

WHAT GOD SAID

The 25 Core Messages of Conversations with God
That Will Change Your Life and the World

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Dedicated to all people
who believe in God
and who have yearned to know
more about this Divine Essence
and their relationship to It.

Acknowledgments

Is it possible that there is something we do not fully understand about God and about Life and about Each Other, the understanding of which would change everything? However you conceive of your personal God, is it okay to explore our ideas about God further?

I want to acknowledge every person who has picked up this book. Even if you put it down without reading it. Even if you start to read it and decide not to finish it. And of course, if you read it to its final page. It takes courage to embark upon excursions such as those offered here.

Every word ever written about God has been written by a human being. Those writers are believed to have been inspired by God. The question is: Has God *ever* stopped inspiring human beings? *Could it be possible that God's messages continue to flow to humanity, even today?* My deepest thanks to everyone who is willing to ask these questions, even if you don't agree with the answers I have found. We have met on the Field of Inquiry, and that is a wonderful first step toward each other. We do not have to agree, but if we can disagree *agreeably*, we will have done what *every* person's God has invited. And that can heal the world.

*The day is coming to pass
when the enormity of God's love
and of God's gift to humanity
will be fully realized,
and will become a part
of everyone's life.*

*This outcome is inevitable.
It is simply a matter of time.*

O kay, you claim to have talked directly with God, so tell us . . . what is God's message to the world?"

The speaker was the world-famous host of one of America's most popular national television morning shows, and he was asking me to answer the biggest question of all time.

"Can you bring it down to a sentence or two?" he added. "We have about thirty seconds."

My mind raced. How could I say something in thirty seconds that would capture the essence of what Deity wants the world to know? Then, in one quick flash, I heard God's answer in my head. I blinked and made an announcement that surprised even me.

"Actually, I can bring it down to *five words*."

The host raised his eyebrows, showing a nanosecond of disbelief, then deadpanned to the camera: "All right then. Ladies and gentlemen, from a man who says he *communes with The Divine*, here is God's message to the world . . . in five words."

I knew that millions were watching in households around the globe. This was my chance to bring God's most important communication to more people than I ever imagined I would, or could,

in my lifetime. Looking straight into the lens I repeated the words I had just been given to say.

"You've got me all wrong."

A One-in-a-Million Chance

My name is Neale and I should explain.

I have talked with God.

Not just once, in a singular moment of epiphanic revelation, but many, many times.

So have you.

You may not think that you have, but you have. You've probably just called it something else. You may have called it a *blinding flash of insight*. Or a *brilliant idea*. Or an *incredible hunch*, a *good guess*, a *stroke of genius*, a *coincidence*, *serendipity*, or *women's intuition*.

Whatever you called it, it's all the same thing. It's all a communication from a source of wisdom and insight within us that is the birthright of every person.

In my case I called my encounters with this source exactly what I experienced them to be: conversations with God.

Luckily, I wrote down all the exchanges that I had, so I've never forgotten them. The process started when, one day in February 1990, I sat down at 4:20 in the morning and wrote an angry letter to God, demanding to know why my life wasn't working and how I could *make* it work.

What followed was an ongoing on-paper dialogue with Deity, in which I asked the most perplexing or frustrating questions of my life, and answers were given to me exactly as if I was being given dictation.

At one point I was told by God: "This will one day become a book," and so, a few months later, I sent my first handwritten notes

to a stenographer to have them transcribed, then I printed out the document and sent it to a publisher . . . almost as a dare.

I don't know who I was daring . . . myself or God . . . but I knew that I wanted to "test" what I had been given, to see if it had any validity at all, to see if any of it was true.

I was fully aware, of course, that the chances of some publishing house actually printing and distributing a book from a person claiming to be talking directly to God were one in a million. It simply wasn't going to happen.

Wrong.

It happened.

So Now, the Expansion Begins

Now here I am after nine books in the *Conversations with God* series, and I'm doing what I have done every time I sat down to write a book. I'm asking myself: *Why are you writing this book? What are you hoping to accomplish here? Is this book needed?*

Let me answer my own questions so that you can get a sense of what's ahead—and so that you can decide whether or not you want to take this journey.

- I am writing this book because I have been asked many, many times by many, many people to expand upon what God said in the three thousand pages that make up the *Conversations with God* books—and I want to do so in one tidy volume, so that God's message for humanity could be made easily and rapidly accessible.
- What I hope to accomplish with these new, never-before-published expansions of the messages of *Conversations with*

God is make them *immediately usable* in day-to-day life. I want the ideas to be functional and not just conceptual.

- This book is needed for two reasons: (1) Millions of people have read *Conversations with God* (the books in the series have been published in thirty-seven languages), and those readers asked me not only to expand the material but also to tell them which of the many messages are the most important. (2) The messages of *Conversations with God* can change the world if people know how to apply them, and the world is desperately in need of changing right now. Not in fifty years. Not in twenty-five years. Not in ten years. Right now.

The Problem Is Systemic

It's time to be honest here: Nothing is working.

I mean, nothing.

Not a single major system that we have put into place on this planet is functioning correctly. Not our political, not our economic, not our environmental, not our education, not our social, and not our spiritual system. None of them are producing the outcomes that we say we want. In fact, it's worse. They're producing the outcomes that we say we *don't* want.

And not just on a global scale. It gets down to the personal level. It gets right down to you and me. All but the tiniest percentage of the world's people are caught up in struggle. *Daily* struggle. Struggle not merely to be happy, but to *survive*, to *get by*, to just *stay afloat*.

And now, it has gone past even that. Because now, even those people who *are* living the "good life" are not having a good time.

Not even them. Personal happiness seems mysteriously and frustratingly elusive. And even when people achieve it, they can't hold on to it.

Now that's the greatest clue, that's the biggest hint, that's the surest sign that something's amiss. When even those who *should* be happy by any reasonable measure are not, there's got to be a *serious systemic problem* in a society's culture. You can tell that a social formula is askew when even if the formula is working, *it's not*; when even if everything's going right, *something's desperately wrong*.

That's where we are today, and I think it's time for a New Message to guide humanity. I think it's time for a brand-new cultural story to be embraced by our species.

Now if you like your life exactly the way it is, and if you like your world precisely as it presents itself, you may disagree with me. Yet if for no other reason than that, you may want to read on. If you yearn to keep things the same, you should know all there is to know about changes that others (in this case, millions of others) are being invited to consider.

If you agree with me that it's time for some major changes to be made, in the world at large and perhaps in your own life, you have come to exactly the right place.

The messages here were meant to change everything.

Hold On to Your Seat

For quickest reading and maximum impact, I have reduced the core messages of the nine *Conversations with God* books to a thousand words. Then, I've offered significant expansions of them.

