 60 years of study. Their research clearly indicates that the brain serves to connect consciousness to and to integrate it with the body, and when the brain is no longer functional, consciousness can separate from the body and the brain and function on its own.

The evidence falls into four categories: 1) Recovery of lost consciousness in the moments or days prior to death among people who have been unconscious for prolonged periods of time, known as, “terminal lucidity”; 2) Complex consciousness ability in some people who have minimal brain tissue, as well as those who suffer from hydrocephalus, often called “water on the brain”; 3) Complex consciousness in near-death experiences when the brain is not functioning or is functioning at a greatly diminished level; 4) Memories, particularly among young children, accurately recalling details of a past life.

Let me say parenthetically that if you would like to know the details and read case histories illustrative of each category, you can do so in my book, *Life After Death, Powerful Evidence You Will Never Die*. It's available as a Kindle eBook and in a trade paperback edition on Amazon.

The database at the University of Virginia indicates that about one in five children reporting past life memories also report memories of the time spent between the past life and the current one. As you recall, James Leininger remembered Billy, Leon, and Walter meeting him in heaven, and he talked about choosing his parents while they were staying at “The Pink Hotel” on the beach.

How can this be?

Dr. Stevenson theorized there might be an intermediate vehicle, made of “nonmaterial mind stuff” that imprints the embryo or fetus with memories as well as with scars from injuries or other markings on the previous body, along with likes, dislikes, and other attitudes.

Birthmarks, Wounds, and the Imprint of a Violent Death

Dr. Stevenson's investigations, which he accumulated over decades, revealed something startling that he did not anticipate. In a significant minority of cases involving children who spoke spontaneously of a previous life,

unusual birthmarks or congenital defects appeared to correspond closely to wounds, injuries, or other bodily damage sustained by the individual whose life the child claimed to remember. Most often, they were the result of fatal injuries.

Stevenson did not argue that birthmarks in general have any special meaning. On the contrary, he repeatedly emphasized that the vast majority of birthmarks are commonplace and unremarkable. What drew his attention were cases in which a child's mark or defect showed a *specific correspondence*—in location, shape, or severity—to a documented wound of a deceased person whose life the child described in detail, often before the age of five.

One such case occurred in Burma (now Myanmar). A young girl began speaking of having been another child who had died after being struck and run over by a train. According to accounts of the accident, the victim's leg had been severed below the knee. The child who recalled this was born with a striking congenital defect: the same leg was absent below the knee, as if cleanly removed. Stevenson noted that congenital absence of a limb at precisely that level is rare. He also acknowledged that the families involved were acquainted—raising the possibility of normal information transfer—but he regarded the physical correspondence as sufficiently unusual to warrant inclusion among what he considered to be the strongest cases he'd come upon.

In Turkey, a boy named Semih Tutuşmuş was born with a severely malformed right ear and underdevelopment of the right side of his face. From an early age he spoke of having been a man in a nearby village who had been killed by a shotgun blast to the head. Investigation confirmed that such a man had existed and that he had indeed died from a shotgun wound entering the right side of the head, destroying the ear and adjacent facial structures. What makes this case particularly strong is that the child showed intense emotional reactions toward the alleged killer, whom he reportedly recognized without prompting.

Other cases displayed what Stevenson regarded as an even more compelling pattern: paired birthmarks corresponding to gunshot *entry and exit wounds*. In these instances, one mark was typically small, round, and well defined—matching the appearance of an entry wound—while the second was larger, more irregular, and sometimes ragged, resembling an exit wound. In Thailand, a boy named Chanai Choomalaiwong bore two such marks on his head. He claimed to remember being a schoolteacher who had been shot from behind. Records and witness testimony confirmed that the teacher had been killed by a gunshot entering the back of the head and exiting near the front. Stevenson repeatedly observed this same entry-exit configuration across unrelated cases, a pattern he found difficult to attribute to chance alone.

Knife wounds also appeared in the records. In one Thai case, a child was born with a pronounced, wart-like lesion on the back of the head. The child spoke of having been his own uncle, a man who had died after receiving a heavy knife blow to precisely that area of the skull. Significantly, the same child also had a congenital defect affecting the nail of his right big toe. The deceased uncle had reportedly suffered from a chronic infection and injury to that toe during his lifetime. No wonder Stevenson considered such *multiple correspondences within a single case* to be especially noteworthy.

Not all such marks resembled punctures or cuts. Some appeared as long, linear impressions, as though produced by pressure or constriction. In several Burmese cases, children bore ropelike marks on their legs or torsos and spoke of deaths involving binding or entanglement. In one instance, a man had died after becoming caught in parachute lines; the child born later bore linear markings corresponding to the locations where the ropes had reportedly cut into the body. Stevenson carefully recorded alternative explanations—such as the possibility of maternal impressions—but noted that these did not account for the child's verified statements about the deceased individual.

Across cultures, religions, and family structures, Stevenson observed the same general rule: when a remembered previous life ended violently, physical marks

were more likely to appear in the next life. When deaths were natural or unremarkable, such correspondences were rare or absent. He did not claim that these cases proved reincarnation in a definitive sense. Rather, he argued that they posed a challenge to prevailing assumptions about the complete separation of mind, memory, and biology.

In presenting these cases, Stevenson adopted a deliberately conservative posture. He sought medical records where possible, interviewed multiple witnesses independently, and documented inconsistencies as carefully as agreements. Yet after examining hundreds of cases over many years, he concluded that conventional explanations—coincidence, fraud, suggestion, or genetic anomaly—could not fully account for the specificity and recurrence of the observed patterns.

If consciousness is entirely produced by the brain, Stevenson asked, then why should memories that appear to survive death sometimes leave traces on a body that has not yet been born? He did not offer a final answer. Instead, he left future researchers with an unsettling but persistent question: whether violent experience, at the moment of death, can leave an imprint that transcends a single lifetime—and whether the human organism may carry, in rare instances, the scars of a life once lived.

Morphogenetic Fields

Rupert Sheldrake, a British biochemist, graduate of Cambridge University and former Royal Society research fellow, has set forth a hypothesis that may explain this phenomenon. According to Sheldrake, the growth, development and the programmed behavior of organisms are governed by fields which exist much like fields of gravity or electromagnetism, and that these fields change and evolve as a species changes and evolves. Each plant, animal and human has its own field that is part of a larger field of its species just as a radio show has its own particular frequency but is nonetheless part of the full band of radio frequencies on the AM or FM radio dial.

Sheldrake is not the only one to have come up with such a theory. A man named Harold S. Burr, Ph.D., [1889-1973] did as well. Dr. Burr was E. K. Hunt Professor Emeritus, Anatomy, at Yale University School of Medicine and a member of the faculty of medicine for more than forty years. From 1916 to the late 1950's, he published, either alone or with others, more than ninety scientific papers. Dr. Burr maintained that all living things—from men to mice, from trees to seeds—are molded and controlled by electrodynamic fields, which he was able to measure and map with standard voltmeters. He maintained that these “fields of life,” or L-fields as he called them, are the basic blueprints of all life.

Morphogenetic Fields Work Together with Our Genes

Dr. Sheldrake's theory is essentially the same as Dr. Burr's. According to his theory, genes and morphogenetic fields work together to create our bodies. Genes account for such things as hair, skin, and eye color, while morphogenetic fields guide the cells of a growing fetus to become a kidney or a foot or a brain while an animal or human embryo is forming in the womb.

Traditional biology assumes genes are programmed with the purpose of each new cell and direct it to form whatever body part it is assigned to, but this has never been demonstrated. Sheldrake says genes dictate the primary structure of proteins, not the individual parts of the body. According to currently accepted theory, given the right genes and hence the right proteins, and the right systems by which protein synthesis is controlled, an organism is supposed to assemble itself. But how does this actually work? As Rupert Sheldrake once wrote, "This is rather like delivering the right materials to a building site at the right times and expecting a house to grow spontaneously."

Physiologists do their best to explain the functioning of plants and animals in mechanistic terms, but explanations of some phenomena are sketchy at best. Sheldrake believes the following can be explained by the existence of

morphogenetic fields: Formation of the structure of organisms, instinctive behavior, learning, and memory.

Sheldrake's theory combined with Dr. Stevenson's findings may also clear up certain mysteries that currently remain with respect to the theory of evolution. For example, it may be possible that traits acquired during a lifetime can be passed to future generations, i.e., accidental mutations that happen to help a plant or animal survive long enough to reproduce may not be the only way organisms adapt to a changing environment. Entities and organisms that figure out a way to overcome difficulties, physically or mentally, may pass that trait or physiological manifestation to the next generation via their shared morphogenetic field.

According to the fossil record, a species can remain virtually unchanged for many millennia and then alter dramatically during an epoch when environmental conditions shift. This happens so quickly that scientists often are unable to find evidence of the transition. An eminent authority on evolution, Stephen Jay Gould [1941–2002], once wrote, “The extreme rarity of transitional forms in the fossil record persists as the trade secret of paleontology. The evolutionary trees that adorn our textbooks have data only at the tips and nodes of their branches; the rest is inference, however reasonable, not the evidence of fossils.”

Where Memories Reside

Morphogenetic fields might also explain a phenomenon of memory that has neuroscientists puzzled: where it is located in the brain. One way research on this subject has been conducted is to train an animal to do something and then to cut out parts of its brain in an effort to find where the memory was stored. As Sheldrake has written, “But even after large chunks of their brains have been removed—in some experiments over 60 percent—the hapless animals can often remember what they were trained to do before the operation.”

Several theories have been put forth to explain this including backup systems and holograms, but the obvious one in light of Sheldrake’s hypothesis is that the memory may not be in the brain at all. This has pretty much been proven by the past-life research conducted at the University of Virginia in that subjects report memories from between lives when they have no physical body or brain. As you recall, this was the case with James Leininger who recalled seeing his future parents while they were on a second honeymoon in Hawaii. I asked Dr. Tucker about this. He said brains are needed to recall memories, but it appears that brains are not where memories are stored.

The bottom line when it comes to memories is that scientists have been looking in the wrong place. To quote Sheldrake again, “A search inside your TV set for traces of

the programs you watched last week would be doomed to failure for the same reason: The set tunes in to TV transmissions but does not store them.” In other words, the brain is a physical link to the memory located in your morphogenetic field, or perhaps your memories are stored in your own little cubby in some sort of psychic warehouse—a universal memory bank or database sometimes referred to as the Akashic Records.

Whichever the case may be, apparently, they are not stored in your brain.

Instincts May Be Memories Housed in Morphogenetic Fields

It seems logical to me that the morphogenetic fields of individual humans blend into the overall morphogenetic field of humankind. Each one affects the whole in terms of where an entire species—whether human or otherwise—stands in evolution. For animals, this has obvious implications in the explanation of instinctive behavior. The collective field of a species that is hunted—deer, for example—learns over time to be afraid of man. An individual deer does not have to learn this after birth. He is born with it, and we label it “instinctive behavior.” It’s part of the collective memory of deer that is contained in the morphogenetic field of the species. According the well-

known psychiatrist, Carl Jung [1875-1961], humans also have a collective, or shared memory, which he labeled the “collective unconscious,” a universal, inherited layer of the mind all humans share, functioning as a reservoir of experiences, instincts, and primordial images known as archetypes. It is not individually acquired but inherited, shaping behavior, myths, and dreams across cultures.

Concerning different animal species, adherents to the “survival of the fittest” theory will argue that of the many deer that are born each spring, those that possess a natural inclination to skittishness are more likely to reach the age of reproduction, and this is what has caused the trait to develop into an instinct over time. This makes sense as well, so it’s hard to argue. My guess is—since most things have more than one cause—that both theories are correct at least to some extent and work together in a push-me, pull-me way.

Other Evidence of Morphogenetic Fields

Collective morphogenetic fields may explain the behavior of societal insects, fishes and birds. For example, we’ve all seen swarms of gnats, schools of fish, or flocks of birds behaving as though they were a single organism as they glide through the air or water, turning and diving as though they form one unified whole. Spend some time at an aquarium watching a school of fish. Something is sure to cause a minor explosion in their midst, producing

momentary chaos as individuals scatter a short distance from their original positions. But within seconds, they will regroup and become a single moving organism once more.

The behavior of some species is truly amazing, or would be without Sheldrake's and Dr. Burr's theory. Key West silver-sided fish, for example, will organize themselves around a barracuda in a shape that seems dictated by risk. The distance between the school and the barracuda is widest at the predator's mouth and narrowest at the tail, where the threat of being eaten is the least.

In the world of insects, African termites, which are blind, rebuild tunnels and arches from both sides of a breach and meet up perfectly in the middle, and they can do this even when the two sides are separated by a large steel plate that is several feet wider and higher than the termitary, placed so that it divides the mound.

Acquired Characteristics Can Be Passed Along

As touched upon above, what may be mind-blowing about Sheldrake's hypothesis to those accustomed to thinking of heredity as working solely by the passing of genes through egg and sperm is that acquired characteristics can be passed from one generation to the next. It's interesting to note that photographs of James Huston—the pilot shot down at Iwo Jima—bear an uncanny resemblance to James Leininger, and that case is not unique. Pictures of

Barbro Karlen as a teenager—a Swedish woman some are convinced is the reincarnation of Anne Frank—closely resemble Anne at the same age. In my interview with Dr. Tucker, he pointed out that in some situations mental images are known to produce specific effects on the body. For example, some religiously devout individuals develop wounds, called stigmata, which match the crucifixion wounds of Jesus. More than 350 such cases have been reported.

Someone under hypnosis might be told a pencil is a lit cigarette. When the pencil touches that person's arm, a cigarette burn will appear on the arm. The inference is that the mind has a powerful influence over the body, that the nineteenth and twentieth century belief that the brain creates awareness appears to be off the mark, and that the mind can operate separately from it.

So, what is the brain?

As Rupert Sheldrake was quoted earlier as having said, it might best be compared to a radio or television receiver that brings consciousness and the mind into physical reality. In other words, the evidence strongly suggests it is your mind's connection to and interface with your physical body.

Which raises the question, what happens when the body quits, and we die?

We will explore that next.

Chapter Three: Consciousness

Outside the Body

Pam Reynolds was only 35 years old when she was told she was going to die.

She'd been suffering dizziness and loss of speech, so her doctor had ordered a CAT scan. Huge aneurysms—two ballooned arteries—were found at the base of her brain near where the stem entered her spine. It would only be a matter of time before one burst. When that happened, Pam's life would end.

Surgery seemed out of the question. One aneurysm was in an almost impossible place to reach without injuring the brain. If the skull were opened, the brain would be in the way—between the aneurysm and the doctor's scalpel.

As good fortune would have it, one long shot possibility did exist. Dr. Robert Spetzler, chief of neurosurgery at the Barrow Neurological Institute in Phoenix, Arizona, offered a radical procedure that would require shutting down Pam's body. Her heart would be stopped. Her body temperature would be lowered to sixty degrees Fahrenheit so there would be little or no deterioration of tissue. The blood would be drained from her brain, and then—only then, because he would in effect be working on a cadaver—Dr. Spetzler could deal with the most difficult to reach aneurysm.

Incredible as it may seem, Pam would literally be dead. If anyone ever wanted to construct an experiment to find out what happens when we die, this would have been it—provided, of course, Pam actually came back from death to tell the tale.

The procedure was awfully scary, but it was her only chance, so Pam went ahead with it. With no blood running through her brain, the aneurysm would deflate, and the doctor would be able to repair it. Once repaired, the plan was for the surgical team to pump blood back into her through a device that would raise its temperature and along with it, that of her body. Then they would jolt her heart back to life using electric shocks.

Imagine how Pam must have felt when they wheeled her into the operating room on the gurney, wheels squeaking. That was at 7:15 a.m. on August 8, 1991. Anesthesia was administered, both ear channels were occluded with molded ear speakers designed to monitor brain stem function. These clicked constantly. An electroencephalogram (EEG) was set up to monitor cortical brain waves, and an electrical device was affixed to test the functioning of her cerebral hemispheres. These machines would display flat lines once her heart was stopped and her blood drained out.

Pam remembers none of this and remained unconscious until she heard a buzzing sound at 8:40 a.m.—an unpleasant

sound, she recalls, reminiscent of a dentist's drill.

Recounting this she said, "I remember the top of my head tingling, and I just sort of popped out of it. Then, I was looking down at my body. I knew it was my body, but for some reason I didn't care.

"My vantage point was that of sitting on the doctor's shoulder. He had an instrument in his hand that looked like an electric toothbrush. That puzzled me. I had assumed they would open the skull with a saw—I'd heard the term 'saw'—but what he was working with looked a lot more like a drill than a saw—sort of like my electric toothbrush—and there also was a case, like the one my father stored his socket wrenches in when I was a child—with little bits in it."

All this turned out to be true. The saw used by the doctor did look like an electric toothbrush, and there was a case with bits in it. The extraordinary thing is, Pam could not have made these observations about tools as she entered the operating room because she would not have been able to see them. All the instruments, including the drill-like saw, were concealed inside sterile packaging, as is standard practice. To maintain a sterile environment, these packages are not opened until the patient is completely asleep.

"I also heard people talking," she continued. "I distinctly remember hearing a female voice say, 'We have a problem. The arteries are too small.'

"Someone said to try the other side.

“This [talking] seemed to come from somewhere down at the other end of the table and I wondered, What are they doing? This is brain surgery [not surgery on the legs].

“I later found out they accessed the femoral arteries, which are in the groin area, in order to drain the blood from my body.”

Operation records show that the artery first accessed for this purpose could not be used because it was indeed too small, so the artery on the other side was used. Dr. Spetzler verified that no one would be able to hear or see anything, using the usual bodily senses, while in the state Pam Reynolds was in at the time.

But Pam did hear and see what was going on. Her consciousness was outside her body. But it didn’t remain in the operating room as surgery progressed.

“I felt a presence, and I turned around to look at it,” she said. “That’s when I saw a tiny pinpoint of light.

“It [the light] started to pull me. There was a physical sensation like what you might have in your stomach when you drive fast over a hill. So I went toward the light, and as I came closer I began to discern different figures.

“I distinctly heard my grandmother call me. She had a very distinct voice, and I immediately went to her. It felt great. And I saw an uncle who had passed away when he was only 39 years old. He had taught me a lot. He taught me to play my first guitar. I saw many people I knew and many I did not know.

“I asked if God was the light, and the answer was, ‘No, God is not the light. The light is what happens when God breathes.’ And I remember thinking, I’m standing in the breath of God.

“At some point I was reminded that it was time to go back. Of course, I’d made my decision to go back before the operation, but the more I was there in the light, the more I liked it.

“But my uncle escorted me back down the tunnel.

“When I got to where the body was, and I looked at it, I really did not want to get in it. I was certain about that because it looked like what it was—void of life. And I knew it would hurt.

“But my uncle kept trying to reason with me. He said not to worry and go ahead. It would be like diving into a swimming pool.

“‘Just jump in,’ he said.

“‘No,’ I said.

“‘What about the children?’

“‘You know, I think the children will be just fine.’

“‘Honey, you’ve got to go.’

“‘No.’

“I saw the body jump.

“Then he pushed me, and I felt [my body] jump.

“It took me a long time, but I guess I’m ready [now] to forgive him for that.”

The jump Pam saw, and the one she felt, were caused by the electric shocks to restart her heart.

All this happened under extremely controlled conditions when every known vital sign, every clinical sign of life, and death, was being monitored. Her body had been dead, but her consciousness had lived on.

The doctors have no explanation. They know of no way to explain what Pam experienced given the paradigm science still operates within at this moment in history. Pam's ability to recall and accurately describe what was going on in the operating room while she was dead with the blood drained from her head and most of her body, indicates her mind had separated from her brain. But today's generally accepted scientific reasoning holds that there can be no memory of anything when the heart is stopped and the brain is not functioning. The only logical explanation is that her consciousness was outside her brain and the memories of her experiences formed there as well.

If this were an isolated case, perhaps it could be dismissed as some sort of anomaly. Certainly, skeptics would try. But there are many, many others. Once such is that reported by Dr. Melvin E. Morse, M.D.

The Case of Kristle Merzlock

In spring, 1982, Kristle Merzlock arrived at the hospital in Pocatello, Idaho, in a coma—having been pulled from

the bottom of a swimming pool. Her heart had stopped beating 19 minutes earlier.

Bill Longhurst, the physician who received Kristle in the emergency room, quickly summoned Melvin Morse, then 27, the only doctor at the hospital who'd performed a significant number of resuscitations. Miraculously, he was able to get her heart going and put her on an artificial lung machine.

Morse had topflight academic credentials—a medical degree with honors from George Washington University and a research fellowship funded by the National Cancer Institute. Even so, he was not prepared for what was about to happen. Kristle's pupils were fixed and dilated and she had no gag reflex. A CAT scan revealed massive swelling of her brain, an artificial lung was doing her breathing, and her blood pH was extremely acidic, a clear indication of imminent death. Morse said, "There was little we could do at that point."