Here, then, is the clearest articulation and the most practical application of what I consider to be the most important insights of *Conversations with God*.

Not every statement in the thousand-word summary that makes up chapter 2 may be perfectly understood upon first reading. They certainly weren't for me. That's precisely why I've expanded on them on the pages that follow.

After fifteen years of working to apply these messages in my life and, during that same decade and a half, searching to find the clearest, simplest way of explaining—in answer to thousands of questions from audiences around the world—what the messages say and how they can be applied, I assess that I am now ready to contribute this book.

So here we go. Oh, but now, hold on to your seat. Some of these ideas may be considered by many to be heretical, so this could be quite a ride. Yet I believe it is as George Bernard Shaw famously noted: “All great truths begin as blasphemies.”

2

Here, in one thousand words, is all that the human race needs to know in order to live the life for which it has yearned and which, despite trying for thousands of years, it has yet to produce. Carry these messages to your world:

1. We are all One. All things are One Thing. There is only One Thing, and all things are part of the One Thing there is. This means that you are Divine. You are not your body, you are not your mind, and you are not your soul. You are the unique combination of all three, which comprises the Totality Of You. You are an individuation of Divinity; an expression of God on Earth.
2. There's enough. It is not necessary to compete for, much less fight over, your resources. All you have to do is share.
3. There's nothing you have to do. There is much you *will* do, but nothing you are *required* to do. God wants nothing, needs nothing, demands nothing, commands nothing.
4. God talks to everyone, all the time. The question is not: To whom does God talk? The question is: Who listens?

5. There are Three Basic Principles of Life: *Functionality*, *Adaptability*, and *Sustainability*.
6. There is no such thing as Right and Wrong, there is only What Works and What Does Not Work, given what it is you are trying to do.
7. In the spiritual sense, there are no victims and no villains in the world, although in the human sense it appears that there surely are. Yet because you are Divine, everything that happens ultimately benefits you.
8. No one does anything inappropriate, given their model of the world.
9. There is no such place as hell, and eternal damnation does not exist.
10. Death does not exist. What you call “death” is merely a process of Re-Identification.
11. There is no such thing as Space and Time, there is only Here and Now.
12. Love is all there is.
13. You are the creator of your own reality, using the Three Tools of Creation: *Thought*, *Word*, and *Action*.
14. Your life has nothing to do with you. It is about everyone whose life you touch and how you touch it.
15. The purpose of your life is to re-create yourself anew in the next grandest version of the greatest vision ever you held about Who You Are.
16. The moment you declare anything, everything unlike it will come into the space. This is the Law of Opposites,

producing a contextual field within which that which you wish to express may be experienced.

17. There is no such thing as Absolute Truth. All truth is subjective. Within this framework there are five levels of truth telling: *Tell your truth to yourself about yourself; Tell your truth to yourself about another; Tell your truth about yourself to another; Tell your truth about another to another; Tell your truth to everyone about everything.*
18. The human race lives within a precise set of illusions. The Ten Illusions of Humans are *Need Exists, Failure Exists, Disunity Exists, Insufficiency Exists, Requirement Exists, Judgment Exists, Condemnation Exists, Conditionality Exists, Superiority Exists, and Ignorance Exists.* These illusions are meant to serve humanity, but it must learn how to use them.
19. The Three Core Concepts of Holistic Living are *Honesty, Awareness, and Responsibility.* Live according to these precepts and self-anger will disappear from your life.
20. Life functions within a Be-Do-Have paradigm. Most people have this backward, imagining that first one must “have” things in order to “do” things, thus to “be” what they wish to be. Reversing this process is the fastest way to experience mastery in living.
21. There are Three Levels of Awareness: *Hope, Faith, and Knowing.* Spiritual mastery is about living from the third level.
22. There are Five Fallacies about God that create crisis, violence, killing, and war. First, the idea that God *needs* something. Second, the idea that God *can fail to get* what

He needs. Third, the idea that God *has separated* you from Him because you have not given Him what He needs. Fourth, the idea that God still needs what He needs so badly that God now *requires* you, *from your separated position*, to give it to Him. Fifth, the idea that God *will destroy you* if you do not meet His requirements.

23. There are also Five Fallacies about Life that likewise create crisis, violence, killing, and war. First, the idea that human beings are separate from each other. Second, the idea that there is not enough of what human beings need to be happy. Third, the idea that in order to get the stuff of which there is not enough, human beings must compete with each other. Fourth, the idea that some human beings are better than other human beings. Fifth, the idea that it is appropriate for human beings to resolve severe differences created by all the other fallacies by killing each other.
24. You think you are being terrorized by other people, but in truth you are being terrorized by your beliefs. Your experience of yourself and your world will shift dramatically if you adopt, collectively, the Five Steps to Peace:
- Permit yourself to acknowledge that some of your old beliefs about God and about Life are no longer working.
 - Explore the possibility that there is something you do not fully understand about God and about Life, the understanding of which would change everything.
 - Announce that you are willing for new understandings of God and Life to now be brought forth, understandings that could produce a new way of life on this planet.

- Courageously examine these new understandings and, if they align with your personal inner truth and knowing, enlarge your belief system to include them.
 - Express your life as a demonstration of your highest beliefs, rather than as a denial of them.
25. Let there be a New Gospel for all the people of Earth:
“We are all one. Ours is not a better way, ours is merely another way.”

The one thousand words here, embraced and acted on, could change your world in a single generation.

3

Some of those messages are crystal clear and some beg for clarification. Most of us can probably agree, for instance, that “it is not necessary to compete for, much less fight over,” our resources. On the other hand, we might have a difficult time with the idea that “there are no victims or villains in the world,” even if the statement is qualified by “in a spiritual sense.”

Especially in a spiritual sense, we have believed that “right and wrong” are intrinsic parts of the universal scheme of things—of “the Law of God,” if you will—and most people cannot conceive of a world with no moral absolutes. In fact, what many people think is *wrong* with the world today is that there seem to be fewer and fewer moral absolutes.

This creates a major problem. Many human beings don’t appear to know how to exist with no one outside of them telling them what to do and what not to do. It’s hard enough to find happiness in a world where someone *does*. What would we do without any rules at all? And what would restrain us if there were no judgment, condemnation, and punishment, *especially* in the “spiritual sense”?

So we see that the first difficulty with, and the biggest challenge of, the *Conversations with God* material is that it pulls the underpin-

ning from humanity's moral constructions and ideas about God. Never mind that those constructions and religious dogmas have done little to produce a world free of hatred, violence, and fear. Never mind that those moral values and teachings about God have failed to eliminate suffering, reduce abject poverty, or even do something as simple as end hunger on our planet.