But somehow, against all odds, Kristle survived. Three days later she came out of her coma with full brain function. Needless to say, Morse was amazed. But something else amazed him even more and, eventually, forced him to completely rearrange his thinking about consciousness and life after death.

Kristle recognized him.

"That's the one with the beard," she told her mother.

“First there was this tall doctor who didn’t have a beard, and then he came in.”

This was true. Morse had a beard, and the admitting doctor, Longhurst, was clean-shaven and tall.

Kristle then described the emergency room with astonishing accuracy.

Morse said, “She had the right equipment, the right number of people—everything was just as it had been that day.” She correctly related the procedures that had been performed on her. Even though her eyes had been closed and she had been profoundly comatose during the entire experience, she still ‘saw’ what was going on.”

Kristle was able to do this, she said, because she was outside her body—that is, her mind and awareness were outside floating above it, observing what was going on. As you might expect, Morse had a hard time believing what she told him about her out-of-body experience (OBE), and his skepticism showed through. Kristle patted him shyly on the hand and said, “Don’t worry, Dr. Morse, heaven is fun!”

Morse wrote up her case for the American Medical Association’s *Pediatric Journal* as a “fascinoma,” meaning a strange yet interesting case. Then he returned to cancer research. One night, he saw Elizabeth Kübler-Ross [1926-2004], author of *On Death and Dying* on television describing to a grieving mother what her child went through when she died. Kübler-Ross said that the girl floated out of

her body, suffered no pain, and entered into heaven. Morse thought this was unprofessional of a psychiatrist, and vowed to prove her wrong.

NDE Research by Morse and Sharp

He teamed up with Kimberly Clark Sharp, a clinical social worker in Seattle to begin researching near-death experiences (NDEs) in children. Their work later became known as The Seattle Study. At Seattle Children's Hospital, they designed and implemented the first prospective study of NDEs with age and sex matched controls. They studied 26 children who nearly died and compared them to 131 children who were also quite ill, in the intensive care unit, mechanically ventilated, treated with drugs such as morphine, Valium and anesthetic agents. Often they had suffered a lack of oxygen to the brain, but none had ever reached the near-death state of actually being clinically dead.

Before 1976, not much had been published on NDEs, but that year a medical student named Raymond Moody published what became a best-selling book called *Life After Life*. Moody interviewed patients who had been resuscitated after being clinically dead and described what he found to be common occurrences in such instances: a sensation of serenity, separation from the body, entrance into a dark tunnel, a vision of light, and the appearance of deceased family members who offer help.

Morse said working with kids had its advantages. “The adult near-death experience is cluttered by cultural references and contaminated by the need for validation,” he explained. “But with kids, it’s pure. Kids don’t repress the memory, or fear the ridicule that might come from talking about it.”

He found that of the 26 children who nearly died 23 had NDEs whereas none of the other children had them. If NDEs are caused by a lack of oxygen to the brain, drugs, hallucinations secondary to coma, or stress and the fear of dying, then the control would have been expected to also have experienced NDEs, but they did not, indicating that NDEs happen only to the dying.

Morse was determined, he said, to “produce a study that would hold up under the most stringent peer review.” He poured over the medical records of each patient, documenting the drugs they took, the anesthesia used on them and the level of oxygen in their blood. His team of medical students combed the literature in search of reports of drug use, psychological states or oxygen deprivation that might have produced hallucinations similar to near-death experiences.

When he published his results in the *American Journal of Diseases of Children*, Morse felt he was on solid ground in asserting near-death experiences are not the result of drugs or sleep deprivation, nor are they merely dreams or

hallucinations. He was extremely careful to stay on firm scientific ground, labeling them “natural psychological processes associated with dying.” While he could not explain what caused NDEs, he could prove that something consistent was going on, something that could not be explained in medical terms.

If you think Morse’s colleagues and the medical community toasted him, and gave him a pat on the back, you are wrong. Morse was ridiculed and scorned by other doctors. Soon, prominent physicians questioned whether he could even deliver good patient care.

What I think of as “pseudo skeptics” have advanced a number of theories to explain the visions of dying patients. I call them pseudo skeptics because they will come up with almost ridiculous ways to attempt to shoot down what is clearly based on solid data. Some attributed the NDEs to “anesthetic agents” administered in the hospital, even though Morse found that many of the subjects studied were dying far from a hospital setting. Others considered the visions to be hallucinations produced by narcotics, endorphins or profound oxygen deprivation—none of which, Morse insists, have been shown to correlate with the near death experiences he documented. He believes the medical community rejected his conclusions for a variety of reasons—one being his willingness to talk about death as a positive experience.

He said, “There’s a feeling that people come to doctors to keep living, that if death is treated as a result that isn’t necessarily negative, then we may not do all we can to avoid it.”

This does not ring true to me. It seems more likely to me that a small percentage of scientists with a vested interest in maintaining the status quo have intimidated the majority into holding onto the old paradigm that says consciousness cannot exist outside the brain. We will soon look at studies that clearly show that consciousness can exist outside the brain. For now, let’s look at what is typically reported to happen during a near death experience.

The Elements of Near Death Experiences

In December, 2008, I interviewed consciousness researcher Jody Long, who along with her husband, Jeffrey P. Long, M.D., founded the Near Death Experience Research Foundation. They maintain what they believe is the largest NDE website (www.nderf.org) in the world. At that time it already had more than 1800 full-text published NDE accounts.

Five steps seem to be common to NDEs:

1. A sense of being dead, including the sudden awareness of a fatal accident, or of not surviving an operation.

2. An out-of-body experience; the sensation of peering down on one's body. As in the cases recounted above, those experiencing clinical death often report back the scene with uncanny accuracy, quoting doctors and witnesses verbatim.
3. Some kind of tunnel experience, a sense of moving upward or through a narrow passage.
4. Light, including light "beings," God or a Godlike entity. For having a hell-like experience, the opposite may be true—darkness or a lack of light.
5. A life review—being shown one's life, sometimes highlighting mistakes or omissions.

I find the life review of particular significance, and it never fails to come to mind whenever I'm tempted to do something that potentially might harm another. Here is what Raymond Moody, M.D., author of *Life After Life* and other books on this subject had to say about the life review:

When the life review occurs, there are no more physical surroundings. In their place is a full color, three-dimensional, panoramic review of every single thing the [persons having this experience] have done in their lives.

This usually takes place in a third-person perspective and doesn't occur in time as we know it. The closest

description I've heard of it is that the person's whole life is there at once.

In this situation, you not only see every action that you have ever done, but you also immediately perceive the effect of every single one of your actions upon the people in your life.

So for instance, if I see myself doing an unloving act, then immediately I am in the consciousness of the person I did that act to, so that I feel their sadness, hurt, and regret.

On the other hand, if I do a loving act to someone, then I am immediately in their place and I can feel the kind and happy feelings.

Through all of this, a Being is with these people, asking them what good they have done with their lives. He helps them through this review and helps them put all the events of their life in perspective.

All of the people who go through this come away believing that the most important thing in their life is love.

For most of them, the second most important thing in life is knowledge. As they see life scenes in which they are learning things, the Being points out that one of the things they can take with them at death is knowledge. The other is love.

I have a feeling some people reading this book still aren't buying that there is some sort of universal mind out there, a medium for our thoughts and awareness, and so in the next chapter we are going to take a look at scientific research that supports this hypothesis.

Chapter Four: Awareness Is Non-Local

The purpose of this chapter is to provide additional evidence that memories are not stored in the brain—that our individual minds are part and parcel of the One Mind that contains and encompasses All-That-Is.

The Duke University Parapsychology Laboratory

Back in the early 1930s a university with a new name and big ambitions hired a couple of men who wanted to unravel the mysteries of the paranormal. That university was Duke, located in Durham, North Carolina, now one of the most prestigious in the United States. The men were William McDougall [1871-1938] and Joseph Banks Rhine, most often referred to as J. B. Rhine [1895-1980]. The organization they created was called the Duke Parapsychology Laboratory for many years. Today it is called The Rhine Research Center, and although it is no longer connected with the University, it is located adjacent to the Duke campus.

What motivated these men? They wanted most to prove or disprove the fact or fiction of life after death. On my radio show that aired the week of April 6, 2009, I

interviewed journalist Stacy Horn who wrote a book chronicling the history of this organization from 1930 to 1960, including experiments that were conducted and the interaction of the many people over the years. This included such well-known celebrities Upton Sinclair and scientists such as Albert Einstein. The name of her book is *UNBELIEVABLE: Investigations into Ghosts, Poltergeists, Telepathy, and Other Unseen Phenomena, from the Duke Parapsychology Laboratory* (HarperCollins, ECCO Imprint). Stacy went into this project a skeptic about paranormal phenomena, but was no longer a skeptic when she came out of it.

Previously known as Trinity College, a grant by tobacco millionaire James B. Duke in 1924 prompted the name change. Perhaps, the newly reconstituted school was looking for ways to make its mark when it lured William McDougall from Harvard University to set up a department of psychology.

He was soon contacted by a man named John Thomas who had 800 pages of transcripts generated by mediums he had been working with. Thomas' wife had died unexpectedly during an operation, and Thomas had been devastated. He began working with mediums in order to communicate with her.

Thomas got exciting results, but he wasn't sure he could believe them. Looking for verification of their authenticity,

he traveled around the United States talking with mediums. He went to Europe, eventually, reasoning that mediums there would have no way of knowing anything about him or his wife. If they were able to come up with information that was accurate, it would be more convincing.

Ultimately, Thomas wrote to McDougall asking if he could send J. B. Rhine, then of Harvard University, and Rhine's wife Louisa, to Duke to study this material. McDougall agreed and Rhine came to Duke.

J. B. Rhine Takes Up Residence at Duke

Rhine studied Thomas' transcripts. He was able to verify much of the information, and to all but eliminate fraud and lucky guesses. He traveled to Upstate New York, for example, investigating cemetery head stones to check out the veracity of the genealogy of Thomas' wife indicated by a medium. The genealogy proved to be accurate. Not even Thomas himself knew if this genealogy was correct, but the information did check out. Ultimately, however, Rhine concluded that even though the information was correct, it could not be said with absolute certainty that the information was coming from Thomas' deceased and disembodied wife.

The problem still dogs researchers who study the purported abilities of mediums. Assuming no fraud is being perpetrated, several possibilities exist as to the source of

information coming from mediums that seems to be from a deceased individual:

1. It may actually be coming from the now disembodied individual.
2. The medium may be employing ESP or telepathy to read the minds of living individuals—in this case Thomas himself, or other living relatives of his wife. Indeed, a whole range of psychic abilities may be put to use including remote viewing, psychometry and clairvoyance. Nowadays, the full breadth of psychic abilities that might be at work is called “superpsi.”
3. A third possibility is that the medium might be tapping into a reservoir of information of human history, thoughts and feelings many believe exists. As mentioned earlier, some call this the Akashic Records, which are envisioned as the memory hard drive of the universe. Also previously touched upon, the famous psychiatrist, Carl Jung, for example, wrote of a universal unconscious that holds the history and thoughts of all mankind. Today, some researchers call this the “psychic reservoir.” This is thought to be the source of information for

perhaps most famous and well-documented psychic of the twentieth century, Edgar Cayce (1877-1945), often referred to as “The Sleeping Prophet”—Cayce became known as such because his readings were given while in a self-induced trance.

Rhine could find no way to prove that superpsi or psychic reservoir were not the source of information tapped into by mediums that had supposedly been in touch with Thomas’ wife. So Rhine began putting his energy into the study of what became known as extra sensory perception, or ESP. He reasoned that if he could prove awareness extends beyond, and exists outside the body, a major step would be taken toward establishing the possibility of survival of consciousness after death. After all, for our consciousness to continue after death it has to be capable of existing outside the body and the brain.

Conclusive Proof of ESP

Rhine’s most famous experiment used what has become known as ESP cards. Developed specifically for this purpose, these had different symbols on them including a star, wavy lines, a cross, a box and a circle. Many of these experiments were conducted—mostly using Duke University students—to see if people could tell what

symbols were on the cards without looking at them. It was found again and again that they could.

The controls employed in these experiments were refined over time until neither the students nor those testing them could see one another. Ultimately, research was conducted in such a way that not even the person conducting the experiment knew what symbol was on the card a student was to identify. The experiments turned up statistically significant results time after time, showing that ESP appears to be real, which supports the theory that our individual minds are part of the One Mind that contains All-That-Is.

One of Rhine's subjects in the ESP experiments was particularly impressive. A divinity student, his name was Hubert Pierce. Rhine believed that everyone possessed psychic abilities, but his research indicates some people have more talent for it than others. This is of course true of other abilities. An extremely talented singer will wow the judges and go on to win American Idol, but most will fail miserably and get the boot at the first audition.

There were twenty-five cards in the ESP deck, and five different symbols. Therefore, one would expect to guess five correctly each time through, simply by chance. Hubert Pierce could consistently get more than five correct, as could a number of others. But the interesting thing is, and according to Stacy Horn this came up frequently in the research, emotions played a role. Hubert, for example,

needed money. He was a poor, struggling college student. Rhine once told him if he got the next card right, he'd pay him a hundred dollars. Pierce got it right. Rhine said, "Okay, get the next one right, and you'll get another hundred dollars."

Pierce got the next one right.

This went on through the entire deck. Pierce named all 25 cards correctly.

At one point, however, Hubert said he would not be coming into the lab for tests. His girlfriend had broken up with him, and he was heartbroken.

When he finally did come back, he did not perform well.

Another example of emotions playing a role was the time Rhine tested the psychic abilities of children at an orphanage. One little girl became quite attached to a woman researcher. The little girl performed extremely well, apparently because she was eager to please, and wanted to prolong the session.

The Phenomenon of Remote Viewing

Something that demonstrates awareness is not local, but rather is non-local—at no particular place but everywhere at once—is the phenomenon of remote viewing. Those adept at remote viewing can direct their consciousness to be anywhere they want it to be.

Remote viewers use psychic powers to observe what's happening at a location some distance from them—in terms both of miles and in some cases, time as well.

Back in the 1970s, the U. S. government learned that the KGB was using psychics to spy on the United States. Naturally, U.S. Intelligence leaders wanted to see if this actually worked.

Did it? U.S. Army Major General Edmund R. Thompson [1930-2019], who was deputy Director for the Management and Operations for Defense Intelligence from 1982-84 is quoted as having said, “I never liked to get into debates with the skeptics, because if you didn’t believe that remote viewing was real, you hadn’t done your homework.”

Remote viewing was used from the early 1970s forward through the Cold War to keep tabs on what the Soviets and Eastern Block countries were up to that couldn’t be observed by spy planes, or satellites, or operatives on the ground.

In Spring 2009, I interviewed F. Holmes Atwater, the man who in 1979 set up the U.S. Army Intelligence unit that was responsible, which was called Stargate. His friends know him by the name of Skip.

Skip got into this line of work through a series of what some people might call amazing coincidences, and others would say are synchronicities—events that look like coincidences, but seem to happen for a reason.

Skip grew up in a home with parents that took such things for granted. It was the sort of thing they talked about at the dinner table. As a kid, Skip would go off on out-of-body trips almost nightly. He related one specific story to me and my listeners to illustrate this. He was seven or eight years old at the time, and it had to do with a problem he had with bedwetting.

“It was embarrassing,” he said. “I had a big, brown piece of rubber on my bed so I wouldn’t ruin the mattress. My parents didn’t scold me, but they did make me responsible for washing my own sheets.

“I distinctly remember waking up one night, and I was all wet. I was screaming in anger, and my mother came in and said, ‘What’s wrong? Did you fall out of bed?’

“I said, ‘No, I remember, I got up, and I went down the hall to the bathroom, and I sat down. And the minute I started to pee, I woke up here in bed, and I’m all wet.’

“I was mad as the dickens, and my mother hugged me and said, ‘Oh, that’s all right, don’t worry about it. You know, Skip, sometimes you’re in your body and sometimes you’re out of your body, and you have to remember that when you’re going to the bathroom, make sure you’re in your body.’

“[What she said] made perfect sense to me, and I said, ‘Oh, now I understand,’ and that was the end of my bedwetting.”

Atwater Learns of Remote Viewing

Skip was in the Army working for Army Intelligence when he came across a book called *Mind Reach* by Russell Targ and Harold E. Puthoff of the Stanford Research Institute. The book explained remote viewing, which didn't seem at all unusual to Skip given his experiences as a child. Naturally, a person could see things at a distance, using his mental powers. It was as though a light had suddenly flicked on. He instantly realized this could be used to gather intelligence.

At the time, Skip was in counter intelligence. It was his job to defend against wiretaps, bugging devices, and other forms of intelligence gathering by the enemy. No one in his counter intelligence unit had thought about remote viewing as a way the enemy might be spying on us. So Skip went to his commanding officer, a Colonel Webb, and gave him the book. After the Colonel had read it, Skip asked him if this remote viewing was being used on our side.

The Colonel had no idea. He thought if anything was going on, the Pentagon would be the place to find out. So he had Skip transferred to the Pentagon to take a position where he'd be in charge of a counter intelligence team. Skip would have the access he needed to find out about remote viewing and what if anything was being done about it to prevent the enemy from using it.

Before Skip was able to relocate to Washington, however, he received a change of orders. He was told to report to Fort Meade in Maryland. This was a better location for a young Army officer with a wife and children, which Skip had, because Fort Meade had family housing and good schools. It would be a much more affordable and pleasant place to live than Washington, D.C.

Documents Reveal U. S. Interest in Remote Viewing

At Fort Meade, Skip was assigned to what was known as a SAVE team—Security Activity Vulnerability Estimate team. The job was to go to sensitive U.S. installations and try to penetrate them in any way possible—as the enemy might in order to gather intelligence. Then the team would make a report to the commanding officer and provide recommendations for improving security.

Skip moved into his new job and was assigned an office that had just been vacated. The file cabinet and most of the desk drawers had been cleaned out, and an office safe had been emptied, but he did come across three documents in a bottom drawer of the desk that turned out to be classified. They reported on remote viewing experiments taking place in the Soviet sphere, funded by the KGB.

Skip took the documents to his supervising officer, a Major Keenan.

The Major looked at them. “Oh, yes, I remember these,” he said. “The Lt. Colonel was very interested in this subject. Do you know anything about it?”

“Why, yes, I do, Major.”

The Major took a moment and sized up Skip. “Lieutenant,” he said, “from now on you’re in charge of it.”

And that’s how Skip got his wish and started on a ten year career that eventually put him in charge of a remote viewing unit of the Army. As things moved along, he soon learned that basic research had been underway since 1972 to check the validity of the Eastern Block experiments. The initial question had been whether reports of success were valid. It might be that the Soviets were falsifying the results to create fear. The Stanford Research Institute had been retained to replicate the experiments paid for by the KGB. To the surprise of our intelligence community, the results had been positive.

By the time Skip got involved, the CIA and other U.S. intelligence agencies had been using natural psychics for some time to gather information, including well-known psychics such as Ingo Swann [1933-2013], who has since written several books on remote viewing. Skip’s job became to set up, recruit and train remote viewers for U.S. Army Intelligence who may or not have had prior experience using psychic abilities. He developed a screening process, and for those who made the cut, a training program

employing methodologies gleaned from accomplished remote viewers.

Skip's efforts met with success, but after a while he began looking for ways to enhance the results his remote viewers were achieving. This led him to The Monroe Institute (TMI) in Virginia, where he worked as Research Director when I interviewed him.

The Monroe Institute Proves to Be a Resource

Robert Monroe [1915–1995] had spent a career in broadcasting, culminating as a vice president of NBC Radio. After leaving NBC, Monroe became known for his research into altered states of consciousness. His 1971 book *Journeys Out of the Body* is said to have popularized the term “out-of-body experience,” or OBE.

Monroe's original objective had been to develop a process by which people could learn effortlessly—while they were asleep. He developed sound patterns that would help people reach a state called Stage Two Sleep and hold them in that state. Monroe experimented on himself and exposed himself to many varieties of sound. One night in 1956, quite unexpectedly, he found himself floating over his body. He panicked and thought he must be dying. He consulted medical doctors and psychiatrists about this, and eventually understood he wasn't dying—that this experience was fairly common. As a result, he conducted

more experiments to learn how to replicate what he had done, and to control it.

By the time Monroe came to Skip's attention, he had established The Monroe Institute southwest of Charlottesville, Virginia, where the public could come to share in these sound-created experiences. Skip decided to investigate, and traveled from Fort Meade to Virginia to meet Monroe.

Skip, of course, was running a secret program for the U.S. Army and could not disclose the real reason for his visit. But he did explain to Monroe that he was interested in the work being done, had read his book, and had had out-of-body experiences as a child.

Monroe invited Skip to come into his laboratory. He took him to a room that had been set up and equipped for his experiments. He had Skip lie down. Skip became nervous. He was, after all, an intelligence officer on a surreptitious mission.

"What are these sounds I've heard about—these hemi-sync® sounds?" Skip asked.

"Oh, nothing to worry about," Monroe said. "I'll just play some music at first to calm you down."

As soon as Skip was lying down on the bed with the headphones on, the door shut and the lights went out. He wondered what he'd gotten himself into.

Music came through the speakers. It turned into the

sound of surf against the shore. This reminded Skip of happy childhood days spent playing at the beach.

Then droning sounds came on in the background and quite unexpectedly the bed began to rise off the floor as though it were being lifted by hydraulics the way a car in a service station is lifted for an oil change.

Skip thought, *Wow, this is a very special bed. They must have one of those lifts underneath it to push it up in the air.*

As he was thinking about what must have been done to build it—the building had to have been constructed around it—he began to feel himself moving in a different direction. He seemed to be headed laterally, rather than up. That's when he realized it must not be a lift he was on. Yet the feeling was very strong, quite visceral, as though he were on an airplane circling into a landing approach. He saw or imagined that he was moving through a rock or crystal tunnel of some kind. Then he heard a voice.

"Whoa, there. What's happening, kid?" It was Robert Monroe.

"Well, I seem to be going somewhere," Skip said.

"Well, now, where're you going, kid?"

"I don't know," Skip answered.

Skip traveled along the tunnel, or corridor, and eventually came out of it in vast, open, white space. He said it was a little like being in a white cloud except there was no mist or fog. Everything was white, boundless, and there were no walls.

Perhaps the strangest part was that Skip watched himself arrive.

He thought, Gosh, I've come all this way only to find I'm already here.

Skip said in our interview, "It sounds trite to say wherever you go, there you are, but that's exactly what happened to me."

He remained in the white space for a while. Then he heard Robert Monroe's voice again:

"What's happening?"

Skip was embarrassed because he'd forgotten he was in Monroe's laboratory lying on a bed.

He said, "Oh, nothing much."

"Okay . . . well, it's time for lunch."

This didn't make sense, but that didn't matter because Monroe changed the sounds coming through the headphones, and Skip felt the bed being lowered down to its original position. In a short time, the door was open and the lights were on.

Monroe was standing in the doorway.

Skip leaned over and looked under the bed.

"Oh, did you lose your wallet down there?" Monroe asked.

Skip was looking for the hydraulic lift, but there was none.

As a result of this experience, he learned there was definitely something to the sound technology Robert

Monroe had developed, and the Army entered into a classified contract with Robert Monroe to do some training.

The Amazing Abilities of Joe McMoneagle

One man Monroe trained was perhaps the most outstanding remote viewer in the Army. His name is Joe McMoneagle.

Joe had been in intelligence before joining Skip's unit. His personal story is fascinating and was related to me by a guest on my show who'd gotten to know Joe over the years through an association with The Monroe Institute.

In the early 1970s, Joe was the target of a successful assassination attempt while in the Army stationed in Germany, working as an operative in intelligence. Poison was the method. He was meeting with an intelligence contact at a restaurant, having dinner, when he felt nauseous. He excused himself and went outside to get some air. He walked around for a moment, then saw a crowd gathered just outside the door. He went to see what the commotion was about, looked through the crowd, and could make out a body lying on the street.

People were saying, "He's dead, he's dead!"

Joe came closer and was shocked to see the body was his own.

Testing later showed he'd been subjected to a binary poison, one which becomes toxic when combined with

another substance. This had allowed his assassin to slip him the poison and make his getaway before Joe sat down to dinner and consumed whatever had triggered the toxicity that killed him.

McMoneagle's consciousness, after viewing his body lying on the street, went toward the light and through the tunnel described by Pam Reynolds and other near-death survivors. As is now considered typical in these cases, he arrived at a place where he was met by spiritual beings. There, he underwent some instruction and a life review.

We would know nothing of this if Joe's body had not been resuscitated. His recovery and recuperation took quite some time.

What happened that evening changed Joe in several ways. He'd had psychic experiences before his NDE, but had kept them to himself. He no longer did. He also began to have spontaneous out-of-body experiences he was unable to control.

Joe's case came to the attention of two physicists at the Stanford Research Institute, Russell Targ and Harold Puthoff. They'd already been working on a government contract to study the ramifications of the quantum mechanics theory of non locality of consciousness. These were the same experiments described in the classified document found by Skip Atwater, and the same two men who'd authored the book he'd read.

Joe became the first remote viewer directly on the government payroll. In the course of his career in the Army as a remote viewer, Joe worked on more than 200 missions, many of which were reported at the highest levels of the U.S. military and government. Some of the information was considered so crucial, vital and unavailable from any other source, that he was awarded the Legion of Merit for his work, the second highest award the Army can give to someone in the military during peacetime.

Skylab's Fall to Earth Is Accurately Predicted

One such mission was to determine the time and the location Skylab would fall to earth. Depending on how old you are, you may recall Skylab—literally a scientific laboratory in orbit around the earth, put there for astronauts to conduct experiments in space. Launched in 1973, it weighed about 100 tons.

By 1979 its orbit was decaying and Skylab was expected to come down. The question was, “Where?”

A hundred ton metal object falling on a heavily populated area such as New York, Tokyo or London, for example, would cause a tremendous death and destruction. Super computers were enlisted to answer the question, but too many variables existed for the technology of the day. The results were unreliable.

Joe McMoneagle, Ingo Swann and a third individual, a woman whose name I have been unable to uncover, were contracted individually to come up with an answer. None of the three knew the others were involved. All picked the same day, July 11, 1979, and almost the same time. Each was within five minutes of the other two. This was nine and a half months before Skylab came down. In addition, they all picked a location in western Australia within five miles of one another—a remote, uninhabited area.

Skylab came down there, all right, almost precisely as predicted, demonstrating awareness is not located just inside our skulls, nor is it limited in time and space—more evidence my one-mind theory is correct.

The Capture of Saddam Hussein Is Seen Six Weeks Ahead

Another startling example that awareness is non local comes from a book by Stephan A. Schwartz, *OPENING TO THE INFINITE: The Art and Science of Nonlocal Awareness* (Nemoseen Media, 2007). Mr. Schwartz was on my radio show in the summer of 2008. One of the amazing stories he told was about the predictions made by a college seminar class about the capture of Saddam Hussein. On November 2, 2003, after being taught the basic skills of remote viewing, 47 of those who'd attended the seminar

agreed to “Describe the location of Saddam Hussein at the time of this capture or discovery by U.S. or coalition forces.” The students’ data was collected and analyzed, including points of consensus concerning the physical location, as well as things that were not likely to be predictable—such as Hussein’s appearance on the day of his capture. The data were photocopied and distributed to a number of people, and then turned over to a third party, Herk Stokeley, Director of Atlantic University. Stokeley placed the data in an envelope, which he sealed in front of a notary, who affixed her seal across the envelope’s flap. The envelope was then placed in a vault.

Hussein was captured about six weeks later, on December 13, 2003. The remote viewing documents in the safe said he would be beneath an ordinary looking house on the outskirts of a small village near the city of Tikrit, and that the house would be part of a small compound that’s bordered on one side by a dirt road and, on the other by a nearby river. Two large palm trees would mark the ends of the house. All this turned out to be true.

Remote viewing also predicted Hussein would be found crouching in a subterranean room or cave reached by a tunnel. This was true.

Remote viewing said Hussein would look like a homeless person with dirty, rough clothing, long ratty hair and a substantial and equally ratty salt and pepper beard. This was true.

Remote viewing said he would have only two or three supporters with him at the time of his discovery. He had two.

Remote viewing said he'd have a gun with him. He had a pistol.

Remote viewing said he would have a quantity of money. He had \$750,000 in cash.

Remote viewing said he would be defiant, but would not put up any resistance and would be tired and dispirited. This was true.

ESP Messages Aren't Sent or Received

Stephan Schwartz also told me about an experiment he conducted that seems to show that we all are plugged into a universal mind and that thoughts are not electromagnetic waves like radio or TV signals. In other words, thoughts do not travel between minds like cell phone or radio signals that travel between a sender and a receiver. The results of his experiment clearly suggest that thoughts and information exist in a universal, perhaps foundational or underlying mind that we all share at a level beyond normal waking consciousness as has been discussed. In other words, people don't receive information from others, they tap into information or memories that exist in the One Mind we all share.

How was this done? Schwartz had researchers in a submarine lowered to a depth below which it has been

demonstrated that electromagnetic waves—regardless of their frequency or strength—cannot penetrate. Remote viewers in the submarine were able to get the same results with respect to targets located on the surface as were remote viewers who were located on the surface.

Telepathy [ESP] experiments were also conducted. The results achieved by researchers in the submarine were comparable to the results achieved by a control group of researchers on the surface. This appears to demonstrate that ESP does not work by messages traveling through space from one mind to another. It suggests that what mystics have been saying for millennia is correct: All-Is-One. Being located in a submarine deep below the surface of the ocean doesn't change that. Details of this experiment can be found in Schwartz's book, *OPENING TO THE INFINITE: The Art and Science of Nonlocal Awareness* (Nemoseen Media, 2007).

I mentioned in the Preface that as I learned more about the true nature of reality and read what Jesus reportedly said and taught, it became clear to me that He knew what he was talking about. Below is a passage from John's gospel that many find difficult to understand. It seems to me that in this passage Jesus is saying he will continue to be alive and to help his followers after his body dies. He also seems to indicate that we are all interconnected and part of One Mind and One Life, which he called "the Father." I've put several parts of the passage in italics because they seem to highlight this.

It also seems to me that Jesus is attempting to tell his followers that once they fully grasp what he knows and teaches—believes in him—they can and will become like him and be able to do the work he was able to do. This seems to indicate that we can and will become like Him if we persevere.

John 14:11-20 (NIV):

“11 Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the works themselves. 12 Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. 13 And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. 14 You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it. 15 If you love me, keep my commands. 16 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever— 17 the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be[a] in you. 18 I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. 19 Before long, the world will not see me anymore, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. 20 On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you.”

Life Goes On

What's the take-away from this chapter? The One Mind we all share contains all and is all—past, present, and at least to an extent, future. Also, among other things, your deceased loved ones still exist as part of the One Life—as I will attempt to show in the upcoming chapter.

Chapter Five: Accurate Information about Those Not Currently Incarnated

One scientist seems to have proven beyond the shadow of a doubt that it's possible for bona fide mediums to relate accurate and specific information about deceased individuals to living loved ones under blinded conditions—without the use of fraud, visual or verbal clues, or any other possible deceit or deception. Her name is Julie Beischel, and she has a Ph.D. in pharmacology and toxicology. This may be an unusual background for a paranormal researcher, but it may also be the reason she has been able to come up with an airtight methodology that proves mediums can do what they have long claimed to be able to do. A big part of what pharmacologists do is determine the efficacy, or lack thereof, of drugs. Doing so requires constructing foolproof, double blind experiments.

I met with Dr. Beischel during a lunch break at the Society for Scientific Exploration's Annual Meeting in May 2009, at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville. We talked for more than an hour. A few weeks later she also was a guest on my radio show, and I was able to ask follow up questions.

Dr. Beischel received her Ph.D. from the University of Arizona at a time when something occurred to prompt her

to change her career direction.

Her mother committed suicide.

The Author's Wish to Communicate with His Father

Out of a sense of propriety, I did not ask Dr. Beischel how she felt about her mother's suicide, and what questions it may have raised, but I can imagine how I would have felt had it happened in my family. The suicide of a parent must certainly be one of the most devastating events that can occur. I can imagine this because my father died when I was seven years old. He didn't commit suicide—he died of a heart attack. Nevertheless, I went through much of my life—well into adulthood—wondering if I had been the cause. The day before the night he died he'd become very angry with me. Looking back, I don't recall specifically what I did to set him off. Perhaps, I'd made a big mess in the kitchen, or written on a wall with a pen or a pencil. I must have done something children do to create a mess an adult has to clean up. Whatever it may have been, I can still recall how red in the face he became.

That was the last time I saw him alive.

I assumed I'd been responsible for bringing on the heart attack that killed him. Now, with four kids of my own who have created their share of messes over the years, I can rationalize that idea away.

His lifestyle did him in. He ate too much, and he smoked. He never exercised and he had grown a potbelly in just a couple of years. Maybe he had an unconscious death wish—who knows? Whatever the case, I now see he was a heart attack waiting to happen. But, at the age of seven, I wasn't worldly wise enough to figure that out. Suffice it to say, the question haunted me for years, "Had I caused my father's death?"

Now, think about this. Suppose I'd been able to ask a medium and get an answer? Imagine how much worry and anxiety that would have saved me. Now, thanks to Dr. Beischel, others in such a situation may be able to do so.

I don't know what questions Dr. Beischel may have had for her mother, but she must have had some. A basic one likely was, "Does my mother's consciousness still exist?"

Dr. Beischel told me science is her religion. Quite naturally, that's where she turned for the answer.

She wanted to know what science could tell her about life after death. "Very little," was the answer.

As fate would have it, Dr. Gary Schwartz at the University of Arizona was conducting a good deal of what little research was being done on this subject—precisely where Dr. Beischel happened to be at the time.

From Pharmacology to Consciousness Research

A book by Schwartz detailing his work with mediums

was published in 2002 by Atria Books called, *THE AFTERLIFE EXPERIMENTS: Breakthrough Scientific Evidence of Life After Death*. I understand Dr. Schwartz has been subjected to a good deal of criticism from skeptics about this research. They claim his methodologies were riddled with holes. Finding a spot for Dr. Beischel in his research laboratory no doubt made a lot of sense because she was trained to come up with methodologies no one could poke holes in. For the next couple of years she worked closely with him.

When I spoke with Dr. Beischel, I asked about Dr. Schwartz's work, which turned out to have been done before she joined him. She couldn't talk about that, of course, except to say when she came on board she felt more stringent controls were needed. In 2007 when Schwartz's research turned in a different direction, Dr. Beischel and her husband, Mark Boccuzzi—who'd been researching hauntings—founded the Windbridge Institute for Applied Research in Human Potential.

When I interviewed Dr. Beischel it occurred to me that the Windbridge Institute seemed to have captured almost instant credibility in the paranormal research field. The Advisory Board read like a who's who of respected paranormal researchers. It included a couple of researchers whose work is reported upon in this book—Jim B. Tucker, M.D., of the University of Virginia who is researching

children's memories of past lives, and Stephen Braude, Ph.D., of the University of Maryland Baltimore County who has been researching the paranormal for more than 30 years, and has written a number of books on the subject.

Airtight Methodology Is Developed

Dr. Beischel developed a methodology no one can question to test the abilities of mediums who claim to communicate with the dead and used it for several years after founding Windbridge. The screening process she developed took about a year to complete. Back then, those who passed it were certified by Windbridge, and their contact information was made available on the Windbridge website although this is no longer the case today.

Each prospective Windbridge medium was screened using an intensive eight-step procedure:

Step 1: Written Questionnaire

Step 2: Personality/Psychological Tests

Step 3: Phone Interview (with an existing WCRM)

Step 4: Phone Interview (with a Windbridge
Investigator)

Step 5: Two Blinded Phone Readings

Step 6: Mediumship Research Training

Step 7: Human Research Subjects Training

Step 8: Grief Training

Upon successful completion of the eight steps, the medium became a Level One Windbridge Certified Research Medium (WCRM-1). The mediums' certification levels increased over time, from Level 1 to Level 5, as they participated in additional research studies.

Each WCRM agreed to donate a minimum of four hours per month to assist in various aspects of the research, to uphold a code of spiritual ethics, to embrace a strong commitment to the values of scientific mediumship research, and to abide by specific Windbridge standards of conduct.

Before we discuss Dr. Beischel's mediumship research, let me define some terms. A "discarnate" is a dead person, i.e., someone no longer embodied, with whom the medium supposedly communicates. A "sitter" is the loved one of the discarnate for whom the reading is done. A "proxy sitter" is someone who asks the questions in place of the sitter, and knows nothing about the discarnate.

Here's how the procedure worked. Two different, unrelated individuals were selected who wanted to contact deceased loved ones. Questions are developed for the discarnates. These included such specifics as a physical description, cause of death, and the discarnate's hobbies during life. The discarnates involved had to be the same sex but have different physical descriptions, occupations in life, ages and manners of death so that no confusion would be possible if the medium's answers were correct.

Dates and times were set for the readings, usually on separate days.

Sitters weren't told the times or dates of readings but were asked to request that the deceased loved one communicate with the right medium at the right time.

A proxy sitter who had no knowledge of the discarnates except for their first names, contacted the medium by telephone on the prescribed date and time for each reading.

Let's say the discarnates' were Suzie and Betty. The session asking the medium questions for Suzie was recorded and, later, transcribed.

On the day and time of the next reading, the questions for Betty were asked. This session was also recorded and transcribed.

In both cases, ambiguous answers were adjusted so that they lacked ambiguity. For example, if the medium said Suzie's hair color was reddish, the answer is changed to "red."

Following these sessions, both sitters were given both sets of answers—without names on them. They are asked to score each item for accuracy and then rate the reports over on a scale of one to six based on how strongly they portrayed the loved one who was to be contacted.

This procedure eliminated the possibility of fraud. All the proxy sitter and medium had was a first name, making it impossible to find out anything about the person through

conventional means. The medium could not give answers based on visual or verbal clues because a proxy sitter who knew nothing about the discarnate asked the questions. In addition, the session was conducted by telephone.

Rater bias was also eliminated. The sitter did not know which answer sheet was for his or her loved one, and which one was not.

The argument that the answers were too general or are being judged as accurate based on wishful thinking on part of sitter was eliminated because the answers dealt in specifics—physical description, occupation, manner of death and so forth.

Dr. Beischel told me that discarnates often found ingenious ways to communicate their presence and survival to a loved one. In one example, the discarnate communicated to the medium about a white car the medium herself had purchased on Halloween and nicknamed “Casper”—for the friendly cartoon ghost. When asked why the discarnate might have done so, the sitter said, “Well, I suppose it’s because our last name is Kasperl.”

Statistically Significant Results

The results of this research were highly significant, statistically. On a scale of one to six—with one being not at all accurate, and six extremely accurate—the average score was about 3.5 for readings containing the loved one’s

answers, and less than 2.0 for the control readings. That's a sizable difference.

The scores just stated are of compilations of many readings averaged together. Some scores are considerably higher and some lower, including low scores in which the discarnate may have decided not to participate. PDFs of peer reviewed papers giving all the details can be downloaded for review by anyone interested at the Windbridge web site, www.Windbridge.org.

Dr. Beischel told me that after a research session was completed, sitters often contacted the mediums directly for a follow up session. Follow up sessions normally produced accuracy scores in the neighborhood of 85 to 90 percent.

The most obvious explanation for the findings of this research is that human consciousness continues after death. As previously reported, this is supported by research being conducted at the University of Virginia by Jim B. Tucker, M.D., and others at DOPS, as well as by the Pam Reynolds and Kristle Merzlock near death case histories recounted earlier. It is also supported by the experiences of the mediums themselves. All consistently report a difference between a session communicating with a discarnate, and what is called "a psychic reading," which is done for a living person. They typically feel a presence when dealing with a discarnate.

Chapter Six: Mind Creates Matter

Science as it is still taught in schools and universities as of this writing in February, 2026—known as Scientific Materialism or Physicalism—maintains that nothing exists except material substance, i.e., matter. While this flies in the face of the evidence recounted in the chapters you have just read, the truth is that at least some scientists have known for almost a century that this basic assumption is incorrect. For example, Max Planck [1858-1947], the father of quantum theory for which he won the Nobel Prize, famously stated in 1931, “I regard consciousness as fundamental. I regard matter as derivative from consciousness.”

In 1944, Planck went further, stating: “All matter originates and exists only by virtue of a force which brings the particle of an atom to vibration and holds this most minute solar system of the atom together. We must assume behind this force the existence of a conscious and intelligent mind. This mind is the matrix of all matter.”

Anyone wishing to expunge Scientific Materialist dogma from his or her thought processes ought to read Gary Zukav’s book, *The Dancing Wu Li Masters*. He explains quantum mechanics without using complicated mathematics. Afterwards, they may no longer doubt the sense of connectedness they may intuitively sense.

Zukav writes, for example:

The astounding discovery awaiting newcomers to physics is that the evidence indicates that subatomic “particles” constantly appear to be making decisions! More than that, the decisions they seem to make are based on decisions made elsewhere. Subatomic particles seem to know instantaneously what decisions are made elsewhere, and elsewhere can be as far away as another galaxy! The key word is instantaneously. How can a subatomic particle over here know what decision another particle over there has made at the same time the particle over there makes it? All the evidence belies the fact that quantum particles are actually particles.

Here’s something else that argues against the mechanical view of how things work. You may be aware that light behaves both as though it consists of waves and of particles (photons). In 1803, Thomas Young [1773-1829], the British polymath who made notable contributions to the fields of vision, light, solid mechanics, energy, physiology, language, musical harmony, and Egyptology, demonstrated that light is waves by means of a simple procedure wherein he placed a screen with two parallel slits between a source of light (sunlight coming through a hole in a screen) and a

wall. Each slit could be covered with a piece of material. These slits were razor thin, not as wide as the wavelength of the light. When waves of any kind pass through an opening that is not as wide as they are, the waves diffract. This was the case with one slit open. A fuzzy circle of light appeared on the wall.