Did you know that six million children die every year on Earth from *starvation*? That's fact, not polemic.

We get terribly upset—and we should—when a man with a gun kills 20 children in a school, but we sit by and watch 684 children die *every hour* of hunger and allow it to go on. There's nothing, we say, that we can do about it.

It is sadly true that when it comes to our global values and the religions from which they emerge, the majority of the world's people have refused to do what they have allowed themselves to do in every other area of human endeavor.

In science, they have encouraged it. In medicine, they have encouraged it. In technology, they have encouraged it. But when it comes to religion—presumably the most important area of all—they have actively discouraged it.

And what is it that people in science, medicine, and technology routinely do that, when it comes to religion, they stubbornly refuse to do?

Question the prior assumption.

Leave the Apples Where They Are

Apple-cart-upsetting is not something that people on this planet like to do. They don't want anyone tampering with their most sacred beliefs. Even if those beliefs are clearly and demonstrably wrong, or obviously and totally ineffective in producing the out-

comes they espouse or predict, human beings will cling to their beliefs with a stubborn rigidity that is both shocking and appalling.

For instance, did you know that—paleontological and archaeological discoveries of the past quarter century notwithstanding—surveys show that over 40 percent of this planet’s population continue to believe that the world is no more than ten thousand years old?

People believe what they want or need to believe in order to support their previously held point of view. In a startling number of instances, it truly is a case of “don’t bother me with the facts.”

Nowhere is this in greater evidence than in the area of religion.

We know what we know about God and we don’t want to hear anything else. And there’s a powerful reason for this. Our thoughts about God form the bedrock of our entire understanding of Life. This is true even for those who have no belief in God at all.

So whether people are “believers” or “nonbelievers,” their thoughts about God create a foundation upon which many build their entire moral code. Understandably, then, *new* thoughts, *new* ideas, *new* concepts about God are not easily welcomed or enthusiastically embraced by most folks.

A New Truth about God would be—for agnostics, atheists, and adherents alike—the Great Apple Cart Upsetter of all time.

Flying into the Window Pane

Since most people want to leave their religious beliefs alone, we find ourselves insisting on building a life in the first quarter of the 21st century with 1st-century spiritual tools.

In medicine, this would be like trying to perform surgery with a very sharp stick. In technology, it would be like trying to send a

rocket to the moon with the spark of a flint stone. In science, it would be like trying to conduct an experiment in a cave by the light of a small fire.

Still, leaving our religious beliefs untouched could make sense *if* those tools were working. Yet we are not allowed to even *question* if they are working. The problem is not with the tools, we tell ourselves, the problem is that we are not using them.

Yet the keen observer would realize that the problem is exactly the opposite. The problem is that we *are* using them. And we are using them *against each other*.

Thus, the tools of our ancient religions have proven ineffective (to put it mildly) in creating a world of peace, harmony, sufficiency, and dignity for all.

What is wrong here?

That is a question we are not supposed to ask. We are supposed to keep on doing the same thing we have always done, expecting to get a different result. (And that, of course, is the definition of insanity.)

Like flies against a windowpane, we keep banging our heads against that which we do not see—or, in our case, which we *refuse* to see: that there must be something fundamentally flawed in our beliefs about God and about Life, or we would be way past where we are now in terms of our social and spiritual development.

We would not live on a planet where people still kill each other in order to resolve their differences.

We would not live on a planet where people still die of starvation by the millions while enough food is thrown into the garbage every day to feed half the population.

We would not live on a planet where 5 percent of the population holds or controls 95 percent of the wealth and resources—and considers this perfectly okay.

We would not live on a planet where “every man for himself” is actually considered preferable to “all for one and one for all.”

What Are We Willing to Do?

Yet we do live on such a planet. And so the question is, are we willing to continue all of this?

Are we willing to just go on as we have been, bequeathing to our children and to theirs a world that can unlock the mysteries of the human genome but cannot unlock the love within the human heart?

We say we are not. We say we want a better life, and to produce a better life for our offspring, but what are we willing to do about it?

Are we willing to do *the bravest thing of all*? Are we willing to challenge our most sacred beliefs? Are we willing to consider the possibility that there may be something we do not fully understand about God and about Life—the understanding of which would change everything?

Are we willing to consider—to at least explore—new ideas, new thoughts, new constructions within the human story? Even if, on the surface, they seem to contradict what we think we already know about God and Life, can we at least explore their possibilities? Must we dismiss every new concept, every new hypothesis, out of hand simply because it does not agree with the story we have been telling ourselves for centuries and millennia?

No. We do not have to. And a civilization that hopes to advance cannot afford to. Thus, the messages here become extraordinarily important, for only when we are open to all ideas are all possibilities open to us.

There is good news here. Today, as the world faces economic crises, political upheaval, civil unrest, societal breakdown, environmental degradation, spiritual confusion, ongoing conflict and war, people everywhere are finding the courage to *not* leave their religious beliefs alone. They are searching for new guideposts, new insights, new answers, new ways of being human.

Most important of all, a small but growing number of people are now yearning for new ways of understanding and relating to God, because they have come to a new awareness that humanity's ideas about God greatly impact, and in some cases even create, its ideas about humanity itself, about who we are in relationship to each other, and about how Life works.

And it is clear now—today more than ever, because of our ability to see ourselves, to communicate with our entire world, in an instant—that some of our old ideas are no longer functional.

It is doubtful that they were ever functional, but it didn't matter in the past. Not on a global scale. Because things kept going. Life went on. But now, things can't keep going anymore. Not as they have been. Too much is known by too many too fast. Our old ways of doing things, our old ways of *being*, are no longer even considered

partially functional by part of the world. And this is what people everywhere are beginning at last to acknowledge. In the past, one place on the Earth could hide its dysfunction from another place. Now, we all know everything about what's going on everywhere. This makes dysfunction harder to hide—and harder for the world at large to tolerate.

Too many of us are seeing our self-inflicted wounds. And we're also seeing that we're running out of Band-Aids. We can't just keep patching everything together.

We're running out of fertile soil in which to plant our crops. We're running out of cooler, damper climate to stop our Earth from parching. We're running out of pure water. We're running out of clean air. And we're running out of ways to ignore all of this.

We're running out of money to make things better. We're running out of time in which to do it. Worst of all, some people are running out of the *will* to do it, as they sink deeper and deeper into fear and frustration, thinking that the only solution is to turn *on* each other rather than *to* each other.

This Group Does Not Include You

You're not among those who believe this, or you would never have picked up this book. You're among those who are clear that it's not too late to change this—even if you don't exactly know what part you can play in doing it. (More on that later.) What you *do* know is that what must be accomplished now is the complete overhaul of our way of being.

Not a small task, but not impossible. Our species has experienced such a complete re-creation of itself before—a renaissance, a rebirth, if you will. And this renaissance need not take three hundred years. It can be accomplished in one-tenth the time, pre-

cisely because of the instantaneous and transparent nature of our modern-day communication—a condition that I call *instaparency*.

I want to suggest that our turnaround might best begin with a new writing, an expansion, of our cultural story, of the words that we tell ourselves about ourselves, of the lessons we teach our children about the reason and purpose for Life itself, and—most important of all—of the narratives we share with everyone about what we call “God.”

This is where the power lies. This is where the leverage is. This is where we find the fuel that drives the engine of the human experience.

Yet what new Divinely inspired addition to our hallowed human story could capture our attention and cause us to even consider changing our age-old behaviors? That is the question. What new ideas from God could be as powerful and as inspiring, as exciting and as motivating as those of Lao Tzu or of Buddha; of Moses or of Jesus; of Muhammad or of Krishna? What expansion of our story could be as moving, as life-impacting, and as experience-changing as the messages of the belief systems and religions to which the followers of those teachers gave birth?

That has been the key question for a very long time. What new ideas could expand our ancient story sufficiently to offer brand-new possibilities for an entire species?

It's Not About Rejection or Abandonment

I come here to respectfully suggest that the contemporary ideas of what I have come to call the New Spirituality might offer one outline for those additions. They could at least offer a basis for opening discussions, for beginning explorations.

This will not happen, however, if people see such explorations as

a rejection or abandonment of humanity's Ancient Story, for we hold that story dear to our hearts—as well we should. It has, after all, gotten us this far.

So it should be made clear at the outset that *Conversations with God* never suggests such a thing. Indeed, it makes the opposite point: Much of what has been given to us by our world's religions is valuable and good. That is why religion itself has lasted so long. If religions have produced conflict between people, it is not because their teachings are “wrong” but because they may be incomplete.

It is my observation that many human beings are as children who have learned to add and subtract but have not yet heard about multiplication and long division (to say nothing of geometry, trigonometry, and calculus), yet *they think they know all there is to know about mathematics*.

There may be much more to be revealed about God and about Life than we now assume, and I believe it is a mistake to imagine that we have in hand everything there is to know on these subjects.

The intention of *Conversations with God* is not, therefore, to reject wholesale or completely abandon humanity's old ideas about the Divine and about Life, but to add to, build on, extend, widen, broaden, deepen, clarify, and enrich our Ancient Story.

Ending the Blockade

There is no need for this expansion of our original understanding to generate rage, much less block us forever as we seek to move forward on our spiritual voyage, any more than expanded scientific, medical, or technical understandings have blocked us forever from advancing in our evolutionary journey.

Yes, there have been some stumbling blocks, there have been some delays, on the evolutionary journey of science, medicine, and

technology, but nothing that we allowed to stop us completely. It took us awhile to admit that the sun did not revolve around the Earth; it took us awhile to acknowledge that washing our hands before delivering babies would decrease infant mortality; it took us awhile to “get” that computers need not pose a threat to human beings; but ultimately we embraced these and other advancements and stepped forward.

We didn’t throw out the whole of our scientific knowledge to accept a new discovery, we didn’t throw out the whole of our medical knowledge to adopt a new procedure, we didn’t throw out the whole of our technical knowledge to apply a new development. We simply enfolded the new within the old, allowing ourselves to modify and expand our understandings, and then we marched on, all the better for it.

It is time now for us to do the same with religion.

What is needed now on Earth is a Civil Rights Movement for the Soul, freeing humanity at last from the oppression of its belief in a violent, angry, and vindictive God, and releasing our species from a spiritual doctrine that has created nothing but separation, fear, and dysfunction around the world.

We need to replace this dogma, finally, with what my friend Rabbi Michael Learned would describe as an ethos of unity and cooperation, understanding and compassion, generosity and love.

The first step in this movement is to initiate a global conversation that begins with a rarely asked blunt question: “Honestly, and without bias, would you say that our world’s belief systems, including its religions, have produced the outcomes for which humanity has yearned?”

If the answer to this question is no, the next question must be: “Why do you think our belief systems have failed to do this?” And finally, any beneficial discussion would lead to this inquiry: “What beliefs or understandings do you feel *would* produce the outcomes humanity says it desires?”

These questions could form the basis of what I call the Conver-

sation of the Century—and this is something in which all of us can take part. You could engage in the Conversation of the Century right now in the worldwide virtual community that gathers daily at www.TheGlobalConversation.com. This is an Internet newspaper I created that relates the expanded spiritual concepts of the New Spirituality to the news of the day, making spirituality itself *vital* again, *meaningful* again in our daily lives.

You could also launch an Evolution Revolution Group in your community right now, meeting in your home once or twice a month.

Talking about important topics generates energy around them. Every major change that has ever occurred in our social, political, economic, and spiritual systems began when one person talked to another person about it. This may seem almost absurdly obvious, yet I observe many people who want to see changes in their world and in their lives nevertheless saying: “What can I do? What impact can I possibly make?”

So make no mistake, people talking together about the same thing at the same moment become very powerful. So powerful that, as Victor Hugo said, “All the armies of the world cannot stop an idea whose time has come.”

Rewriting humanity’s cultural story to include expanded beliefs and deeper understandings about God and Life, enlarging upon the primitive and simplistic beliefs of our past, is just such an idea.

It takes time, but large clusters of people—whole societies—*can* have a change of mind about things. Martin Luther King Jr. helped create a change of mind about blacks. Betty Friedan and Gloria Steinem helped create a change of mind about women. Harvey Milk helped create a change of mind about gays. We can all now help create a change of mind about God.

A New Gospel

To “change the world’s mind about God!” Ah! What a goal!

And *that* is the goal of the New Spirituality. That is the goal of *Conversations with God*. That is the goal of every soul who knows and loves God, and who can no longer sit by idly and watch people grapple with teachings of a fearful, vengeful, violent God, and ignore all the damaging outcomes that such beliefs have inflicted upon the human race.

Those of us in that group know that the first thing we must help people change their mind about is God’s relationship to us. Then, our relationship to God. And finally, the relationship of all people to each other, and to Life itself.

These three topics form the through line of the most important messages of *Conversations with God*, summarized in chapter 2. I believe with all my heart that these messages provide a pathway to the kind of life experience for which Earth’s people have yearned, both individually and collectively, for thousands of years.

Please note that I said “a” pathway, not “the” pathway. My choice of words was specific and deliberate. *Conversations with God* offered humanity a New Gospel in the book *Friendship with God*. That New Gospel concludes the summary in chapter 2.