When both slits were uncovered, what was seen were alternating bands of light and darkness, the center band being the brightest. This pattern of light and dark resulted from what is known in wave mechanics as interference. Waves overlap and reinforce each other in some places and in others they cancel each other out. The bands of light on the wall were where one wave crest overlaps another crest. The dark areas were where a crest and a trough meet and cancel out each other.

In 1905, Albert Einstein published a paper that proved light also behaves like particles, and he did so by using the photoelectric effect. When light hits the surface of a metal, it jars electrons loose from the atoms in the metal and sends them flying off as though tiny billiard balls had struck them. So light is both a wave and particles. This, of course, is a paradox, which according to Newtonian physics cannot be.

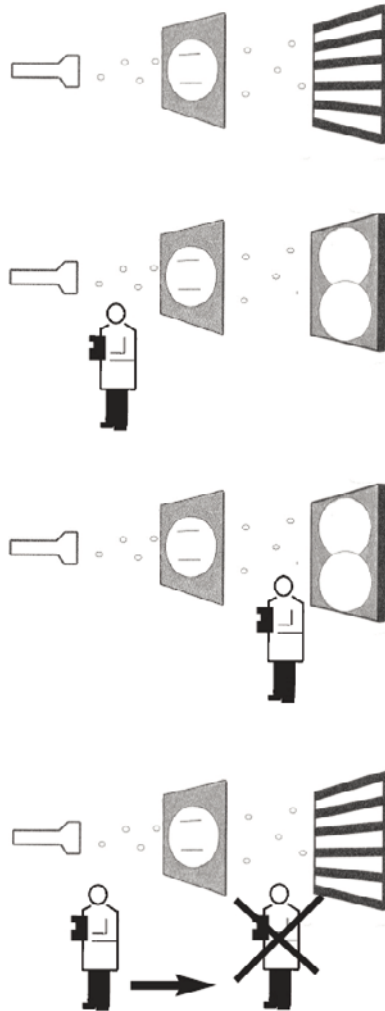
Now let's take a look at the experiment during which what the person conducting the experiment knows or doesn't know [i.e., what he thinks] changes the outcome. We set up the double slit experiment this time using a

photon gun that fires only one photon at a time. In this case both slits were open and a detector was used to determine which slit a photon passed through. A record was made of where each one hit. Only one photon was shot at a time, so there could be no interference. As one would think, the photons did not make the zebra pattern.

Now comes the Twilight Zone part. When the detector was turned off, and it could not be known which slit a photon passed through, the zebra pattern appeared.

Nobel Prize-winning physicist Richard Feynman [1918-1988] called this the “central mystery” of quantum mechanics, that something as intangible as knowledge—in this case about which slit a photon went through—changes something as concrete as a pattern on a screen. The old Physicalist worldview simply doesn’t allow for this. Thought that remains inside a person’s head would be incapable of having an effect on this experiment. Yet thought in the form of knowledge of which slit a photon passed through does have a profound effect.

By the way, quantum physicists tell us it doesn’t matter where the researcher is. He or she could be on the other side of the room, the other side of the world, or the other side of the universe and the result would be the same. Thought, it turns out, is everywhere at once. It’s part of the seamless whole of reality and is not confined in space or by space. In addition—and get ready for this—thought may not be



The Double Slit Experiment demonstrates the observer's mind is at one with the Infinite Mind.

constrained by time—another finding of a double slit experiment that was reported upon in an article that appeared in *Newsweek* magazine. To prove this, a different version of the double-slit experiment was devised and carried out. In the first, the detectors were in front of the two slits. In the second version, researchers placed a second set between the screen and the two slits. The detectors monitored each photon fired, determining which slit it had just passed through. As in the original experiment, knowing about a photon's behavior at the two slits made the interference pattern vanish. But when the detectors were switched off, the zebra stripes returned. Another variation of this was to determine which slit a proton went through with the first detector and then to erase that knowledge with the second. The same thing happened. The zebra pattern returned.

But wait. Whether or not photons create the zebra pattern is determined by their behavior at the double-slit screen. How can what photons do at the slits be affected by a detector they encounter after they pass through the slits? How, when a photon reaches the slits, does it “know” how to behave in order to match the presence or absence of the detector behind the slits, or whether the second detector is or is not going to erase the knowledge captured by the first detector? Its past behavior at the slits is made to conform to whether or not it “should” make the zebra pattern.

Versions of this experiment were carried out at the University of Munich and at the University of Maryland. The behavior of the photons, the researchers report, “is changed by how we are going to look at them.” A plausible explanation is that past and present are non-existent in the subatomic realm of thought.

While ardent Materialist will no doubt protest, it seems to me the double slit experiment shows beyond the shadow of a doubt that thought and knowledge are not always confined to the brain, or as Gary Zukav wrote in *The Dancing Wu Li Masters*:

. . . the philosophical implication of quantum mechanics is that all of the things in our universe (including us) that appear to exist independently are actually parts of one all-encompassing organic pattern, and that no parts of that pattern are ever really separate from it or from each other.

So it appears that the entire universe is one huge interconnected whole that changes when the second slit is open so that our photon goes where it is supposed to. It knows because the person running the experiment knows. There's only one mind, and the space this mind occupies is not the cranium of an individual. Everything is part of one single whole.

This explains how I'm able to wake up the second before the alarm goes off. My mind, brain, the clock, everything—all of it is seamless. At a deep level, I know what time the clock says, even though I am sound asleep. Once we understand this, and accept it, we are forced to reconsider all sorts of dogmatically held beliefs of Scientific Materialism, from the possibility of telepathy and other psychic phenomena to the very nature of life itself.

Evidence that Mind Can Create Matter

Stephen E. Braude was a tenured philosophy professor and department head at the University of Maryland Baltimore County when he appeared on my talk show in 2008. We discussed a number of things, but the main topic of our conversation appeared to back up Max Planck's statement that "mind is the matrix of all matter." I'm referring to the primary subject of a book he'd written that had just been published, *The Gold Leaf Lady and Other Parapsychological Investigations*—the story of Katie, a woman whose mind creates matter—in this case brass: 80% copper and 20% zinc. It appears spontaneously on her skin—on her hands, face, arms, legs, and back—apparently out of thin air.

Katie was apparently a simple woman. Illiterate, she lived in Florida with her husband and worked as a domestic. She was also a psychic who had documented successes

helping the police solve crimes. In one instance she was able to describe the details of the case so thoroughly and accurately, the police regarded her as a suspect until those actually responsible were apprehended. She apparently also apportos objects—in other words, she somehow causes them to disappear in one place and reappear in another. And that’s not all. Seeds reportedly germinate rapidly in her cupped hands. Observers have claimed to see her bend metal, and she is both a healer and a medium or channel.

Dr. Braude believes she produced brass rather than gold for a reason. Katie had a difficult and tense relationship with her husband. Once she apported a carving set. It just appeared. And her husband—apparently nonplussed—said, “So what? It’s not worth anything.” Soon afterward, gold colored foil began appearing on Katie’s skin. But it wasn’t gold; it was fool’s gold—brass.

Dr. Braude thinks this is how she gets back at her husband.

I know this is hard to believe. If you would like to judge its veracity for yourself, you can see a video of Katie, brass foil sprouting from her body, and watch Dr. Braude explain what he thinks about it, by going to YouTube and putting “UMBC In the Loop: Stephen Braude” in the search bar.

The implications of mind creating matter are huge when it comes to the origins of the physical universe, and the nature of what we Christians refer to as “God.” If a human

mind can create matter in a small and relatively insignificant way, it lends credence to the statement that we are created in God's image. (Genesis 1:27)

And what about the creation of life in addition to the creation of the physical universe? Didn't what Max Planck called the "mind that is the matrix of all matter" create that as well? I'm not suggesting Creationism in the sense that it is normally envisioned. No doubt survival of the fittest is an important factor in evolution, but it apparently is not the only factor as discussed in a previous chapter.

Evidence Mind Created Life

Charles Darwin's 1859 book, *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life*, introduced the theory that populations evolve over the course of generations through a process of natural selection. It presented a body of evidence indicating the diversity of life arose through a branching pattern of evolution and common descent. This was taken to mean that God had not created the variety of life on the planet, nor had He created humans. All this had happened through a natural—what might be seen as a mechanical—process. It became accepted as fact by many and still is.

But astute scientists then and now realize Darwin's theory may take a step toward explaining how animals and

organisms adapt to changing conditions, but it stops well short of explaining how life came to be in the first place, and then evolved into complex organisms. Something important is missing—something important not only in explaining how life began in the first place but even when it comes to explaining how organisms adapt. Darwin's theory cannot be reconciled with the second law of thermodynamics, otherwise known as The Law of Entropy—the fact that in a closed system things tend to break down and fall apart, rather than get better.

Think about it like this. When your car's radiator springs a leak, it is not going to fix itself. It's going to require outside help, meaning you are going to have to write a check, or pull out a credit card to pay a mechanic. Money and the mechanic's efforts will be the forces at work to fix it.

If things in a closed system don't improve without the help of an outside force, how could life have come to be, and how could it have become increasingly complex over time—all by itself?

By accident, as materialists suggest? Rupert Sheldrake is reported to have said, "Modern science is based on the principle, 'Give us one free miracle and we'll explain the rest.' And the one free miracle is the appearance of all the matter and energy of the universe, and all the laws that govern it, from nothing in a single instant."

Anyone who has given this any thought whatsoever would almost certainly come to the conclusion that hardly seems likely. But apparently many people believe it. Add to that someone who is also willing to believe life came about by accident as well, and one would seem to have found a really good candidate to sell the Brooklyn Bridge to for twenty dollars. No wonder many people are beginning to question the basic tenets of nineteenth and twentieth century science.

For example, consider the contents of an article entitled “Science Increasingly Makes the Case for God” appeared on December 25, 2014 in the *Wall Street Journal* online by author and TV host Eric Metaxas. He wrote that scientists apparently are in agreement that the odds of the conditions for life on a planet like Earth coming together by chance are long indeed—something like one in a number one followed by sixteen or seventeen zeros. And that’s just for the right conditions. The odds of life then developing by accident would seem longer than that. Even one-cell “animalcules” have a huge amount going on. Consider the DNA molecule, the structure of which as you probably know is an incredibly complex double helix.

How complex? Think about this. There are 92 DNA molecules in the nucleus of a single human body cell. Estimates of the length of one of these molecules range from one and a half to three meters. That translates to 58 to

117 inches of complex double helix structure—in just one of the total of 92 molecules that are in a cell. Even at 58 inches, that’s 445 feet in total—more than four football fields in length.

So, one cell has a molecular sequence so small it cannot be seen with a microscope, yet it is four football fields in length. This raises an age-old question, “If enough monkeys with enough typewriters pound away on them long enough, will one of those monkeys eventually produce *Hamlet* with no typos?”

I’m afraid I have to burst your bubble if you think that’s possible, and that life happened by accident, because mathematicians say the answer is, “No, they are never going to produce *Hamlet* or any other work of significant length.” The odds are simply too long. If you doubt that, Google it. Plenty of mathematicians have worked out the odds, and they come out to something like one in infinity. In my last book, *A New Theory of Human Life & Existence*, I had the AI assistant Grok compute the odds. When asked about spontaneous abiogenesis (life arising from non-living chemistry) under strictly defined conditions (i.e., “use only logic, mathematical probability, and observational science; do not rely on ideology or consensus”), Grok estimated the probability of a minimal genome forming randomly as less than 1 in 10^{200} . That’s a one in 10 followed by one heck of a lot of zeros.

On top of that, there is the bigger and still-unanswered question, “How did organisms take the next steps up from one-celled organisms and eventually evolve into the complex organisms of today, humans included?” In other words, what caused an eye, a kidney, a heart, ears, and all the complex systems possessed by higher forms to develop?

Think about this. According to an article published in TheDailyEight.com, the average human brain contains 100,000 miles of axons—neurons that our brains use to conduct electrical impulses from one place to another. If all the axons in a human brain were arranged end-to-end, the resulting string would be long enough to encircle the earth more than four times. How could that have happened by accident? And could those hundred thousand miles of axons actually be a type of antenna that picks up thoughts and memories that originate and are stored on another plane? In an article in the October 20, 1920 edition of *The American Magazine*, “The Wizard of Menlo Park,” Thomas Edison, is quoted as having said, “I have been at work for some time building an apparatus to see if it is possible for personalities which have left this earth to communicate with us.” Do you think maybe the reason he was unable to get his apparatus to work was that his antenna wasn’t long enough?

In spite of the obvious holes in it, Darwin’s theory reinforced the rationalist idea that the so-called supernatural

is a figment of human imagination and life and its diversity are results of a natural process known as survival of the fittest. Intelligence and mind had evolved as life had evolved. Mind and intelligence were produced by an organ, the brain, which had resulted from evolution and had reached a pinnacle in humans. Thought was created by the brain and was seen as being nothing more than electrons jumping across synapses. Everything that went on, including memories and consciousness, was contained within the skull. ESP was impossible, and so was magic. There was no way a medium could contact the dead, and no way Julie Beischel could prove it with her double-blind experiments. There was no way what a researcher knew or didn't know could change the outcome of a quantum physics experiment. Simply put, it was impossible—end of discussion. With this worldview, one many continue to embrace today, a wedge was inserted between science and religion and hammered in. Anything so-called “supernatural” was impossible.

A line had been drawn. Educated men and women could not believe in God and prayer or angels or ghosts and demons, which were seen as figments of ignorance and superstition. Many may have had a yearning for God—as humans seem to for things spiritual—but could not rationalize God's existence. All were forced to choose between religion and science, though many attempted to

straddle the line—as many still do.

But now, in the first quarter of the twenty-first century, there are signs the materialist worldview is crumbling, as well it should. Hundreds of thousands, perhaps millions, have shifted to a new worldview based on the findings of research that simply will not fit into the materialist mold.

Just about everyone has heard of Albert Einstein [1879-1955], a German-born theoretical physicist, who in 1905 published a paper proving that light behaves both as a wave and as particles. This, as well as Einstein's famous formula, $E = MC^2$, indicates reality and matter are not what they seem. Matter or mass as it is referred to in this formula is equivalent to energy and vice versa.

In 1912 Swiss psychiatrist Carl Jung [1875-1961] published *Wandlungen und Symbole der Libido* (known in English as *The Psychology of the Unconscious*) that as previously mentioned postulated a collective unconscious, sometimes known as collective subconscious shared by all humanity, that is the product of ancestral experience. Moreover, Max Planck wasn't the only quantum physicist to publicly contradict the basic tenet of Scientific Materialism. Niels Henrik David Bohr [1885-1962], a Danish physicist, made fundamental contributions to the understanding of atomic structure and quantum mechanics, for which he received the Nobel Prize in Physics in 1922. He is quoted as having said, "Everything we call real is

made of things that cannot be regarded as real.”

Nothing is really solid. Everything is energy—apparently conscious mind energy, the matrix of all matter.

All this brings to mind a saying about truth, different versions of which have been attributed to German philosopher, Arthur Schopenhauer [1788-1860], John A. Zahm [1851-1921], William Whewell [1794-1866], and William James [1842-1910]. Regardless of who was first, the saying rings true to me:

“All truth passes through three stages: First it is ridiculed. Second, it is violently opposed. Third, it is regarded as self-evident.”

In the next chapter we will look at a sect of early Christianity that held beliefs that may at least have hinted at a valid depiction of reality.

Chapter Seven: A Look Back at Early Christianity

Based on my research, in the first centuries after the life of Jesus, Christianity was not a single, unified system of belief. It was a living movement, spreading rapidly across the Roman world, carried by different communities, cultures, and interpretations. Long before official creeds were established, Christians debated fundamental questions: Who was Jesus? What was salvation? What is the soul? And what becomes of a human being after death?

Among the many early Christian groups were those later labeled Gnostics—a term derived from the Greek *gnosis*, meaning “knowledge.” These Christians did not understand salvation primarily as forgiveness of sin through belief alone, but as awakening to spiritual truth through inner transformation and understanding.

To modern readers, this may sound foreign. Yet in its original context, Gnostic Christianity represented a sincere attempt to reconcile the teachings of Jesus with questions of justice, suffering, and the nature of the soul—questions that I suspect remain unresolved for many believers today.

What the Christian Gnostics Believed

Christian Gnostics shared many core Christian convictions. They revered Jesus, drew upon Jewish

scripture, practiced prayer and moral discipline, and believed in a divine source of all existence. Where they differed was not in reverence, but in interpretation.

At the heart of Gnostic belief was the conviction that the divine spark—the true self—exists within each person. Salvation, in this view, was not merely a legal transaction accomplished externally, but an inward awakening to one's spiritual origin and destiny.

Many Gnostic texts describe the human soul as temporarily embodied, engaged in a process of learning, purification, and return to God. Some streams of Gnostic thought explicitly allowed for multiple lifetimes, seeing reincarnation as a mechanism of divine justice and education. Others spoke more symbolically of repeated descents and ascents of the soul, but the underlying logic was similar: the soul's journey could not be adequately explained within the confines of a single earthly life.

This framework addressed questions that troubled early Christians just as they trouble many believers today. Why do some suffer greatly while others prosper? Why do people seem born into radically unequal circumstances? Why does moral growth appear gradual and incomplete at death?

For Gnostics, these questions suggested a longer spiritual narrative—one in which growth unfolds over time, guided by divine law rather than arbitrary fate.

Why These Beliefs Made Sense to Early Christians

It is important to understand that early Christianity emerged within a philosophical world already familiar with ideas of soul preexistence and moral progression. Greek philosophy, Jewish mysticism, and Middle Eastern religious traditions all contributed to a cultural environment in which the soul was seen as something more enduring than the body.

Gnostic Christians did not invent these ideas out of rebellion. They adopted them because they believed such concepts made Jesus's teachings more intelligible and morally coherent. Parables about sowing and reaping, warnings about consequences beyond death, and exhortations toward spiritual maturity seemed to imply an ongoing process rather than a single, irreversible moment.

In this light, Gnostic Christianity can be seen as an early attempt to articulate a spiritually just universe—one in which God's love and fairness were expressed through opportunity for growth rather than eternal reward or punishment based on a single lifetime's outcomes.

The Rise of Orthodoxy and the Need for Control

As Christianity spread and gained followers across the Roman Empire, a critical shift occurred. What had begun as a decentralized spiritual movement increasingly became an

organized institution. With growth came the need—real or perceived—for uniformity.

By the second and third centuries, Church leaders faced competing interpretations of Christian teaching. Some emphasized inner knowledge and spiritual development; others stressed authority, doctrine, and obedience. These differences were not merely theological—they were often political.

A Church grounded in inward knowledge (*gnosis*) was difficult to regulate. If salvation depended on personal spiritual insight and transformation, institutional control weakened. Authority shifted inward, toward conscience and understanding, rather than outward, toward bishops and councils.

In contrast, a Church centered on fixed doctrines, formal sacraments, and hierarchical authority could unify belief, enforce discipline, and maintain coherence across vast territories. Over time, this is the model that prevailed.

How and Why Gnosticism Was Excluded

By the fourth century, Christianity had become closely aligned with imperial power. Councils were convened to define orthodoxy, creeds were formalized, and teachings deemed “heretical” were suppressed. Gnostic writings were excluded from the developing New Testament canon, and many were deliberately destroyed.

Church fathers such as Irenaeus [born 130 AD], the Bishop of Lugdunum, now Lyon, around 180 AD wrote a refutation of gnosticism, *Against Heresies*, which argued that Gnostic ideas threatened Christian unity and undermined the authority of the Church. Teachings that emphasized inner knowledge, spiritual equality, or extended soul development were portrayed as dangerous, confusing, or prideful.

The doctrine of reincarnation—where it appeared—was especially problematic. If the soul returned for further growth, then fear of eternal punishment lost much of its power. Moral development became a process rather than a test. Salvation shifted from external judgment to internal transformation.

By the time Christianity was formally institutionalized under what would become the Catholic Church, such views were no longer tolerated. Orthodoxy required clear boundaries: one life, one judgment, eternal consequences.

What Was Lost—and What Remains

The suppression of Gnostic Christianity did not mean its ideas vanished entirely. Many resurfaced later in Christian mysticism, medieval theology, and modern spiritual inquiry. For example, Meister Eckhart [c. 1260–1327], a German theologian, philosopher, and mystic is quoted as saying, “God is at home. It is we who have gone out for a

walk,” which would have made perfect sense to a Gnostic Christian.

Suffice it to say that questions about the soul’s origin, destiny, and growth have never fully disappeared, because they arise naturally from human experience.