So let’s start there. Let’s *begin* our exploration of this thousand-word summary where it *ends*. Let’s start at the bottom and work our way up.

6

As we look at the 25 Core Messages emerging from *Conversations with God*, last to first, I'm going to devote one chapter to each, and divide every chapter into two sections: Meaning and Application. Thus, we'll expand in two ways on the messages themselves, taking many people who have not had a chance to go there before into new territories.

Here, then, is our look at the most daring message of all . . .

CWG CORE MESSAGE #25

Let there be a New Gospel for all the people of Earth: "We are all one. Ours is not a better way, ours is merely another way."

This was for me one of the most wonderful messages in the dialogue with Divinity that I had the wonderful fortune to experience. In that sweet exchange, God softly told me that we could bring an end to much of the anger, hatred, division, and violence in our world by simply adopting and spreading a new teaching, a simple

fifteen-word new doctrine: *We are all One. Ours is not a better way, ours is merely another way.*

God called this the New Gospel, and I have to admit that I was at first very reluctant to use those words because, after all, the word “gospel” holds such a special significance for so many people. But I have never edited a single thing that I have been given in these dialogue experiences, and I couldn’t justify suddenly starting . . . so I left the phrase exactly as I received it.

I do believe that what we could all use right now is a new gospel. Not one to replace the old, but to add to it, to enlarge upon it, giving it deeper, richer meaning. So, in my talks and workshops around the world I have invited our economic leaders, our political leaders, and our spiritual leaders to speak this New Gospel to their audiences.

So far, no one has done so. I do understand. I know why not one major world leader, not one global spiritual figure, not one titan of business and industry has dared to utter those words from their podiums and pulpits and boardroom tables. They simply don’t believe it would work, that it would ever be accepted by those who listen to them, who look up to them.

In fact, because of the very positions these leaders hold, they may feel that they have to declare exactly the opposite. Why would anyone follow them if they did not announce that their way was the better way?

Yet nothing blocks the creation and sustaining of peace in our world more than thoughts of superiority—especially if they are accompanied by righteousness.

And this, sadly, is what we are seeing more and more of in our increasingly polarized society. “Not only,” our leaders say, “do we have a good idea . . . it is the *only* good idea there is. Our way is the *right* way. Everyone else is not only wrong, but *bad* for even suggesting something else.”

This is what our exchange of views is sounding like more and more each day—and it is so sad that we don't even notice that we are creating the polarity ourselves, with our righteousness.

As pointed out here earlier, when humans believe they are “right” about something, some of them—perhaps most—hold on to their views tenaciously, even when facts reveal their viewpoint to be inaccurate or render it obsolete.

It is true that people can change their mind about things. Harvey Milk, Gloria Steinem, Martin Luther King Jr., and others, God bless them, proved that. But it is not an easy task to help them to do so. For it is as we have been told in *Communion with God*: The idea of superiority is seductive.

It is, that book tells us, one of the Ten Illusions of Humans. It cannot be real . . . and I will explain why in just a moment . . . but it can sure seem real. And it feels so *good*.

Nowhere is the idea of superiority more pervasive than in religion, another point made earlier. That is what makes the New Gospel so dramatic and so striking—and so challenging for many people to embrace.

Yet precisely because it *is* challenging, it invites our closer examination. So let's take a more-than-surface look at it.

Is God Not “Everything”?

The New Gospel begins with the words “we are all One.” Thus, this final revelation in the 25 Core Messages of what God said brings us right back to its first revelation, closing a circle.

That first message is: “We are all One. All things are One Thing. There is only One Thing, and all things are part of the One Thing There Is.”

If that opening statement is true, it carries with it an important

implication—a *remarkably* important implication—that would amount to a major expansion of humanity’s previous understanding of the relationship between God and Man.

The implication, of course, is that if *everything* is One Thing, and if we are *part* of everything (which we obviously are), then *we are part of God*, unless God is *not* part of “everything,” but stands outside of “everything”—in which case “everything” is not everything at all.

This is, in fact, what many, many people believe. They believe that there are, essentially, *two things* that exist in ultimate reality: (1) Everything That Is, and (2) that which *created* Everything That Is.

In this cosmology, God stands outside of Everything That Is. In order to conceive of this, many people define “everything” as only that which is *physical*, and define God as that which is *spiritual*. Yet this is an unfair delineation, because it gives an altered meaning to the word “everything.”

It also forces us to assume that *we* are not spiritual . . . or that if *we are* spiritual *and* physical, the part of us that is spiritual is not part of “everything.” Because, by simple logic, if the part of *us* that is spiritual is *included* in what we call “everything,” then a God who is spiritual must be part of “everything” as well.

This leads some of us to take all sorts of twisted pathways and to use every kind of tortured logic to explain how a God who is spiritual is not part of “everything,” even though the part of us that is spiritual *is*.

Presumably, God’s spirit is a different kind of spirit, a different *type*. Not simply grander or bigger or more powerful, but a different *type* altogether—a type that does not fall within the category of “everything that is.”

It is the first big challenge of the New Spirituality to coax us away from this fractured reasoning and gently guide us into considering that there may be a pattern to life’s Essential Energy (that

some people, including myself, call “God”) that allows it to express as both physical and spiritual *at the same time*, even as we clearly observe that we, as humans, are doing.

In other words, we may wish to consider the possibility that what we can do, God can do, and that even as we are both spiritual and physical, so, too, is That Which Is Divine.

This would make Humanity and Divinity one and the same, except as to proportion. God is All Of It, whereas we are part of that which *comprises* All Of It.

Does this not make much more sense?

And have not major religions declared that we are “made in the image and likeness of God”?

Our Stories Tell Us Otherwise

Previously, we have been told by most of humanity’s cultures, through myths and tales, that God separated us from the Godhead. Not that God *divided* us (in which case we would all be simply divisions of the Same Thing), but that He *separated* us. Consider the difference.

A company that has divisions in several cities is still one and the same company. Yet a company that has *split off* and sold one or two of those divisions has created *separate entities* that are no longer a part of the original firm.

Is this what God has done? Yes, say most religions. Thus, they tell us that God is one thing and we are another. This separation occurred, so the teaching goes, because God was displeased with us. His displeasure, we have been further informed, is the result of our having disobeyed Him. (Or, at least, of our earliest ancestors having done so.)

And so, the Story of Separation was seeded in the human

psyche. This story is foundational and crucial to the world's religions, for if we believe in God at all, and if we hunger in any way for God's safety, for God's love, for God's magnificence, then getting *back* to God becomes our number one priority—and that is where religions come in. They promise us the way to do that.

To make sure that we understand the urgency of this undertaking, religions have added a caveat: If we *don't* get back to God, we'll wind up going to that other place . . .

The Unhappy Alternative

If we have not found the way to return to God, who will forgive us for every unkindness and misbehavior during our life on Earth, we will not be absolved of our sins, and, as punishment for our misdeeds, we will be sent to a place of interminable and indescribable suffering, called, variously, Hell, Hades, Ġahannam, Nār, Perdition, Infernum, the Netherworld, Sheol, Acheron, Gehenna, Tophet, the Abyss, or the Pit (among other things).

Complicating this process is the fact that, according to at least one religion, there is *only one way* to get back to God and be forgiven, and that is through Jesus Christ. No one else has the power to forgive us, including, presumably, God Himself, and so we need to take this one path to salvation.

Indeed, according to this doctrine, one can live a virtually perfect life, demonstrating kindness, caring, compassion, generosity, and every other divine virtue in every moment of one's life, and still not "get to heaven" (as the return journey is called). In other words, one cannot "earn" one's way to heaven, but can only get there if one "accepts Christ" as one's Lord and Savior. And the reason that it is only Christ who can offer salvation, and not God Himself, is that

it was Christ who “paid for our sins” through his willingly accepted torture and death, thus appeasing a “just” God (who others may see as a wrathful, vengeful God) who otherwise would have made us pay for them ourselves.

Even if one were to die moments after birth, an utterly innocent baby having been unable to commit a single offense against God, there is Original Sin to deal with, this particular religion asserts. That is the sin committed by the first souls—the ones who got thrown out of heaven to begin with—the burden of which has been passed down to us to carry, by virtue of our heritage.

This is the Doctrine of Inherited Imperfection. Unless a soul is spotless, this doctrine declares, it may not return to God. And no soul—not even that of a baby—is spotless.

We are *born* imperfect. We can find forgiveness, however, and return to spotlessness, by claiming Christ as our Savior. In the case of an infant, this is done through the sacrament of Baptism, in which Christ is accepted *on behalf* of the baby, by an adult.

(The child can accept Christ again later, through the sacrament of Confirmation, in which she or he, having reached the age of reason, confirms and renews the baptismal promise, and is thus said to be able to receive the Holy Spirit. This occurs usually between the age of seven and fourteen, depending upon local custom.)

None of this is a small matter, we are told, because if we don’t accept Christ’s gift of redemption, our own payment for our sins will go on forever. That is, for Eternity. So great has been our offense against God . . . including the greatest offense, which would be to not accept God’s gift of the tortured and sacrificed Christ.

By this measure Jews, Hindus, Muslims, Buddhists, and members of every other faith (as well as those of no faith at all) are going to hell.

Expanding Our Concept of Deity and Reality

Is this how it really is?

The New Spirituality invites us to look closely at this teaching and decide for ourselves if it matches our concept of an all-loving God who is the source of everything and therefore needs nothing.

The first and last of the 25 most important messages in *Conversations with God* expands our entire concept of Deity—and of Ultimate Reality itself. It describes a reality in which nothing is separated from anything else, and a God who is expressed in, as, and through all things that exist.

I will explore the inferences of this in greater detail when Core Message #1 is addressed separately, toward the end of this book. For now, let's stay with Core Message #25, and take a look at the second half of this fifteen-word statement. It says: *Ours is not a better way, ours is merely another way.*

As with the first half of the New Gospel, this sentence carries larger theological implications than might at first be apparent. More than a simple magnanimous or humble declaration, it expands our current thought that one way to God, and only one way, is the “better” way, and that one and only one religious doctrine forms the basis of the One True Faith.

What God seeks to tell all of us is that every faith is the One True Faith to those who hold it as True. This is because “as you believe, so will it be done unto you.” That is, pure faith empowers itself, producing the results that it calls for. And *this* is because of the nature of who you are and how life works (which, again, we will explore in later portions of this book).

So if you believe that your following the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad, bless His holy name, will lead the way to Paradise, it will. If you believe that accepting Christ as your Savior will guar-

antee you a place in heaven, it will. If you believe that modeling the behavior of Buddha will bring you peace, it will. Whatsoever you believe, so shall your experience be.

What this means is that there is more than one way to the mountaintop. It also means that no one way is “better” than another. All roads lead to the same destination. Indeed, says *Conversations with God*, there is no way *not* to get what we call the Kingdom of God, because there is *nowhere else to go*. (This idea will be explored in chapter 23.)

This place, too, has many names. Some call it paradise, Jannah, nirvana, Zion, the hereafter, the next world, the next life, the Kingdom of God, Elysium, the Elysian Fields, Valhalla, the empyrean, or, simply, heaven.

Spiritual Surgery Removing a Fatal Flaw

What the second sentence in the New Gospel does is extract righteousness from religion, thus removing something that is not very good from something that is otherwise very good in many ways.

The idea that there is only One Right Way to return to God has caused more death and destruction, and therefore caused more people to run *from* God, than any other single notion.

The New Gospel is like spiritual surgery, reaching in and cutting out the poison from the otherwise glorious and healthy thoughts that most humans hold about their religion and their Deity.

I believe that somewhere deep inside, most people know that if there is a God at all, it cannot be a Lord Of The Brand Name, who thinks that all facial tissue must be Kleenex, all transparent adhesive strips must be Scotch Tape, and all people going to heaven must be Christian (or Muslim, or Hindu, or Mormon, or whatever logo your God has on His name tag).

What the New Gospel from *Friendship with God* offers is a chance to allow our theology to catch up with our twenty-first-century awareness. It is an opportunity to discuss a central question: “Is it possible that our previous information about the Kingdom of God, and who is ‘eligible’ to be there, was incomplete?”

For the billions of people who hold that souls can return to God only along a particular pathway, the belief that all roads lead to heaven is an invitation to expand their concept of God, making the Divine Being large enough to reach by any route. Or, as I heard someone put it delightfully a few years ago: “If God is your target, you can’t miss!”

Had this idea of an “Only For Us” paradise been eliminated from the spiritual constructions of our species centuries ago, thousands upon thousands of lives would have been saved, as countless people have been martyred for not accepting and practicing the “right faith.”

Even today, people around the world are shamed and marginalized, rebuked and admonished, and in some cases still persecuted, for not embracing the “one true religion.”

Applying This Message to Everyday Life

This remarkable message offers all of us an opportunity to join in the healing of humanity.

Fear of damnation is no longer considered a loving way to gain converts to any religion, even if people say that they are doing it out of “concern” for someone they love. And being

made “bad” or “wrong” is no longer a healing way to get anyone to agree with your point of view on *any* subject.

The New Gospel has applications far beyond the sphere of religion. Practiced in the political arena, it could return civility to civil discourse. Embraced in the economic arena, it could replace ruthless competition with collaboration and cooperation. Accepted in the educational arena, it could bring an end to the teaching of only those things with which we agree.