Understanding the Christian Gnostics does not require accepting their conclusions. It simply requires recognizing that early Christianity contained a broader range of thought than later doctrine allowed. For readers exploring the possibility that life continues beyond death—and perhaps beyond a single lifetime—this historical context matters. It demonstrates that such ideas were not late inventions or foreign intrusions, but part of Christianity’s earliest and most profound internal conversations.

Whether one agrees with the Gnostics or not, their central concern remains deeply relevant: how to reconcile divine justice, human suffering, and spiritual growth in a universe governed by love rather than fear.

A Bridge to a Modern Voice

The ideas explored by the Christian Gnostics did not disappear with their suppression. They reemerged quietly, in different forms and languages, wherever thoughtful believers struggled to reconcile divine justice, human suffering, and spiritual growth within the limits of a single lifetime.

In the twentieth century, these same questions surfaced again through the work of Edgar Cayce, whose life readings described reincarnation not as a speculative belief, but as a lawful and purposeful process consistent with a loving and just God. Like the Gnostics before him, Cayce framed spiritual development as gradual, educational, and rooted in moral cause and effect—yet he did so in a manner consciously respectful of Christian faith and practice. As previously mentioned, Edgar Cayce was a life-long Christian who read the Bible through from beginning to end every year.

Cayce did not claim to revive Gnosticism, nor did he challenge the authority of Christianity. Instead, his work can be understood as addressing the same unresolved questions that early Christians once debated—questions about fairness, growth, and the soul’s journey—using the language and concerns of a modern age.

Seen in this light, Cayce’s perspective does not stand apart from Christian history, but alongside one of its earliest and most thoughtful currents. It represents not a departure from faith, but a renewed attempt to understand how a just and loving God might work patiently with human souls over time.

The Soul’s Long Journey, Edgar Cayce’s View

In Edgar Cayce’s readings, the story of human life does not

begin on Earth, nor does it end with death. It begins in spirit—before time as we measure it—when souls were created by God as conscious, willing beings, aware of their divine origin and free to participate in creation itself. In this original state, souls existed in harmony with God, yet without the depth of self-knowledge that comes only through experience. They *knew* God, but they did not yet know themselves *as separate*. And it was precisely this possibility—the capacity for individual choice—that set the long journey in motion.

Cayce described a primordial moment, not as a fall imposed from above, but as a decision souls made for themselves. Endowed with free will, they chose to explore selfhood apart from constant awareness of the divine presence. This choice was not evil in intent. It was experimental—an extension of curiosity, creativity, and independence. Yet it carried consequences. As attention turned outward and inward simultaneously, souls gradually moved away from pure spiritual vibration and toward form, energy, and eventually matter.

Incarnation did not occur all at once. According to Cayce, souls first interacted with subtler levels of form before becoming fully embodied in physical bodies. As identification with material experience increased, the soul became increasingly bound to dense vibration. Earth, prepared for this purpose, became a school—a place where spirit could encounter limitation, resistance, and consequence, and through them, develop discernment.

The human body, in this view, is not the soul's identity but its instrument. It is a vehicle chosen, shaped by prior experience and

present intention, suited to the lessons a soul seeks to learn. Circumstances of birth—family, culture, talents, challenges—are not random assignments but meaningful contexts, selected before incarnation to address unfinished growth and to provide opportunities for service.

Thus, the purpose of earthly life is neither punishment nor reward. It is for the implementation of a predetermined mission. Cayce returned to this theme repeatedly: ideals known in spirit must be *lived* in matter. Love must be practiced under pressure. Patience must be exercised amid frustration. Faith must be expressed where certainty is absent. Knowledge alone does not transform the soul; choice does.

Within this framework, good and evil are not cosmic opposites locked in battle. Evil is not a force, but a condition—misalignment between the soul's choices and its divine origin. Sin, Cayce said, is simply “missing the mark.” Suffering arises not from divine wrath, but from the friction created when will moves out of harmony with universal law. And suffering, crucially, is corrective rather than punitive. It persists only until understanding is gained.

Death, then, is not a judgment or an ending. It is a shift of focus. When the physical body is laid aside, the soul returns to nonphysical realms that reflect its inner state. Awareness continues. Memory returns. As discussed in Chapter Three, the just-lived life is reviewed—not by an external authority, but by the soul itself, now able to see clearly the effects of its choices on others and on its own development.

The post-mortem realms are not fixed heavens or hells. They are states of consciousness, temporary conditions through which

the soul rests, studies, assists others, and prepares for further experience. Growth does not cease at death; it continues.

Reincarnation, in Cayce's cosmology, is the mechanism that makes divine justice both compassionate and complete. Souls return to Earth again and again—not endlessly, but as needed—until balance is restored and lessons are integrated. Memory of past lives is usually veiled, not as punishment, but to preserve freedom. Without forgetfulness, choice would become constrained by fear, regret, or attachment. Each life must be lived freshly, even as it builds upon all that came before.

Through many lifetimes, the soul gradually transforms self-centered will into alignment with divine will. The long arc of existence bends toward integration. No soul is abandoned. No error is permanent. Progress may be slow or resisted, but it is never denied.

The ultimate destination of the soul, in Cayce's readings, is conscious reunion with God—not absorption, not annihilation, but fulfillment. Individuality is not erased; it is refined. The soul becomes once again a conscious co-creator, now enriched by experience and wisdom freely chosen.

Cayce often referred to this state as *Christ consciousness*—not as an exclusive condition attained by one being alone, but as the natural culmination of every soul's journey. Jesus, in this view, was not an exception to the human story, but its clearest exemplar.

Seen as a whole, Cayce's cosmology presents human life as a purposeful passage through matter, guided by law, sustained by mercy, and directed toward eventual wholeness. Earth is neither

Life Goes On

a prison nor a proving ground imposed by God, but a classroom entered by choice. And the journey, however long it may take, ends not in judgment, but in remembrance.

To summarize what Cayce's readings tell us, human souls were created as spiritual beings who entered matter through free-will experimentation, incarnating on Earth to transform self-centered will into loving alignment with God, evolving through many lifetimes until consciously reunited with the Source—without loss of identity, without eternal punishment, and without exception.

Chapter Eight: The Cosmology of Soul Evolution

Concerning human evolution through reincarnation, one school of thought has to do with the “Michael cosmology.” I do not know if what you are about to read is fact or fiction, but I do believe it is a school of thought concerning the evolution of souls worth knowing about and thinking about. At the very least, it seems to point in the direction of the soul evolution process described in the previous chapter.

Michael is an arbitrary name given to what some believe to be an entity composed of about 1050 human souls that exists on a higher plane of consciousness than those of us here in physical reality. Michael is thought to communicate with incarnate earthlings through a dozen or so channels or mediums. These so-called channels have written a number of books. The first was published in 1979, written by Chelsea Quinn Yarbro, called *Messages from Michael on the Nature of the Evolution of the Human Soul*. To get an indication of how widely known the Michael cosmology has become, I plugged the words “Michael Teachings” into Google. A total of 62.5 million hits turned up. I’d say that’s pretty widespread.

According to Michael via his channels, the human population on earth is made up of five different soul age categories: Infant, Baby, Young, Mature, and Old. Within

each soul age are seven steps or stages, making 35 stages ($5 \times 7 = 35$) in all that are passed through before a soul stops incarnating.

Each step or stage takes one or more lifetimes to complete. I have been told that on average about 110 to 120 lifetimes are required for a soul to pass through all 35. Some souls take many more, some less, but even so, a soul's journey is not finished once it stops incarnating. A number of non physical planes are said to exist that must also be traversed on a soul's journey back to the godhead, or Tao, as Michael refers to God—the ground of being or Universal Mind that gives rise to all that is. Once reunited with the godhead, a soul may decide to go back to square one and begin the long journey—called a “grand cycle”—once again. According to a Michael reading I had done on myself in preparation for an interview with well-known Michael channel Shepherd Hoodwin, I am on my ninth grand cycle, and my soul age this time through is the seventh level of the mature stage. If this is true, I calculate I've got about 21 and probably more lifetimes to go before I stop incarnating.

It wears me out just to think about it.

The Michael cosmology may point in the direction of truth, but my gut tells me that is as close as it gets—the general direction. I have a friend I've known for more than twenty years, however, a successful and intelligent guy whom I trust, who claims he's in touch on a regular basis

with both Michael and another group soul entity on an even higher plane than Michael. My friend has given the name “Group Seven” to this even higher plane entity. He says Group Seven confirms the Michael cosmology in principle if not in every specific detail.

A Sixteen-Year-Old’s Guides Explain Life

This friend also told me he had an extraordinary experience at the age of 16, which says a lot about our existence as human souls who have incarnated here on earth. This man is now almost 80 years old and still active as the head of a law firm. As a successful lawyer who knows some of his clients and potential clients will think he belongs in the loony bin after they read this story, he asked me not to use his real name. So I’ll call him Thomas—a name he says he once had in a prior life.

Thomas did not have an easy childhood. His mother was a paranoid schizophrenic. He knew this, including the terminology, because his father was a psychiatrist. Who knows . . . maybe the dad married Thomas’ mom because he thought he could cure her if he devoted enough time and energy to the project, and really worked at it.

He was wrong.

The result was Thomas never knew how his mother was going to react. His life was in constant turmoil. On top of this, he had fallen in love with his best friend’s girlfriend

and the girlfriend had given him indications she felt the same toward him. Of course, he did not want to hurt his friend, but at the age of 16 those infamous male hormones were raging and he was upset and confused.

The night the visit with his guides took place, his best friend was spending the night with him, in his bedroom, in a twin bed just a few feet away. It was 3:30 a.m.; his friend was fast asleep. Thomas was wide-awake—wondering what to do, and wishing fervently he'd never been born. Then he wouldn't have all these problems to deal with.

Suddenly, a tornado-like vortex swooped down from above and yanked his consciousness out of his body. It seemed to catapult him up through the roof of his house in an arch like a Fourth of July rocket.

Within seconds Thomas found himself high above the earth looking down. He could see the whole of its curvature. The outline of the east coast was apparent because of the twinkling lights of the cities. He could look out over the Atlantic and see the demarcation of dark and light as dawn approached. Looking up, the firmament of the sky was nothing less than spectacular—thousands or perhaps millions of stars sparkling above.

“While I was on the way up,” Thomas told me, “I didn’t have time to wonder if this was a dangerous situation I was in. But that thought did cross my mind once the movement stopped.”

“But you didn’t have a body,” I said.

“Exactly—that was my immediate response as well. I didn’t know how I’d gotten there, or even what part of me was actually there, but I didn’t have a body—so what was there to worry about?”

Thomas said he could see without eyes, was fully present and aware and was wondering how this could be, when he heard a barely audible pop.

“It resembled the slight pop one might hear if one is in a silent room and a bubble travels up through the neck of a long neck beer bottle and out the top. This carried with it the sense it was coming from the top of my head—the head I didn’t have.

“When this occurred, the earth disappeared. The sky disappeared. The stars—everything was gone. In the place I associated with my location was a faint glimmer of flickering light, a sort of dotted outline, which I took to be some sort of consciousness or spiritual essence.”

Thomas says he thought if this flickering light represented him, then perhaps there were others in this space.

“Then I saw—in what seemed the distance—other flickers of light. Many of them. I wondered if they might also be discarnate beings, so I asked the question, ‘Is anybody there?’

“As far as I was concerned, I vocalized this, but of course I had no vocal cords because I had no body.”

I asked Thomas, “Did any one answer?”

“An answer came immediately. It was, ‘Yes.’ And these string-like flickering light beings moved toward me and surrounded me. I’m not sure how many there were but I would say about three dozen.

“In the dialog that ensued they all seemed to talk with a single voice—sort of like surround sound, or you might say, quadraphonic.”

“Then what happened?” I asked.

“A dialog—I asked them a number of questions and they answered.”

“This is fascinating,” I said. “Tell me, what did you ask them?”

“My first question was, ‘Where am I?’”

“And?”

“Not long after all this happened, I made copious notes and eventually wrote them up, so I can tell you exactly what they said. They said, ‘You are in a place that is no place.’

“‘What does that mean?’ I said, and they said, ‘You are outside of space and time as you know it.’

“‘What am I doing here?’

“They said, ‘We brought you here because we have some very important things to tell you.’

“‘Oh, okay,’ I said. ‘Who are you?’

“‘We are your guides.’

“This was in 1960, and I was 16 years old. I knew nothing about such things. I had no idea what they were talking about. So I said, ‘What are guides?’

“They said, ‘You can think of us as that which is both you and not you.’

“‘Me and not me?’”

I couldn’t help breaking in and said, “Sounds like, ‘What is the sound of one hand clapping?’”

“Exactly,” Thomas said. “So then I said that if you’re not going to tell me what guides are, can you at least tell me what guides do?

“And they went on to give a beautiful and quite comforting explanation. They said everyone—all living people—have guides. Guides are souls who sign on to facilitate the development of those of us who are embodied.”

I said, “Did they give you any advice about your current situation? About your dilemma concerning your friend and his girlfriend and wishing you had never been born?”

“They did,” Thomas said. “After we got through the explanation of who they were, I asked them what important message they had brought me here to tell.

“They said, ‘The message is, your life is your own. It belongs to you.’

“I said, ‘Who else would it belong to?’

“They said, ‘We mean, you are free to do anything you want with your life, or to do nothing with it at all. You can be whatever you want, you can do whatever you want, you can say whatever you want, you can think and feel whatever you want, and whatever you do or don’t do with it is perfectly okay.’

“And they went on to say, and this was the heart of the matter, ‘Even if you should decide to self destruct’—they didn’t use the term, suicide—‘even if you should decide to terminate your life because it’s unpleasant, or for whatever reason, that’s perfectly okay. You may have been taught in school, or in church, that it’s not okay, that it’s some kind of a sin, that you will go to hell, or whatever—forget all that. It’s simply not true. None of that is the way things really are—”

I couldn’t help myself, and broke in again, “But there must be some consequences—”

Thomas said, “Oh, they didn’t say there wouldn’t be consequences. At this point, I started getting on the defensive. I saw where they were going and told them to wait a minute—I hadn’t been planning to self-destruct—or kill myself, or anything like that.

“And they said, ‘You had not reached that point yet. But if the thoughts you were having of wishing you did not exist had been followed to their conclusion—if we had not intervened—you would have reached that point. And in some other situations, you may reach that point. And we are

here to tell you, that's okay. You won't be judged.

"And then they delivered the punch line. They said, 'But we want you to know that choice would be a waste of time.'"

I said, "Well, how does that work? What happens? Do you have to come back and do it all over again?"

Thomas said, "Exactly—let me tell you. As a 16 year old, when they threw out the words 'waste of time,' that was something I could appreciate. I said, 'Waste of time? What does that mean?'

"They answered by giving me an explanation of the way life and evolution work. In summary, they said we go through a potentially infinite number of lifetimes and for the most part we choose our lifetimes, and what we're likely to experience in each. The thing that had been completely erroneous in my thinking and outlook before they brought me to that place was the idea I could cease to exist.

"'You can terminate a lifetime,' they said, 'but you cannot cease to exist. There is only life. If you decide to exit the one you are in you will simply have to come back and face the same situations again until you deal with and get through them. That's the way it is. Once you have started on a curriculum, you have to see it through.'"

I said, "That reminds me of the movie, *Groundhog Day*. The main character gets stuck living the same day over and over again, until he gets it right. Only then does he finally move on."

“A perfect allegory for the human condition,” Thomas said.

I asked Thomas why he thought his guides had intervened, that plenty of people commit suicide, and their guides don’t stop them.

He told me it was because he had committed suicide in other lives and had a tendency to do so. For this reason, they had been quick to act.

I guess they were tired of him wasting time.

By the way, Thomas was sent back to his body and slept soundly for what was left of the night. And in case you’re wondering, he did not pursue his best friend’s girlfriend. Two days following his extraordinary meeting with his guides—after he had started a job as a lifeguard for the summer—he met a girl and fell head over heels. His best friend’s girlfriend was quickly—and completely—forgotten.

In the next chapter we will put facts together with speculation and see where things appear to be headed, particularly in terms of the emerging worldview.

Chapter Nine: A New Worldview

Many anthropologists say a time existed in human history when humans felt at one with nature. They say they can still see this today in a few primitive tribes. To such people, the Divine showed Itself in many forms and was present in all things. But as humans grew more self aware, they began to feel separate from the Divine. No longer experiencing God in themselves and seeing Him in others, we humans began to conjure up gods outside us. The form this took was different among different people. The Jews believed in one God they called Yahweh; the Canaanites had Baal. In ancient Greece, many gods representing various human qualities were thought to exist. Pretty much everywhere, the worldview in those ancient times had man living on a layer of land suspended between two worlds—what the Chinese referred to as the “Middle Kingdom.” The gods lived above the arc of the sky and the clouds of high mountains such as Mount Olympus or Mount Sinai. We humans lived under that arc and the clouds on earth. Below us was the underworld, home of the dead, where in the case of the Greeks, for example, Hades was in charge, and the three-headed dog Cerberus guarded a gate where one arrived after crossing the River Styx. The Jews called the abode of the dead below ground, “Sheol.”

Then as now, ideas about God and gods were different depending on the group an individual belonged to. But early

in the first century of the modern era, Jesus of Nazareth was born, and as a result of His ministry and teachings, ideas about God and gods began to change. According to British Journalist and former nun, Karen Armstrong, in her book, *A History of God*, the idea spread that only one God ruled over all creation. Perhaps the worldview of the Jews did not change much since they were already monotheistic, but the previously pagan gentiles who accepted Jesus replaced their pantheon of gods above the clouds with one, single God and His angels. The fallen angel, Satan or Lucifer, replaced Hades, and the world below ground became hell, a place where evildoers go. This view held sway for more than a thousand years but was destined to change again because of Christopher Columbus (1451-1506).

Columbus lived on high ground overlooking a Mediterranean harbor. I have visited the ruin of what is said to be the house where he grew up. It is located in Calvi, Corsica, which in Columbus' time was part of the Italian city-state of Genoa. Standing on what would have been his front step, I could see why he came to the realization that the earth is shaped like a ball. There is almost no humidity in that part of the world, and the air is crystal clear. Assuming Columbus had good vision, a spyglass would not have been necessary for him to see ships climb over the horizon as they approached the harbor. I've witnessed this, myself. The shape of the world is obvious to anyone who

looks out over the harbor and across the Mediterranean from the high ground of Calvi. Columbus must have decided to rely on what he could see with his own eyes by sailing west to get to the spice islands of the East Indies, which in Columbus' day had to be reached by traveling overland to the east.

Columbus never realized it, but he didn't actually get there. Nevertheless, some of Ferdinand Magellan's (1480-1521) crew did make it to the East Indies and beyond. Of the 237 men who set out on five ships in 1519, 18 actually completed the circumnavigation of the globe and returned to Spain in 1522.

The newly realized fact that the world was round again forced our worldview to change. But even so, the earth remained at the center of the universe. Now heaven, the dwelling place of God, was seen as being somewhere out there above the stars. Hell was still beneath the ground, down deep where it was hot, the place from which molten lava spewed when volcanoes erupted.

The Worldview Gets Another Update

It wasn't long before the worldview had to be updated. A fellow named Nicolaus Copernicus (1473–1543) determined the sun was at the center of the solar system. Nevertheless, not much happened for a while, just as the materialistic worldview continues to hang on doggedly today despite the

hundred-year-old revelations of quantum physics. About a century was required then as now for reality to sink in. Someone had to champion the cause, and it turned out to be a man named Galileo Galilei [1564–1642].

Galileo made improvements to the telescope, and based on his observations, championed Copernicus' heliocentric assertion as proven fact. But as is the case nowadays, the prevailing worldview did not die easily. Galileo's assertion met with opposition from his fellow astronomers, and the astronomers were not alone. The matter was investigated by the Roman Inquisition, which concluded heliocentrism was false.

Galileo later defended his views in *Dialogue Concerning the Two Chief World Systems*. This work appeared to attack Pope Urban VIII, which not only alienated the Pope but also the Jesuits, both of whom had, until then, supported Galileo. As a result, he was tried by the Holy Office, and found "vehemently suspect of heresy." Forced to recant, he spent the rest of his life under house arrest.

Gradually, however, the educated classes got the message. A new day was dawning, a period alternately referred to as "The Age of Enlightenment" and "The Age of Reason" came to be. An English philosopher named Thomas Hobbes' [1588-1679] view took hold that nothing existed that is not of the material world. This, combined with the work of Sir Isaac Newton, who described universal gravitation and the three laws of motion, ultimately lead

many luminaries to accept the “great clock maker” theory, aka Deism—the idea that God created the universe, wound it up, let it go, and was no longer involved in its operation. They reasoned that natural laws created at the same time kept going what God had set in motion. Deists viewed the universe as a giant machine. The Sun was at the center of the solar system. The Earth and planets revolved around it. Nothing existed except matter, which if true meant what Cotton Mather and other Christian preachers called the “invisible world of spirit” was a figment of imagination.

Darwin’s theory and the acceptance of a mechanical view of the evolution of life brought us to a place where we have arrived and remained for most of the twentieth century and into the twenty-first—to a mechanical worldview that seemed to work to an extent with how many in the Christian Church viewed God—that He is outside of His creation—transcendent—rather than immanent, i.e., *within* his creation. Nevertheless, the mechanical, materialist view of reality led many to reject religion altogether and become atheists and nihilists.

But things don’t have to stay this way, and indeed have not stayed that way for everyone who was raised in a materialist household as I was.

Quantum Physics Is Introduced to the Masses

As previously discussed, in 1979, Gary Zukav, a former

Green Beret during the war in Vietnam, published a book called the *Dancing Wu Li Masters: An Overview of the New Physics*. Targeted for laymen, it explained the basics of quantum physics in everyday language, i.e., without the use of complicated mathematics. To restate what Gary Zukav concluded, “the philosophical implication of quantum mechanics is that all of the things in our universe (including us) that appear to exist independently are actually parts of one all-encompassing organic pattern, and that no parts of that pattern are ever really separate from it or from each other.”

Also in 1979, James Lovelock published a book called *Gaia: A New Look at Life on Earth* that explained his idea that life on earth functions as a single organism. In contrast to the conventional belief that living matter is passive in the face of threats to its existence, the book explored the hypothesis that the earth’s living matter—air, ocean, and land surfaces—forms a complex system that has the capacity to keep the Earth a fit place for life. Since *Gaia* was first published, many of Jim Lovelock’s predictions have come true.

The Spiritual Dimension Is Explored

In the mid 1980s a television series aired on PBS called *The Power of Myth*, featuring author and Sarah Lawrence College Comparative Religion Professor, Joseph Campbell

[1904-1987]. These programs made an impact on a significant segment of the public and opened their eyes to the possibility of the existence of what might be termed “a spiritual dimension.” This can be summed up using Campbell’s own words, “Anyone who has had an experience of mystery knows there is a dimension of the universe that is not available to his senses.”

And so, the thinking of many people came full circle and returned to what it had been prior to the rise of civilization, which is that the Divine shows itself in many forms and is present in all things.

Where do we go from here? Why not follow Christ’s teachings and bring heaven to earth. This possibility will be discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter Ten: Bringing Heaven to Earth

Many non-Christians say they see no need for religion or Jesus. They consider themselves to be good people. They love their children. They give to charity. They hardly ever cheat on their taxes—except maybe on April 15 each year. They reason that if there is a God, and if a heaven and a hell exist, a fair and just God would not send them to hell just for sleeping in on Sunday morning. They probably are right. But my guess is that if these folks were really honest with themselves, really took some time in self-examination, they'd realize they are not as pure and blameless as they think. They might get an inkling of this by thinking seriously about how many people they have hurt, or stepped on, or been inconsiderate toward.

To my way of thinking, one thing is almost certain—if they don't go straight to hell, which apparently would only be temporary if what we've covered so far is correct, they will definitely have a life review, and if they do not come out of that life review with flying colors, they will have to come back to earth and try once more to get things right. It will be “Oh, no, here I go again” like the hero of *Groundhog Day*—except they won't have the advantage he had of remembering what he did or didn't do the last time around.

It boils down to this: Most people do not realize what appears to be the case—that Earth is a school and they are here to learn. Moreover, they do not realize that if they don't learn, they won't graduate, and if they don't graduate, they will have to repeat the grade. As what might well have happened with Thomas if his guides had not intervened, in this life what they are doing is wasting time.

Eventually, if Edgar Cayce is correct in his prediction on this subject, we will all get it right. Then, I suppose, we have a new earth as predicted in the Bible, newly “resurrected” bodies, and we will all live in a heavenly place. But at the rate we are going, that's going to take a very long time. So why not get started now to do the work and learn the lessons by putting Jesus in the driver's seat?

“I get your point,” I can hear some who are reading this say, “but along with Jesus, a person would have to accept the Bible, and the Bible is full of stories and myths that no longer have relevance today.”

My answer to that is you are looking at the Bible through the wrong lens. My position is, “The Bible is all true, and some of it actually happened.” Take the story of Adam and Eve. The Bible says God created Adam out of mud. Let's think about that. If God is the underlying intelligence and life force that gave rise to all that is, then God first created mud, which contains the many elements of the earth needed to make Adam, just as the Bible says. Of

course it took longer than would seem to be indicated in the Bible. But hey, one thing quantum physicists agree on is that what we experience as time is relative. Maybe the word “day” in the Bible would be better translated as “epoch,” as in “Back in my day things were different.”

Adam would have started out as RNA, then progressed to become DNA, then a one-celled organism in the sea. At the non-physical level he'd have been one of Rupert Sheldrake's morphogenetic fields that through a long series of incarnations eventually evolved into a fish. At some point he would have developed lungs and walked out onto land and continued to evolve until he inhabited a tree somewhere in east Africa. An epoch or two later, because the climate changed and the forest began to turn into savanna, he'd have climbed down from the trees and started walking upright so he could see over the tall grass to hunt. Scientists would probably estimate this to have occurred more than 300,000 years ago. Around then, Adam reached a point in the evolution of his mind that caused him to become self-aware. By that I mean he could think about himself objectively. Sitting under the tree he'd climbed down from a few hundred or maybe a thousand or so lifetimes before, he saw himself as different, separate and distinct from the rest of nature. Unlike birds and animals of the forest or the savanna, Adam and his wife, Eve, no longer relied on nature and instincts to direct their behavior. Their minds could

override what nature or instinct—the still, small voice inside called “God”—told him he ought to do.

Or maybe Edgar Cayce was right, and in the beginning, God created souls with free will and eventually some of these souls decided to explore physical reality. Either way, it seems to me this is what the story of Adam and Eve is about—the splitting off or separation from what Rupert Sheldrake calls the field, and what I call the ground of being that supports and informs the physical world—and what most people call God. This separation resulted in self-awareness and free will. According to the story, God told Adam and Eve not to eat the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. The snake, which I think represents Adam and Eve’s all too human nature, or ego mind, told them to go ahead and eat. Rather than consult God before taking action, Adam and Eve acted as humans usually do, and proceeded to do exactly as they pleased. By exercising free will in this manner, they severed, or at the very least, short circuited their connection to God, and we humans have been suffering the consequences since. We have, in effect, cast ourselves out of the Garden, with the result that we are no longer able to tap effortlessly into the abundance and joy that nature is always ready to bestow on us. Our task now is to get back to God, and that is the struggle we are involved with at this point in our evolution. Eventually, like the hero of *Groundhog Day*, we will make it. Edgar Cayce believed

all of us will get back to Him eventually, and that when we do we will be on a much higher level than when we left. We do it by putting Jesus in the driver's seat and establishing a close, personal relationship so that He can help and guide us, which as you recall from our discussion in Chapter Four of John 14:11-20, Jesus said He would do.

So let's talk about that. I've found that one of the things that deters non-Christians is the Christian doctrine that Jesus was God incarnate. We have seen, however, we all are one in spirit. Each of us is a spark that's jumped from the fire we call God. In other words, we are each one of God's offspring—perhaps not realizing it, but one of his children, nonetheless. This is difficult to grasp only when our concept of God is that of the Big Cop located high up above the clouds, and Jesus as the Big Cop in the flesh. But I imagine few people actually continue to hold onto that image of God.

The Apostle Paul, who supplied more New Testament writings than anyone else and did more than any other individual to get the Christian Church going and growing, never called Jesus "God." He called him "the Son of God." This was a Jewish figure of speech of the time. For example, consider the following quotation of Jesus (Matthew 5:43-45):

You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I tell you: Love your enemies and

pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons [or children] of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.

Not only does Jesus believe we all can be “children of God,” but this quotation seems to demonstrate his understanding of the law of karma, which says that we get back what we give out, and that no one and no thing exists apart from the whole. We all take part in the dance and are inseparable from all that is, whether or not we behave that way toward our fellow man. By striking back at those who annoy or harm us, we perpetuate discord and unhappiness for ourselves as well as others. One key to entering the Kingdom of God is to rise above the day-to-day fray and to see things and act from a “oneness” point of view.

This requires us to change how we think. Making this shift may take effort and courage because we must be willing to alter how we view life and our relationship to others. Nowhere is this more evident than in Chapter Three of John’s Gospel.

Let’s take a look.

It’s generally accepted by Bible scholars that the Gospel of John was written by John the Apostle, the disciple to whom Jesus was closest and the person referred to throughout this Gospel as “the one Jesus loved.” I suspect

that few people today, or in His own time, fully comprehended what Jesus was saying most of the time, but if anyone did it was John. His Gospel is an attempt to demonstrate that Jesus was the Messiah whom the Jews had been expecting. In Chapter One of his Gospel, John states that Jesus is the “Word,” and had been with God since the outset when God created the universe (Genesis 1:1) and spoke light into being by saying, “Let there be light.” (Genesis 1:3) John seems to be arguing that metaphorically, at least, Jesus was God’s vocal cords or “mouthpiece,” who had come to Earth in human form to tell people what God wanted them to know—that they should love one another.

John also states in Chapter One of his Gospel that John the Baptist was the prophet whom the Jewish Scriptures—the Old Testament—said would come prior to the Messiah to pave the way. This was important because many at the time were followers of John the Baptist and believed that he, not Jesus, was the true Messiah.

In Chapter Two of John, Jesus turns water into wine at the wedding feast and then throws the moneychangers out of the Temple, as well as those selling animals for sacrifices. The wedding symbolizes the marriage of the Messiah—the bridegroom—and Israel—the bride, which had been prophesied by the prophet, Isaiah 700 years or so earlier. It seems logical that the two incidents (wine and Temple) were placed back to back in order to demonstrate

the two sides of Jesus: 1.) The side that embraces and radiates love and joy, and feels deep concern for each individual in that he saves the host from the embarrassment of running out of wine, and the guests the disappointment of a premature ending to the wedding celebration. 2.) Jesus' unbridled passion for God, and his determination to make God available to everyone. You see, the Sadducees had turned the Outer Temple into a market. The Outer Temple originally had been intended to be a place that everyone, including women and gentiles, could come to pray to and offer praise to the one true God. This got the Sadducees really angry, and probably caused secret glee on the part of the Pharisees who were also among the priestly class and often disagreed with the Sadducees on one thing or another.

Chapter Three of the John Gospel opens with one of these priests coming in secret to speak with Jesus in order to find out about him—probably to satisfy his own curiosity. Here is the text from the NIV translation of the Bible.

There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a member of the Jewish ruling council. He came to Jesus at night and said, "Rabbi, we know you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the miraculous signs you are doing if God were not with him."

In reply Jesus declared, "I tell you the truth. No one can

see the Kingdom of God unless he is born again."

"How can a man be born when he is old?" Nicodemus asked. "Surely he cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb to be born."

Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, no one can enter the Kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You must be born again.' The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit."

"How can this be?" Nicodemus asked.

"You are Israel's teacher," said Jesus, "and do you not understand these things? I tell you the truth, we speak of what we know, and we testify to what we have seen, but still you people do not accept our testimony. I have spoken to you of earthly things and you do not believe; how then will you believe if I speak of heavenly things?"

As you have guessed, this is where the expression, "born again," which also can be translated, "born from above," comes from. It is perhaps one of the most misunderstood phrases in our society today, both inside and outside the Christian Church. It seems to me Jesus is speaking of the shift in consciousness that occurs when a person realizes his or her connection to the Divine.

Typically, something inside tugs at us, and we are presented with a choice. You might think of this as God knocking on the door to your life. When that happens you can decide whether or not to accept the invitation. If you do, you will be in position to form a relationship that can be nurtured through meditation and prayer, or as Christians often say, a daily “walk with Jesus.”

Above, Jesus speaks of being born of “water and the Spirit.” Water represents purification, as in Baptism, and the Jewish custom of ritual washing and bathing. The Spirit, as in the Holy Spirit, is the presence of God within us. To be born of water and the Spirit results in a “turning away” from our egocentric nature and voluntarily becoming a loyal and joyful subject of the “Lord” as part of his Kingdom.

The “wind” he speaks of is the air in our lungs, life, or better yet, the Life Force. No one knows where it comes from or where it goes. But those who are “born again” have tapped into it, and allow it to guide them.

Picking up where we left off above, Jesus goes on to say:

No one has ever gone into heaven except the one who came from heaven — the Son of Man [Jesus refers to Himself as the “Son of Man” throughout the Gospels]. Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, that everyone who believes in him may

have Eternal Life. For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have Eternal Life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son. This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what he has done has been done through God.

Apparently, among his adversaries and followers only Jesus has experienced this close relationship with God, has made it all the way to heaven and decided to return to Earth, so only He is in a position to speak of it authoritatively. This makes sense to me, and it's what I prefer to believe.

I've heard others suggest that Jesus may have had a near death experience, during which he "went to heaven," but was sent back with a mission. Denise Linn, author of a number of books including *Past Lives, Present Miracles*, recounted just such an experience on my show in spring 2008. At the age of seventeen, Denise was riding her

bicycle along a country road in Ohio when what turned out to be a serial killer came along and shot her several times with a pistol. He left her for dead, and she died in the hospital, but was resuscitated. Denise described the experience of dying and passing into a beautiful realm of light where she was greeted by heavenly beings. She said she felt she had returned home and wanted to stay. But she was told to return because it was not her time. As you might expect, this changed her life.

Others have experienced almost exactly the same thing. Betty Eadie indicates in her book, *Embraced by the Light*, that this is what happened to her. A similar experience that took place in World War II is described in detail in a book entitled, *Ordered to Return*. In December, 1943, 20-year-old Army private George Ritchie [1923-2007] died of pneumonia. Nine minutes later, he came back to life profoundly changed. What happened to him while his dead body lay under a sheet changed his life. During that time he was given a tour of “heaven,” and ultimately, he was “ordered to return.” He became a psychiatrist as a result and spent most of his life helping those experiencing spiritual problems. Even so, Dr. Ritchie did not go public with the story of his journey into the afterlife and back until late in life because he was afraid no one would believe him. His fear was that his credibility, and with it his ability to help others, would be lost. I’ve had three or four more people on

my radio show who have told similar stories.

Another possibility is that unlike most people, Jesus recalled the time before his birth and even his previous lives. Some other quotations attributed to him suggest this may be possible.

Returning to our analysis, Jesus next forecasts his death on the cross (he will be “lifted up”), which will have the result of calling attention to his message so that “everyone who believes in him shall not perish but have Eternal Life.” What follows is the most famous verse in the Bible (John 3:16). Please read it one more time: “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have Eternal Life.” In my “red letter” Bible this is attributed to Jesus as a direct quote. Even so, this does not seem to me to be the way a person talking about himself would speak. I suspect these words come from the writer of this Gospel—John.

No matter whose words they are, by and large the Church has taken this verse to mean, and has taught throughout the centuries, that anyone who believes: A.) That Jesus actually lived, B.) was the Son of God/God incarnate, C.) was crucified as a sacrifice for our sins, and D.) arose from the dead—is saved and will go to heaven.

I see nothing wrong or destructive in believing these things. I’ve come to believe they are true in a symbolic way at minimum. Jesus did incarnate on earth with the mission

to save us from our sins. He sacrificed Himself in that cause. I have no trouble believing he appeared to his disciples and others following the crucifixion because a number of cases of visitations by deceased individuals in what appeared to have been physical form have been reported. But the idea that Jesus was literally a blood sacrifice given to purify humankind is in my opinion a first century interpretation based on the beliefs generally held at the time in which he lived. Then, the Jews made sacrifices of “pure” animals—spring lambs, doves and the like. So did pagans. Sacrificing a “pure” animal to bring oneself closer to or to win favor with God or “the gods” was pretty much standard operating procedure. Jesus was thought to be pure and without sin. That he was a sacrifice that washed away the sins of all humans who accepted his crucifixion as such made perfect sense back then. We will discuss this further when I relate to you the ideas contained in a sermon given by Jim Somerville of Richmond’s First Baptist Church.

For now, let’s look more closely at John 3:16.

Defining “believes in him” as “A” through “B” misses the mark in my opinion. To me, “believes in him” means, “Believes what he stands for and what he teaches.” Nor do I think that belief in “A” through “D” alone will gain anyone entry into heaven and the presence of the Father. What will get a person through the gate is that all-important shift in consciousness. It is being “born from above,” or, in

other words, truly taking to heart and feeling that we are all one, all God's children, and that we need to "love one another." That's what will create the Kingdom of Heaven on Earth and lead to eternal life in the nonphysical dimension beyond.

To repeat myself, "believes in him" means "believes what he stands for and what says." Few would argue that's what it means to believe in someone, and if asked, practically any professed Christian will say he or she wholeheartedly believes everything Jesus ever said or taught—but actions sometimes tell a different story. Many, perhaps even most Christians believe and act accordingly, but I've met a few who say they believe and yet they do not. By putting the emphasis on the belief that certain events occurred and that circumstances surrounding Jesus were true exactly as reported, rather than on the ideas and concepts of Jesus' teachings, I believe that the Church has misled many into thinking they are saved regardless of their actions. It seems those who don't take Jesus' teachings seriously will find that they have a lot of work yet to do on themselves when they cross over after death and experience their life reviews.

Later in the passage is the phrase, "has not believed in the name of God's one and only son." To believe in a person's name was a Hebrew expression of the time that meant to believe thoroughly in a person, i.e., their very

essence, their beliefs, and what they stood for. In other words, a person's name was thought to encompass the person's entire being. Now if this is so, why would someone be condemned who does not believe in what Jesus was saying and what he stood for?

It appears to me that Jesus taught that the only way to enter the Kingdom is to form that relationship and to experience the shift in consciousness I've been talking about. In other words, to be "born again." If a person doesn't and isn't, he or she isn't going to behave in a way that will create the Kingdom. It's that simple. The person has condemned him or herself.

Consider the verse: "Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness."

What does this mean?

Simple. Most people don't like to admit when they're wrong, and they certainly aren't going to let on that they are bad or evil—even to themselves.

Later, in Chapter Three (verses 35-36) of John, John the Baptist is asked his opinion of Jesus. Among other things, he says:

"The Father loves the Son and has placed everything in his hands. Whoever believes in the Son has Eternal Life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him."

John the Baptist recognized that Jesus had a special

relationship with the transcendent, that Jesus was in contact with a higher intelligence, and that this intelligence came through him, i.e., “has placed everything in his hands.” In essence John said, “Believe what Jesus says. Follow his teachings and Eternal Life will be yours. ‘Reject’ what he says, and you reject the relationship that you, too, could have with God.” It’s a choice. Believe what Jesus says, or reject it. Acceptance opens the way. Rejection means keeping hidden what then will appear in the form of panic attacks, depression, and many physical illnesses—from heart attacks to cancer. That may sound overly dramatic, but I believe it’s true. God’s wrath remains on those who stay in denial and keep issues buried.

At the risk of being redundant, let me say that by “entering the Kingdom of Heaven,” and allowing oneself to be “born again,” or “born from above,” Jesus was talking about opening one’s mind to God within us. Only one mind exists so God is always present. It’s what the Quakers, quoting from 1 Kings, call “the still small voice.” But many people choose to ignore it. This is understandable. When we start listening, we open ourselves to the truth about ourselves. And the truth can hurt.

Yet, by opening ourselves to the truth, we also open ourselves to growth, fulfillment and happiness. It may take time, it may take effort, and it may be painful to see ourselves as we really are, but by bringing ourselves to light,

we put ourselves in position to jettison old baggage. We can shed the mistakes and begin anew. What would otherwise require lifetimes of going in circles, lifetimes of learning the hard way and repaying old debts, can be accomplished in much less time and with a sense of joy and discovery that those who keep the door closed will never know.

The Kingdom is available to the living—of this I have no doubt. Jesus makes it clear that it's not necessary to die or to wait for the second coming. This fact has been missed by many—though certainly not all—throughout the ages. The Gospel according to John is not the only place such references can be found. Once you become aware, you'll see them throughout the other Gospels as well.

Consider the following:

And (Jesus) said to them, "I tell you the truth, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the Kingdom of God come with power."

Mark 9:1

The Kingdom of God does not come with your careful observation, nor will people say, 'Here it is,' or 'There it is,' because the Kingdom of God is within you.

Luke 17:20-21

The passage above can also be translated, “the Kingdom of God is among you,” since the Greek word used means both “within” and “among.” Indeed, the Kingdom of God is “within and among” all of us, but most of us are blind to it. Perhaps this is because one requisite for entering the Kingdom is to set aside the tendency we all have to view the world from an egocentric position and instead to adopt an attitude of humility:

I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the Kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.

Mark 10:15

And with this comes the realization that you are one with and led by the transcendent. Here is Luke 22:70:

They all asked, “Are you the Son of God?” He replied, “You are right in saying I am.”

Jesus was the Son of God and the rest of us can be as well. He was God incarnate because he was the Christ Consciousness embodied in flesh. The way to heaven is to pursue this state. Consider that this may be what Jesus was saying in these verses (John 14:6-7):

Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you really knew me, you would know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him."