The idea that ours is not a better way, ours is merely another way, applied across the board in our lives, would alter the entire social landscape in ways that we can only begin to imagine, and that would only improve human life for all.

Here are some suggestions for application of this insight into your daily experience:

- If you are a religious person, determine as of this day (if you have not already done so) to never again suggest to another person that your religion is the only way to get to heaven, or that every single person on the face of the Earth who does not practice your religion is going to hell. Use love of God, not fear of God, as your motivator to encourage others to take a closer look at your faith as their possible spiritual home.
- If you are deeply involved in politics, resolve to honor the political point of view and the ideas of others. Welcome them into your discussions. Do not confuse emotion for passion. It is one thing to be passionate about your point of view, it is another to become all emotional (as in “angry”) about it. If you feel anger rising

within you, if you find yourself starting to use abusive or disparaging language in advancing your point of view, take a step back from the discourse and turn down the temperature of the exchange. Own responsibility for allowing the conversation to get out of hand, apologize for ratcheting up the negative energy, and simply start to speak slower and a bit more quietly. It can do wonders.

- When you start to feel that your way is not only a “better” way but the “only” way to see things or to do things, think of a time in your life when you have felt that you had the only good answer to something and life proved that you were not entirely accurate in that assessment. Ask yourself if this could be the case now.
- Look at the other person’s point of view and intentionally search for something—*anything*—of worth or value in what they believe. See if you can find common ground, even a postage-stamp size of common ground, with that other, and restart the discussion there.
- Think of the desired outcomes you and others have in common. Focus on these outcomes that you both seek, rather than pathways or methods to achieve certain results. Often when we see the commonality of outcomes, we find a mutual respect that allows us to begin sharing and creating collaborative approaches to resolving disagreements and solving problems.
- Here is a miracle statement that I have found to be marvelously helpful in moving what could have been a

discordant conversation forward: “I can understand how you could feel that way.” This does not say that I agree with how you feel, but it does say that I do not think you are totally absurd or crazy for thinking the way you do. It honors your background, or life experience, and the path that brought you here today. Sometimes all that people need to break the ice is to feel that they have been heard. Not even agreed with, just fairly heard.

- Regarding the first part of the New Gospel, begin practicing the movement into unity with another by remembering a time when you felt the same way as the person before you right now. See things not just from their point of view, but from a time when you may have had the same or nearly the same feelings. Remember, feelings are not a point of view. They are what *sponsor* a point of view. Feelings of betrayal, for instance, or of anger. Feelings of loneliness, or of being misunderstood. These are all feelings that we have all had at one time or another. Seek to relate to another person’s *feelings*, not their viewpoint or their specific words, and you will begin the practice of “oneness” as a lifetime experience.
- Allow yourself to feel your own natural feelings of oneness with others—and, for that matter, with other forms of life—and practice doing this every day. Choose two other people with whom you interact daily or frequently, and see if you can identify any feelings you have observed them to have, that you have also experienced in your own life at one time or another.

These simple steps can work magic in your relationships—and in the way that you relate to the entire world around you. The New Gospel, these 15 words, are all that you will ever need to change your life for the better. And, excitingly, there are *985 more* words for us to explore.

On September 12, 2001, I was besieged with emails from readers all over the world wanting to know how the messages of *Conversations with God* could help the world prevent a repeat of the horrific and terrifying events of the day before. I wanted to know the same thing. Unable to sleep on the night of 9/11, I went to my keyboard and began an urgent exchange with God. Here is the beginning of that exchange, verbatim . . .

God, please be here. We need help.

I am here.

We need help.

I know.

Right now.

I understand.

The world is on the brink of disaster. And I'm not talking about natural disaster; I'm talking about man-made calamity.

I know. And you're right.

I mean, humans have had disagreements before, and serious ones, but now our divisions and disagreements can lead not simply to wars—which are bad enough—but to the end of civilization as we know it.

That is correct. You have assessed the situation correctly.

You understand the severity of the problem, you simply do not understand the nature of the problem. You do not know what is causing it. So you keep trying to solve it at every level except the level at which it exists.

Which is?

The level of belief.

The problem facing the world today is a spiritual problem.

Your ideas about spirituality are killing you.

You keep trying to solve the world's problem as if it was a political problem, or an economic problem, or even a military problem, and it is none of these. It is a spiritual problem. And that is the one problem human beings don't seem to know how to solve.

Of course I begged God, “Then *tell* us how to solve it!” An entire book emerged as a result of that plea, titled *The New Revelations*, and I consider the most important passage of that book to be . . .

CWG CORE MESSAGE #24

You think you are being terrorized by other people, but in truth you are being terrorized by your beliefs. Your experience of yourself and your world will shift dramatically if you adopt, collectively, the Five Steps to Peace:

- Permit yourself to acknowledge that some of your old beliefs about God and about Life are no longer working.
- Explore the possibility that there is something you do not fully understand about God and about Life, the understanding of which would change everything.
- Announce that you are willing for new understandings of God and Life to now be brought forth, understandings that could produce a new way of life on this planet.
- Courageously examine these new understandings and, if they align with your personal inner truth and knowing, enlarge your belief system to include them.
- Express your life as a demonstration of your highest beliefs, rather than as a denial of them.

It's hard to beat this message for clarity. It means exactly what it says, and there's no room for ambiguity. Yet it is more than a prescription for preventing future 9/11s. It is a stirring call to action. A challenge and an invitation to the entire human race: Find a new way of being. Explore the possibility of changing your fundamental beliefs.

Yet is this necessary? Why must changing, or even challenging, our beliefs be part of the so-called “steps to peace”? Why can’t we just leave our beliefs alone? It isn’t as if they are what causes all the turmoil in the world.

Or is it . . . ?

I used the words “fundamental beliefs” in the paragraph above advisedly. It is the fundamentalist movement in religions and in politics—the refusal to budge off of a belief, or even consider for a moment any new idea about it—that is exposing humanity to the danger of ongoing and endless self-inflicted wounds.

This is true in religion *and* politics. It is especially true when you put them both together.

Need some examples?

A gentleman named Richard Mourdock, campaigning for the U.S. Senate in Indiana in the 2012 general election, famously declared that if a woman became pregnant as a result of a rape, “it is something that God intended to happen,” and for that reason abortion should be opposed and outlawed, even in cases of rape or incest.

When he lost the election (only a week before he made his remarks he was widely predicted to win), Mr. Mourdock in his concession speech did not say, “Well, I may have gone a bit too far.” Instead, he remarked: “I will look back knowing that I was attacked for standing for my principles.”