With the shift in consciousness comes the realization that we are each part of something much bigger. Then it is possible to allow ourselves to be guided by the Spirit within and to enter the Kingdom. It is to say, "Thy will be done," and mean it. Paradoxically, this turning over sets a person free. The way to rapid spiritual growth has been opened in part because of a new ability to see the world clearly. This connection to the truth enables us to sort what is important from what is window dressing. It enables an individual to determine his or her intended destiny.

What about the idea that people who are rich cannot make it into heaven?

What many people do not understand is that Jesus didn't actually say that. What he was talking about was that one needs to get his or her priorities in the right order. Let's review the story the idea about rich people comes from. This account is from Mark 10:17-23, the New International Version (NIV) translation:

As Jesus started on his way, a man ran up to him and fell on his knees before him. "Good teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit Eternal Life?"

"Why do you call me good?" Jesus answered. "No one is good—except God alone. You know the commandments: 'Do not murder, do not commit adultery, do not steal, do not give false testimony, do not defraud, honor your father and mother.'"

"Teacher," he declared, "all these I have kept since I was a boy."

Jesus looked at him and loved him. "One thing you lack," he said. "Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me."

At this the man's face fell. He went away sad, because he had great wealth.

Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, "How hard it is for the rich to enter the Kingdom of God!"

The disciples were amazed at his words. But Jesus said again, "Children, how hard it is to enter the Kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God."

What in the world was Jesus talking about? Well, at the beginning of the story, Jesus rattled off most of the Ten Commandments. But perhaps you noticed he left one out.

The very first law Moses brought down from the mountain was to “Put no other gods before Me.” The rich man had failed to keep this one because money had become his number one god. Imagine what the rich young man’s life review might have been—the treasures in heaven he would have experienced—if he had given his money to the poor. He’d have felt all the joy, happiness, and comfort of the full bellies he helped create. Imagine he’d become a disciple of Jesus the way Peter and John and the others had. Perhaps after Jesus’ death, he’d have taken up his own ministry and led many others in the Way. He’d likely have found his own way to eternal life as a result. By choosing his wealthy lifestyle and not accepting the opportunity Jesus presented him, I’m guessing the rich young man paid dearly with many, many more difficult lifetimes on Earth. Unlike the man in *Groundhog Day*, he didn’t wake up the next morning and realize his mistake. The result is that he may be repeating the same mistake today, 2000 years, and who knows how many lifetimes, later.

In the next chapter we will address the belief that Jesus was a blood sacrifice.

Chapter Eleven: What about the Idea Jesus Was a Blood Sacrifice?

Some years ago, the pastor of Richmond's First Baptist Church, Jim Somerville, preached a sermon about Jesus' having been sacrificed on the Cross. I was present, and what he said made a lot of sense to me.

He said that not long before that Sunday, he had visited a Sunday school class when the teacher asked, "Why did Jesus have to die on the cross?"

From across the room someone said, "Because God demands blood."

Jim was shocked. It wasn't because he had never heard such a thing before. Jim said that's one of the traditional answers to the question, and in some traditions is the only answer. The man who shouted out may have been taught to say "God demands blood" in the same way most of us were taught to say two plus two equals four. When the teacher asked, he answered. He didn't even have to think about it. But Jim did think about it. He thought, "Really? That's why Jesus had to die? Because God demands blood?" It sounded as though Jesus' death had been God's idea, and that just didn't feel right. So later, back in his study, he looked again at how theologians answer the question of why Jesus had to die.

He found they do not all agree. There are almost as many answers as there are theologians, but he told the

congregation that Sunday morning he liked how Dr. Shirley Guthrie [1927-2004], then professor emeritus, Columbia Theological Seminary, explained the dilemma. He said:

“When Jesus died, a dream died in the hearts of his followers. They had hoped that he was the Messiah, the chosen one of God who would free their country from the rule of a totalitarian foreign government and establish it not only as a free nation but as one that would be the center of power, virtue, wisdom, and glory in the whole world. They expected to be rewarded for their loyalty to him by receiving positions of honor and authority in the new government. But Jesus was a failure. He did not defeat his enemies; he was defeated by them. He did not free his nation; he was executed as another of many unsuccessful revolutionaries. Following him meant following a loser, not a winner. His death meant nothing but disappointed expectations and unfulfilled hopes—the end.

“But then something happened—Jesus rose from the dead—and his followers began to understand that his death was not defeat, but only one piece of the most surprising victory in history. They began to search for ways to explain to others why Jesus had to die on the cross, and how his death could be understood as part of the good news. In the years that followed they came up with four main images.”

The first is the financial image. Guthrie says, ‘The scene is a slave market or prison camp. There sit captives who

have lost their freedom. But a man steps up and pays the price (or gives the ransom money) to purchase their freedom (or redeem them). [In this image] we are slaves or prisoners. Jesus is our Redeemer. The ransom price is high—his life for ours—but he pays it gladly for our sake.’

The second is the military image. Guthrie says, ‘The scene is a battlefield. God and the devil are at war for possession of people whom the devil has stolen from the kingdom of God and carried off to his kingdom of darkness. A warrior from God invades the territory ruled by Satan to bring these people home again where they belong. It is a deadly, real battle. On Good Friday God’s warrior is killed and the powers of darkness seem to be victorious. But on Easter morning he triumphs over them and frees the captives. Jesus is the ‘Victor’ who delivers us from Satan’s realm of darkness and death to bring us into God’s realm of light and life.’

The third is the sacrificial image. Guthrie says, “The scene is now a place of worship with a bloody altar where sacrifices are offered. There stand guilty people who deserve God’s wrathful punishment. A priest comes forward who is the mediator between God and the people. He makes a sacrifice to atone for the people’s sin. Blood is shed. A life is offered up. It is a sign of the people’s sorrow for their disobedience, their offering of their own lives to God, and cleansing from the stain of their sin. But this priest is

different from all other priests in that what he sacrifices is not the life of an animal or a bird but his own life. He lets his own blood be shed to make peace between the people and God. He is himself the 'lamb that is slain.' He suffers as the representative of sinful people so that they may be reconciled with God."

The fourth is the legal image. Guthrie says, "The scene is now a courtroom. God, the just Judge, sits behind the desk, and people who have broken the law stand in front of him to be tried. They hear the verdict: Guilty. They receive the sentence: Death. But a righteous man who has obeyed the law perfectly comes and stands beside the accused, takes the death penalty on himself, and suffers the consequences of their guilt in their place. Those who were enemies of the law (and thus of the Judge, also) are now acquitted and reconciled. Order is restored. They no longer have to fear the Judge but are free to go out to begin a new life."

Jim told us he supposes all of these images are familiar to most Christians. They are all found in the Bible in one form or another, and probably all of them have been preached from his pulpit at First Baptist Church, but none of them tells the whole story of why Jesus had to die and some only lead to more questions. The financial image, for example: if it is true that we were "bought with a price" who got paid? Was it the devil? It's hard to imagine God doing business with the devil. Jim said we need to remember that

these images emerged at a time when some people believed there were many gods, constantly battling each other for control: angry gods, fickle gods, who had to be appeased. So the military image, in which God does battle with the forces of evil, would have been familiar to those people. The sacrificial image, in which a pure and perfect sacrifice must be offered to restore God's offended honor, would have been familiar. The legal image, in which God's righteousness requires somebody to pay the death penalty, would have been familiar. But none of these images tells the whole story of why Jesus had to die and some can lead to horrible distortions of that story.

Jim said that back in the eleventh century, for instance, a theologian and Benedictine monk named Anselm [1033-1109] developed something called the "satisfaction theory" of the atonement, which says, essentially, that God's honor and righteousness were so offended by our sin that he turned his back on us, and only the perfect obedience and willing sacrifice of his beloved son could get him to change his mind about us, to turn around and open his arms to us again. You may have heard that theory in one form or another. It seems to show up everywhere. But Shirley Guthrie says that in spite of the enormous influence of this view, "it is unbiblical. Nowhere does scripture use the word satisfaction. It tells us that Jesus came to express, not to change, God's mind. It says that reconciliation is the work

of God, not that it is something purchased from God. What Jesus does is not over against God; his work is God's work, for he himself is God-with-us."

Jim said it may be true that God is disgusted by our sin but here is a deeper truth: God loves us. And no matter how much we have sinned, no matter how despicably, God still loves us. He would never turn his back on us. In fact, in Christ he comes running toward us with open arms. Jim said that in his mind we are like a baby boy in a dirty diaper grinning up at his grandmother. That grandmother may be offended by that diaper, but not by that baby. She will scoop him up into her arms, carry him off to the nursery, talk baby talk to him and chuck him under the chin while she cleans up the mess and puts him in a fresh diaper. Then she will take him back into her arms again and hold him close, pat him on the back, and croon lullabies in his ear. He said that's just how it is with grandmothers and their grandbabies, and if you can believe it, that's how it is with us and God. He sent his son into the world not because God demands blood but because God is love.

If you can picture Jesus on that kind of mission—a mission to reveal God's love to the world—then some of this will begin to make more sense to you. When you start following him through the Gospels you will see that he is not primarily concerned with what his death will accomplish, but with what his life will accomplish. In the

Gospel of Matthew, for example, he sits down on a mountainside in Galilee and begins to say to those people gathered around him, “Blessed are you who are poor in spirit, blessed are you that are mourning the loss of loved ones, blessed are you who are meek, and blessed are you who are merciful.”

He blesses people who have probably never been blessed before. He lifts their spirits and gives them hope. You can almost see their faces brightening as he speaks. He calls them the light of the world, the salt of the earth, and then he teaches them that there is a way of being in right relationship with God that is almost completely different from the way taught by the scribes and Pharisees, a way that is not so much a matter of keeping the rules as it is a matter of the heart. He asks them to pray that God’s kingdom come, and God’s will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. He tells them not to worry about their life, what they will eat or what they will wear—that it is the heavenly father’s pleasure to feed them and clothe them. It’s likely the people there that day felt nothing but love.

Along with Jesus’ ministry of teaching was his ministry of healing, and he heals everywhere he goes. He heals a leper no one else would touch, the servant of a Roman centurion, Peter’s mother-in-law, a man with an unclean spirit. He raises a little girl from the dead, heals a woman who had been hemorrhaging for twelve years, opens the

eyes of two blind men and unties the tongue of a mute. He is all goodness, all grace. But in Chapter Nine of Matthew, less than a third of the way through the Gospel, something begins to happen. Jesus begins to encounter opposition. He tells a paralytic that his sins are forgiven and some scribes who are standing there begin whispering, “That’s blasphemy! Who can forgive sins but God alone?” Later, when he sits down to dinner, it’s with a group of sinners and tax collectors. The Pharisees ask his disciples, “Why does your teacher eat with sinners and tax collectors?”

In Chapter Twelve the religious authorities confront him about working on the Sabbath day. He was in the synagogue, and there was a man there with a withered hand. Jesus asked, “Is it lawful to cure on the Sabbath day or not?” He knew the rules. He himself was a Jew, and he knew as well as anyone Jews weren’t supposed to do work of any kind on the Sabbath. Healing was considered work, and the Pharisees were standing right there to remind him. But love doesn’t always follow the rules, and since he had been sent to show God’s love to the world Jesus healed that man’s withered hand. Matthew says it was then that “the Pharisees went out and conspired against him, how to destroy him” (Matt. 12:14).

It only got worse after that. Jesus went on his way, healing the sick, stilling the storms, feeding the multitudes . . . revealing God’s love in any number of ways, but all this

time the religious authorities were trying to figure out how to trap him and kill him. He had compassion on the multitudes and fed them. He took little children into his arms and blessed them. He shared stories about how, when the Kingdom came, the last would be first and the least would be great. He was all love, and when he came riding that donkey into the city of Jerusalem he came pulling wagonloads of love behind him. The religious authorities couldn't stand it—couldn't stand him. When he entered the temple they scattered like cockroaches. As John says, “the light came into the world, but some loved darkness more than light, because their deeds were evil” (John 3:19). So the cockroaches gathered in the darkness and plotted against him. Within a few days they had figured out how to put him to death. They got the Romans to do their dirty work, to nail him to a wooden beam where he hung bleeding and dying until he cried out and breathed his last.

If anyone had been able to find his disciples that night—sitting around a campfire somewhere, stunned and defeated—if someone had asked them why Jesus had to die, they wouldn't have said that he died in order to purchase anyone's freedom, or that he died to win some ultimate victory over evil. They wouldn't have said that he died as a sacrificial lamb or in order to absolve humankind from guilt. They would have said that he didn't have to die at all, that he came bringing nothing but love and those religious

authorities couldn't stand it. They were threatened by him, jealous of him. They had him crucified to shut the crowds up, so that everyone would quit talking about "Jesus, Jesus, Jesus!" If anyone had been able to find Mary Magdalene the next night, after she'd spent the whole day weeping for her Lord, mascara running down her cheeks, she'd have told you why Jesus had to die on the cross. "Because of those awful people," she'd have said. "They just couldn't let him be. He brought nothing but love into this world and yet they killed him, killed him!"

It would take years of reflection for her to come up with a different answer, for her to see how the bad news of Jesus' death could become part of the good news of the gospel. She might learn to say that it had to be that way, that Jesus' death on the Cross showed us as we had never seen before just how much God loves us. In her more contrite moments she might even say that it was her sin that put him there. But on that night all she would have been able to see is that God's people had a chance to welcome the love that came to them in Jesus and they said no.

But early in the morning, on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, God said, "Yes!"

The earth shook, the stone was rolled away, the angel descended with the good news of resurrection and Mary ran to tell the disciples, ran!—with her heart pounding, with alleluias on her lips. "God did it!" she said. "He raised him

from the dead! Those people said no to Jesus but God said yes!”

So let me tell you why he did it: He did it because he wasn't through loving us yet. He knew that someday you would come into the world, and you would need to know that Jesus died on the cross not because “God demands blood,” but because God is love.

Chapter Twelve: Where Do We Go from Here?

It seems to me there is a universal desire among humans—the desire to be happy. Isn't that what all of us want? Isn't that why we go to Church, or alternatively, to a bar?

So how do we go about accomplishing that? As Ben Franklin reportedly said, “The constitution only guarantees the American people the right to pursue happiness. You have to catch it yourself.”

Unfortunately, in my opinion, for the most part our society and modern culture has not shown us the right way. If you took Psychology 101, you know that Abraham Maslow believed people possess a set of motivation systems unrelated to rewards or unconscious desires. His five-stage model can be divided into basic physiological needs such as safety, love, and esteem, and growth leading to self-actualization. Once we achieve the basic needs of having enough to eat and a roof over our head, most assume the way to fulfill growth needs and achieve happiness is to make something of ourselves, which in western society is to achieve wealth and power.

But does that bring happiness?

Much research has been done over the last thirty years

or so that indicates the answer is, “Maybe momentarily, but fleetingly at best.”

Once you’ve made it to a certain level—accomplished the goal you set out to accomplish—you get tired of that place, and soon you want to move up to an even higher plateau in search of more of the feeling of accomplishment [or happiness] you experienced for a time.

I once watched a movie on Netflix that seems to point toward the most promising way to pursue happiness. It’s a Shady Acres film called *Happy*, a Wadi Rum Films production. *Happy* ponders contemporary happiness through visits with individuals around the globe who seem to have achieved it.

I’ll give you a quick summary.

Depression, anxiety and other undesirable mental conditions have been studied for many years, but only recently have neuroscientists, psychologists and others begun seriously inquiring the causes of happiness. The results so far indicate happiness increases the more a person is physically active, and the more he or she performs actions that benefit others rather than self. An additional important factor is how close an individual feels to his or her family and friends.

It turns out that obsessive pursuit of wealth, material goods, status, and image has the opposite effect. Without question, a difference exists in contentment between people

who barely scrape by and those whose needs are comfortably met, but there is little difference between the rich and those who feel they have what they need to get by. In other words, love isn't the only thing money can't buy.

It can't buy happiness.

The film illustrates this through interviews with those who have found happiness in simple ways, or in togetherness. For example, the residents of a Danish co-housing community who share all domestic duties, including child rearing; a 60-year-old Brazilian surfer; Namibian tribes living off the land, much as all mankind did millennia ago; a German ex-banker now working in one of Mother Teresa's charity wards; the cheerful populace of the island of Okinawa—world longevity capital due to healthy eating, valued traditions and constantly mingling generations.

The film made the point that in contrast to Okinawa, mainland Japan has the globe's worst suicide rate, which the film attributed to pervasive workaholic behavior, routinely leading to exhaustion and despair.

It seems to me that Jesus knew all this 2000 years ago, and told us straight out:

“A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.” (John 13:34)

And, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and

with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself. All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.’ (Matthew 22:37-40)

Jesus was right. It comes down to knowing and sensing that you are an integral part of the whole, and because you are an important part of the whole, providing service to others. People who do that feel happy and complete, and from Jesus’ point of view, they are doing what they need to do to usher in the kingdom of heaven.

Here’s another way to see it. We all are born with talents and abilities. How we use them determines our happiness. We can use them to pile up treasure on earth, or we can use them to pile up treasure in heaven. We do the latter when we use them in service to others.

Why don’t many of us recognize this?

We have been told we should look out for number one, and so it never occurs to us, and if it does we start to think we must be some kind of wimp.

So much comes at us every day it’s almost impossible to think. This may be one reason the water building up behind the dam holding back our understanding has not yet broken through. Maybe so much information has numbed our minds, or put us all to sleep.

Nevertheless, the time has come to acknowledge that we are all connected and the way to happiness and fulfillment

is to recognize that and base our life's work on it. We are not comparable to machines—as the nineteenth-twentieth century paradigm still holding sway with many would have us believe. We are not assemblies of parts that somehow evolved out of the muck and developed a computer-like organ called the brain that miraculously creates awareness inside our skulls. When the brain dies, the lights do not go out. We simply leave the old worn out vehicle behind and move on.

The brain and the body are simply the means to an end. The brain-body combination is a way for spirit—the life force, a spark of the godhead—to enter into physical reality. Perhaps we come here only one time. Perhaps we come here hundreds or even thousands of times. Perhaps physical reality is like a great big amusement park—a diversion. Perhaps it is a school. Maybe it's both.

The time has come for each of us to realize we are eternal. Death is not the end. Death cannot provide an escape. Death does not exist because there is only life. Each of us is like the character from *Groundhog Day*, and we will be much better off once we realize it. Then, we will then be motivated to get things right and achieve lasting happiness.

In the past, a single discovery could create a new worldview—that the earth was round, or that the sun was the center of the solar system. Then Newton's laws followed by the *Origin of Species* did the trick. It seems to

me so many discoveries have occurred since then that more than enough are on the table to create a new one.

What's holding us back? Those with a vested interest in maintaining the status quo. People who do not want to look stupid. Ignorance on the part of people too caught up in the information overload to see the forest for the trees. People with dogmatic religious beliefs. The truth is, a new worldview is already held in part by many, and in full by a small percentage of the world's population.

God is within us. Therefore, the personality of the God our objective mind assumes exists will be the personality of the God we come to know. If we assume a loving and forgiving father God, as Jesus said to do, this will be our God.

If one believes in an unforgiving, wrathful and capricious God, this will be the God that person has to deal with.

If a person does not believe in God at all, but thinks everything happens arbitrarily and by chance, that person's experience will confirm the belief.

The same is true in matters of health. If a person believes the body is subject to all sorts of influences beyond his control, and that this, that, or another symptom shows that such and such an uncontrollable influence is at work on him, then the belief will impress itself on the subjective mind, the subjective mind will accept it without question

and proceed to fashion bodily conditions in accordance with the belief.

Once a person fully grasps this, he or she will see it is just as easy to externalize healthy conditions as it is the contrary.

The next step is for that healthy person to pursue happiness—the right way.

All creation is one connected whole, with no separate pieces. We are the whole, and the whole is us. Do your part. Use your talents. Pitch in.

I'll end this chapter with this thought, which admittedly was inspired by Voltaire. Concentrate on cultivating and improving your small piece of the large garden we live in, and the odds will be in your favor you'll be happy.

In the final two chapters ahead, we will look to the future.

Chapter Thirteen: The Rise and Fall of Worlds

History, as it is commonly taught at present, tells a comforting story. It suggests that humanity emerged slowly from ignorance, discovered agriculture, built villages, then cities, and finally civilization. According to mainstream history, the first civilization to emerge was Sumer in Mesopotamia (modern-day Iraq) around 4000–3500 B.C., i.e., about 6,000 years ago. Based on this account, progress was linear, cumulative, and largely irreversible. But the ground beneath that story has begun to shift.

In southeastern Turkey stands an ancient site now known as Göbekli Tepe. Its massive stone pillars—some weighing more than twenty tons—were erected more than eleven thousand years ago, long before agriculture, metallurgy, writing, or permanent cities were supposed to exist. The site displays symbolic sophistication, ritual complexity, and coordinated labor on a scale that conventional timelines cannot easily explain.

Göbekli Tepe does not prove the existence of a lost global empire. It does something more unsettling: it demonstrates that organized, symbol-rich human cultures existed far earlier than modern civilization is prepared to

admit. Civilization, it seems, did not rise once. It rose, fell, and rose again.

Once this possibility is acknowledged, the past opens in unexpected directions.

Cycles Beneath the Surface of Time

From a purely logical standpoint, it would be extraordinary if humanity—an intelligent species that has existed for hundreds of thousands of years—produced only a single advanced civilization, ours, and managed to preserve it. Climate cycles, geological instability, and environmental volatility make such continuity improbable.

It is far more reasonable to assume that multiple civilizations emerged during favorable climatic windows, flourished for a time, and then declined or vanished. Coastal settlements would have been erased by post-Ice Age sea-level rise. Wood, fiber, and earth structures would have returned to dust. Only stone would endure—and only rarely.

Logic alone suggests not one forgotten civilization, but several.

This is where archaeology, geology, and certain unorthodox historical traditions begin to converge.

Edgar Cayce and the Memory of Lost Worlds

In the early twentieth century, the American mystic Edgar Cayce spoke repeatedly—across thousands of trance

readings—of ancient civilizations that rose and fell long before recorded history. His descriptions were not offered as myth or allegory, but as fragments of a deeper human memory.

Cayce referred most often to Atlantis, a civilization he described as both technologically advanced and spiritually ambitious. According to his readings, Atlantis existed in multiple phases over tens of thousands of years and declined in stages rather than through a single catastrophe. Its final destruction, he said, came through the misuse of powerful energies—forces that amplified human intention faster than moral development could keep pace.

Cayce also spoke of Lemuria, or Mu, an even older civilization centered in the Pacific. Unlike Atlantis, Lemuria was portrayed as less technologically aggressive and more spiritually oriented. Its destruction, in Cayce's account, resulted primarily from geological subsidence and earth changes rather than moral collapse.

Egypt, in this framework, was not an origin civilization but a repository—a culture that preserved fragments of earlier knowledge after the great destruction had already occurred.

Whether one accepts Cayce's source of information or not, the pattern he described is strikingly consistent with what logic and geology independently suggest: civilizations

do not end because they lack knowledge, but because they fail to integrate knowledge with wisdom.

The Pattern of Collapse

Across history—known and forgotten alike—the causes of civilizational collapse follow a familiar structure. First comes expansion: technological innovation, social complexity, and increasing control over the environment. Then comes acceleration: power grows faster than ethical restraint. Finally comes imbalance: environmental stress, internal division, and systems too complex to self-correct.

It seems reasonable to assume that catastrophe, when it arrives, is rarely singular. More likely, it is cumulative.

According to Cayce's readings, civilizations fall when spiritual ideals lag behind technological power. In modern terms, collapse occurs when systems designed to serve human life begin to dominate it.

As I imagine you now sense, this pattern is not confined to the distant past.

The Present Moment

Our own civilization now stands at a familiar threshold. Technological capability is advancing at a pace unmatched in human history as we know it. Artificial intelligence, automation, surveillance systems, and algorithmic decision-

making are rapidly reshaping labor, communication, warfare, and governance. These tools are not inherently destructive. Like all powerful technologies, they augment and amplify the intentions of those who wield them.

At the same time, political cohesion—particularly in the United States—has weakened. Public trust in institutions has eroded. Consensus reality itself has fractured, replaced by competing narratives—algorithmically reinforced and emotionally charged. Technology accelerates not only productivity, but polarization.

Looked at logically, this convergence is precarious.

Advanced civilizations do not collapse because they invent too little, but because they invent faster than they can ethically integrate. Artificial intelligence magnifies this risk. It centralizes power, abstracts decision-making, and distances consequence from choice. Without a corresponding evolution in moral responsibility, such tools destabilize the very societies they are meant to optimize.

Cayce warned that Atlantis fell not because it lacked knowledge, but because it misused it—placing control, domination, and material advantage above service and balance. Stripped of metaphysical language, the warning remains relevant: when technology outruns ethics, systems become brittle. This is why I believe that what has been revealed in this book is so important. My wish is that everyone could and would read this book and seriously

consider the message I hope that it conveys—that the best way to bring heaven to earth and happiness to the largest number of people possible is to practice what Jesus preached, and when doing so, to use one’s abilities and talents to serve others and the whole of humanity.

What May Happen Next

Logic does not demand that catastrophe will take place, but it does suggest the possibility. My intuition tells me that in the near term, the most likely outcome is not sudden collapse of civilization, but rather, fragmentation—increasing inequality, institutional paralysis, and localized breakdowns, rather than global ruin. Environmental pressures, economic dislocation, and information warfare will test societal cohesion. The danger is not that machines will replace humanity, but that humans will surrender responsibility to systems they no longer understand or govern.

Historically, such periods produce one of two outcomes. Either societies consciously re-anchor their technologies to shared ethical principles—redefining progress in human rather than mechanical terms—or they enter a prolonged era of correction, marked by instability and loss, until balance is forcibly restored.

Cayce suggested that collapse is not punishment, but

consequence. Civilizations, like individuals, learn through experience. When learning lags, events accelerate.

Continuity Beyond Ruin

I believe, however, that the deeper implication is not despair. If civilizations have risen and fallen before, humanity itself has endured. Knowledge has been lost, rediscovered, and reframed. The continuity, Cayce suggested, is not merely cultural, but spiritual. What survives destruction is not technology, but consciousness—learning, remembering, and returning under new forms.

From this perspective, the question is not whether civilizations fall, but what is carried forward when they do. Göbekli Tepe stands as a quiet reminder that our ancestors were not primitives awakening for the first time, but survivors of forgotten worlds. The ruins beneath our feet suggest not a single beginning, but many.

Whether our own civilization becomes another buried chapter depends less on what we invent than on how we choose to live with what we already know. If life truly goes on—through individuals, cultures, and perhaps even civilizations—then the responsibility of the present moment is clear: to ensure that power serves understanding, and that progress remains anchored to purpose.

I think it's safe to say that history does not repeat itself because it must. It repeats because the lesson has not yet

been learned. Stones collapse. Cities fade. Institutions dissolve. Yet it's clear that humanity itself endures, carrying forward questions that seem older than memory: Why are we here? What gives life meaning? How should power be used? What survives death?

These questions return in every age because something within us returns with them.

The Soul's Long Journey

As previously discussed, according to Cayce's life readings, the soul does not enter the world once, learn briefly, and vanish. Rather, it moves through time in a long arc of experience—returning to physical life as needed to develop understanding, compassion, and responsibility.

In Cayce's framework, reincarnation is not punishment or reward. It is education. Each lifetime offers circumstances suited to lessons not yet learned, opportunities not yet fulfilled, and capacities not yet expressed. No life stands alone; each is a chapter in a larger story.

Seen in this light, the rise and fall of civilizations takes on new meaning.

Civilizations as Classrooms

Cayce suggested that souls incarnate not randomly, but into environments that best serve their growth. A peaceful

age teaches different lessons than a turbulent one. A technologically advanced civilization presents different moral challenges than a simpler culture.

Civilizations, then, are collective classrooms—temporary structures through which many souls pass, learning together under shared conditions. When the lessons of a given era are exhausted or resisted, the classroom dissolves. The students move on, carrying what they have learned—often imperfectly—into new settings.

Atlantis, in Cayce's account, did not fall because knowledge was evil, but because power outpaced spiritual development. The tools available exceeded the moral restraint required to use them wisely. When imbalance reached a critical point, the environment itself changed, and the civilization could no longer sustain itself.

The lesson was not lost. It was deferred.

Continuity Without Preservation

This view does not promise the preservation of any particular civilization, including our own. Cayce was clear that institutions, nations, and even continents may rise and fall. What persists is the soul's progress—not the structures it temporarily inhabits. This distinction is essential.

If meaning depended on the survival of civilizations, then collapse would be final. But if meaning resides in the growth of consciousness, then even disruption serves a

purpose. What matters most is not whether a civilization endures unchanged, but whether the souls within it carry forward greater understanding.

In this sense, history is not a straight line, but a spiral—returning to familiar themes at higher or lower levels of integration.

The Present Moment Revisited

Our own era, marked by rapid technological expansion and moral uncertainty, resembles the transitional periods Cayce described. Power has increased faster than wisdom. Tools capable of great service can also magnify fear, division, and control. From a Cayce perspective, this does not signal inevitable destruction. It signals choice.

Souls incarnated now face accelerated lessons—about responsibility, compassion, and the consequences of intention. Some will respond by turning inward, hardening, and seeking control. Others will respond by expanding empathy and service. Both responses are forms of learning, though not equally harmonious. Civilizations, like individuals, reveal their character under pressure.

Reincarnation and Responsibility

One of the quiet implications of reincarnation, as Cayce described it, is accountability without condemnation.

Actions matter—not because of external judgment, but because they shape future experience. What is sown is encountered again, not as punishment, but as opportunity for understanding.

This applies not only to individuals, but to societies. The values a civilization cultivates—competition or cooperation, domination or service—become the conditions into which future generations are born. In this way, the soul participates in the continuity of civilization, and civilization participates in the education of the soul.

A Christian Reflection

For Christian readers, this perspective need not conflict with faith. At its heart lies a familiar teaching: that life is purposeful, that love is central, and that growth toward Christ-like understanding is the true measure of progress. Cayce himself consistently emphasized that reincarnation does not replace salvation, grace, or divine love. It is the *process* through which those qualities are gradually learned and embodied. The soul's journey, in this view, unfolds under God's law of love, guided not by wrath, but by mercy and patience. Whether one conceives of many lives or one, the essential call remains the same: to love God, to love others, and to grow in wisdom through experience.

What Finally Endures

When civilizations fall, something quieter continues. The capacity to love. The ability to choose compassion over fear. The hard-won understanding that power must serve life, not dominate it.

If life goes on beyond death, then no sincere effort toward goodness is wasted. And if civilizations rise and fall, then each age offers souls the chance to carry forward what has been learned into whatever comes next. History may bury cities, but it does not erase meaning. The story continues—not because civilizations are permanent, but because consciousness is persistent. And within that persistence lies hope: not that the world will never change, but that change itself can serve a deeper purpose. In that trust, one may face the future without fear—confident that whatever rises or falls, the work of the soul goes on.

Chapter Fourteen: A Word to the Christian Reader

If you have come this far, you have done so thoughtfully—and that matters. Many Christians approach questions about the soul, the afterlife, and the meaning of existence with caution, not from fear of truth, but from reverence for it. Faith, after all, is not meant to be casual. It is meant to be lived carefully, prayerfully, and with humility before God.

This book has not asked you to abandon that posture.

It has simply invited you to consider whether God's work with the soul might be larger, more patient, and more merciful than we often imagine.

Throughout Scripture, we are reminded that God is not confined by time as we experience it, that His ways unfold according to wisdom rather than urgency, and that growth is rarely instantaneous. The Christian life itself is described not as a single moment, but as a journey—one of learning, falling, returning, and gradually being transformed.

In that light, the idea that the soul may continue learning beyond a single lifetime need not diminish faith in Christ. For many, myself included, it deepens it. It portrays a God who does not abandon His children, who does not discard unfinished souls, and who works patiently across experience to bring about understanding rooted in love.

This perspective was central to the life readings of Edgar Cayce, who consistently emphasized that reincarnation, if true, operates entirely within God's law of love—not apart from it. Cayce did not teach reincarnation as an alternative to Christ, but as a means by which Christ's teachings are gradually learned and lived.

Whether one accepts that framework fully, partially, or not at all, the heart of the Christian message remains unchanged.

Love God.

Love your neighbor.

Grow in grace.

Bear good fruit.

No honest inquiry threatens those truths.

If life does continue beyond death of the body, then this life is not diminished—it is dignified. Each act of kindness matters. Each choice toward compassion carries forward. Nothing done in love is lost. And if this life is all there is, then the call to live faithfully is no less urgent.

Either way, fear need not guide us.

Christ taught not anxiety about the future, but trust. Not obsession with endings, but faithfulness in the present. Not speculation for its own sake, but lives aligned with love, mercy, and truth.

If this book has helped ease fear of death, softened rigid judgments, or expanded your sense of God's patience and

Life Goes On

care, then it has served its purpose. If it has raised questions, may those questions be held prayerfully rather than defensively. God is not threatened by honest seeking.

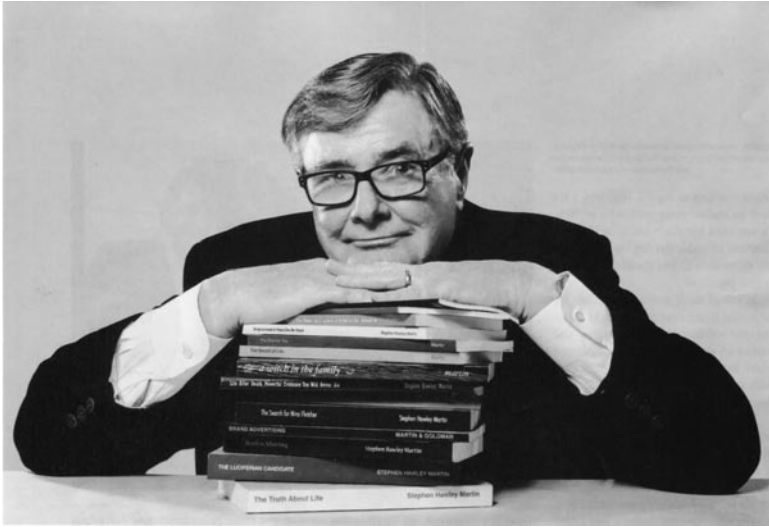
You are not required to resolve every mystery. You are only asked to walk faithfully with what you have been given. And if life truly goes on, then the journey you are on—even now—remains held within God's care, guided not by chance, but by love that does not abandon its work.

May you continue forward without fear, grounded in faith, and open to the possibility that God's purposes for the soul are deeper and more enduring than any single chapter can contain.

Peace be with you.

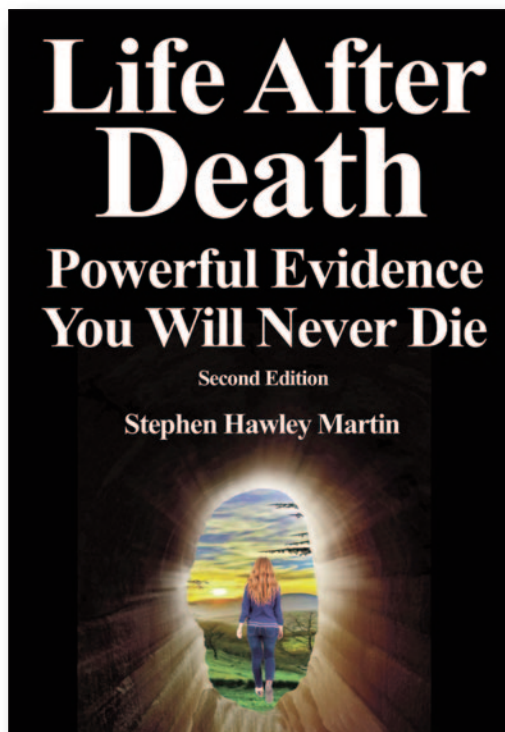
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About the Author



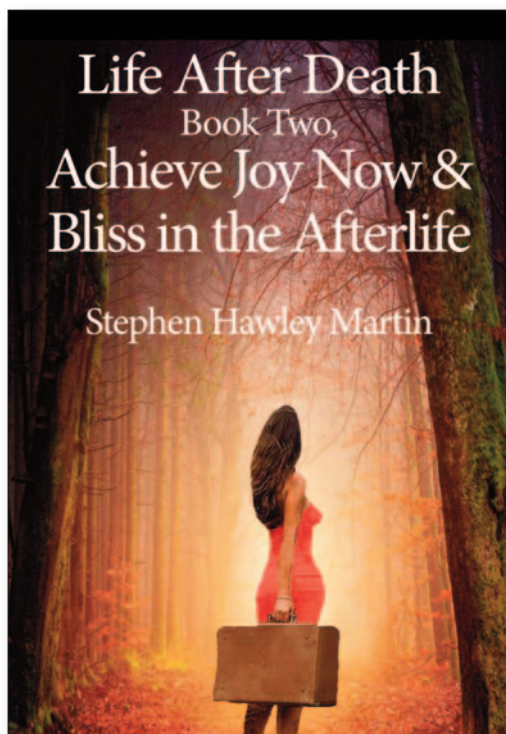
Stephen Hawley Martin is the author of more than three-dozen books, including five published novels, half a dozen business management titles, and quite a few self-help books and metaphysical investigations. He is a former principal of the world-renowned advertising agency, The Martin Agency, the firm that created the GEICO Gecko and “Virginia is for lovers.” Listed in *Who’s Who in America*, and best known as an award-winning author, Steve is the only three-time winner of the *Writer’s Digest* Book Award, having won twice for fiction and once for nonfiction. He has also won First Prize for Visionary Fiction from *Independent Publisher*; First Prize for Nonfiction from *USA Book News*, a Bronze Metal for Visionary fiction as well as a Five-Star Winner’s Award for Romantic Suspense from *Readers’ Choice Book Reviews*. He is actively looking for books to ghostwrite as well as other authors’ manuscripts to edit and publish. To get in touch with Stephen, visit his website: www.shmartin.com.

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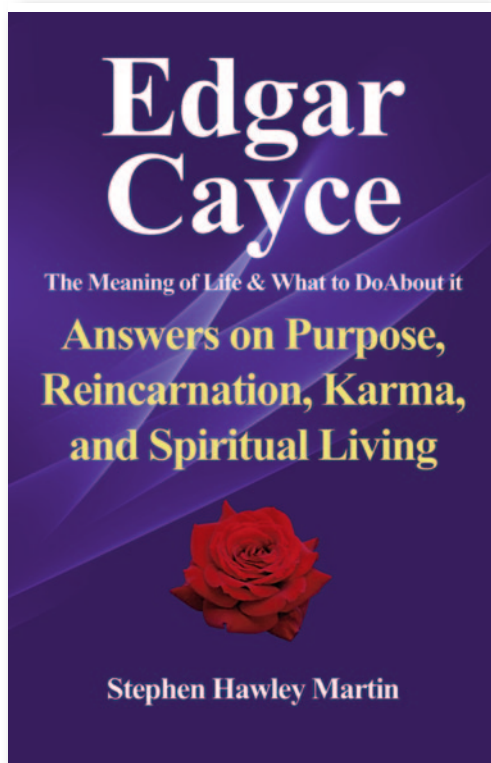
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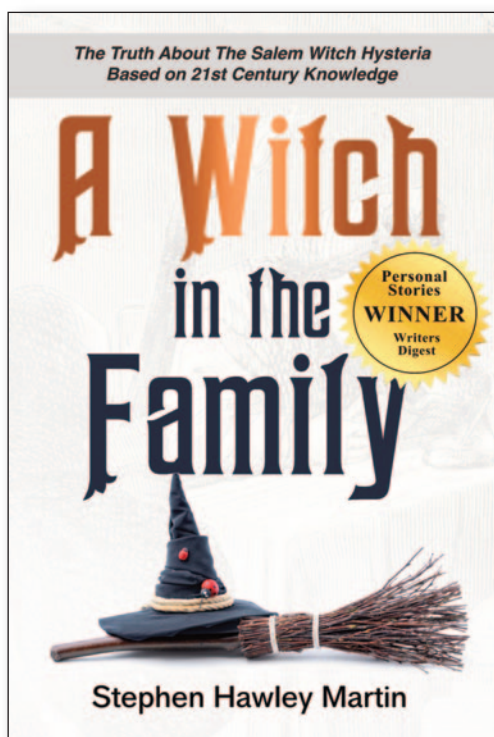
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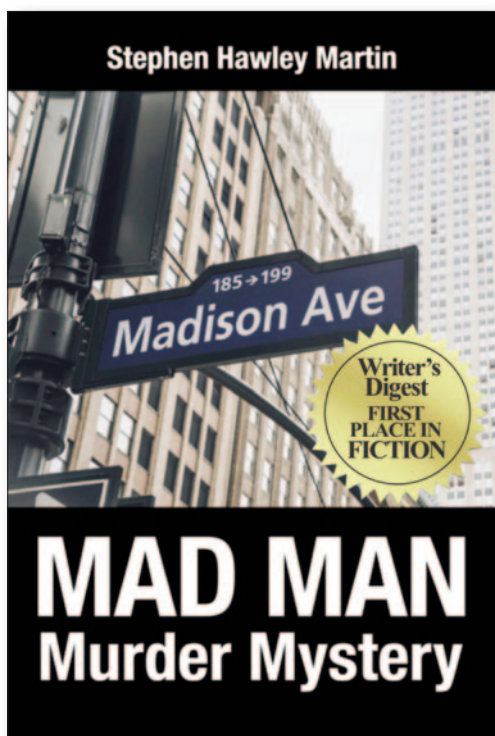
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