He simply could not admit that some of his old beliefs about God and about Life are no longer working.

He is not alone.

This example is brought up here only to show how incredibly rigid, how unyielding, many people can be regarding their beliefs, even in the face of common sense, particularly when it comes to the most sacred of those beliefs—many of which come from what are said to be humanity’s holy books.

The Bible says, in the Book of Deuteronomy: “If a man has a stubborn and rebellious son who does not obey his father and mother and will not listen to them when they discipline him, his father and mother shall take hold of him and bring him to the elders at the gate of his town.

“They shall say to the elders, ‘This son of ours is stubborn and rebellious. He will not obey us. He is a profligate and a drunkard.’ Then all the men of his town shall stone him to death. You must purge the evil from among you.”

Of course, no one today would seriously consider such a “purging” for a son who, in youthful disobedience of his parents, occasionally over-imbibes, right?

Wrong.

The maintenance of civil order in society rests on the foundation of family discipline. Therefore, a child who disrespects his parents must be permanently removed from society in a way that gives an example to all other children of the importance of respect for parents. The death penalty for rebellious children is not something to be taken lightly. The guidelines for administering the death penalty to rebellious children are given in Deut. 21:18–21.

—Charlie Fuqua, 2012 candidate for Arkansas State House of Representatives, in his 2012 book, *God’s Law: The Only Political Solution*

Mr. Fuqua was also not elected.

Apparently some people *are* able to permit themselves to acknowledge that some of our old beliefs about God and about Life are no longer working. Syed Ghaisuddin, a minister of education for the Taliban in the Middle East, may not, however, be one of

them. Asked why the Taliban declares that women need to be confined to home, he told the press: “It’s like having a flower, or a rose. You water it and keep it at home for yourself, to look at it and smell it. It is not supposed to be taken out of the house to be smelled.” In other words, a woman is a *possession*. A man’s possession.

These are the kind of ancient views that may come from politicians, you might say, but surely members of today’s contemporary clergy—people who we hope will lead us and guide us as we seek to create a better life—are able to see when old views are no longer working, yes?

Well, not exactly . . .

Women cannot handle power. It is not within them to handle power . . . The real and true power comes from God, and God is the one that gave man the power and the authority over the wife.

—Rev. Jesse Lee Peterson, a popular Christian fundamentalist pastor, in his Sunday service webcast, “How Liberal Women Are Building a Shameless Society”

All he left out was that women need to stay at home, do the dishes, take care of the children, put supper on the table, handle the housework, and keep the laundry basket empty. Oh, and of course, perform her wifely “duties” for her husband.

And so we see that even in our supposedly modern society, in this supposedly enlightened period, we continue to be confronted with the need to make determinations: *Are* some of our old ideas about God and about Life no longer working? Or are these 2012 voices offering solutions that truly do and can work today just as they did in 1412, or 1012, or the *year* 12?

What the Five Steps to Peace offer us is a way to answer these questions.

Step One

The first of those steps—noticing that some of our old beliefs about God and about Life are no longer working—is without a doubt the biggest. So difficult is it for humanity as a whole to take this step that even a modest number of people doing so would create a revolution.

Why is it so difficult? Because of where humanity's old beliefs came from in the first place.

One of my life's most wonderful spiritual teachers, Dr. Terry Cole-Whittaker, startled me one day years ago when she put a brilliantly insightful question to her congregation (of which I was fortunate to be a member) at a Sunday morning service: "Who would you have to 'make wrong' in order to get Life 'right'?"

Terry offered the observation that in order to avoid making our mother wrong, or our father wrong, or our favorite teacher wrong, or our most hallowed spiritual messenger wrong, we will cling to what they told us, even if it is clearly no longer working (presuming it *ever* worked!).

She then invited us all to muster the courage to step out of our comfort zone and consider the possibility that what we assumed to be true, given its apparently authoritative source, may not be true at all—or may be, at least, *incomplete*. That is, there may be more to know on the subject.

It was Dr. Terry who ignited me to wonder: Has evolution stopped? Did humanity cease to grow and to advance in its understandings of life during the time of my mother and my father? Or the time of theirs? Or during the time of our earliest teachers and messengers? And if so, exactly how far back need we go to find the stopping point?

When, precisely, did spiritual evolution cease?

Or is it possible—just *possible*—that within each new generation is born the capacity for the acquisition of new and even larger understanding? Put simply, *is wisdom static or organic?*

People such as Dr. Terry take us by the hand and lead us to the edge of our comfort zone, promising us that they will be there for us in our moments of fear. It is these *new* teachers, as well as the old, who we do well to revere, for they lead the way to places yet untraveled by the largest number of us, taking steps into the unknown *for* us and coming back to report *to* us what they have found.

These are the Finders of Tomorrow . . . and always, always you can tell the true ones from the false, for the true ones, without fail, invite us to *join* them, not to *follow* them, on life's most spectacular expedition, The Journey of the Soul.

(The work of Dr. Terry Cole-Whittaker, for your information, may be accessed at www.TerryColeWhittaker.com. The program she offers is perfectly titled Adventures in Enlightenment.)

Step Two

Once we get to a place where we can at least admit and acknowledge that some of humanity's old beliefs about God and about Life—even some of the most sacred ones—are no longer working, the second of the Five Steps to Peace invites us to explore the possibility that there is something you do not fully understand about God and about Life, the understanding of which would change everything. That is, that our knowledge in this area may be Incomplete.

I capitalized that last word in order to signify its importance. I want to make the point here again that the problem is not that the Old Teachings are “false” or “wrong.” I believe the problem is that

in some cases they do not go far enough. Or perhaps *we* have not gone far enough in our search for a deeper understanding of them.

Or perhaps both.

Acknowledging that some of the teachings or our searching may be *incomplete* is for many also an enormous step. It is one thing to observe and concede that our Ancient Story may no longer be functional, but it is another thing altogether to embrace the notion that this may be because we never had, from the *beginning*, the whole story. That kind of admission takes spiritual humility. We have to grant that we *do not know it all* when it comes to the topics of God and Life—and that *we never did*.

And by the way, before we move forward into a territory that may feel injurious to our collective spiritual ego, I'd like to point out that the word "some" as found in the first of the Five Steps to Peace is a very important qualifier, and is best not passed over lightly in the reading.

Clearly, the intention of the Divine in this revelation is to make it known that it is not the whole of humanity's Ancient Story about God and Life that is incomplete and could benefit from expansion, but rather, portions of it. This point has already been made repeatedly in the present text, *on purpose*, so that no one could mistakenly assert that *Conversations with God* is being held up as a replacement for what it declares to be Utterly Errant Scripture.

I wish to note again that, quite to the contrary, *CWG* declares that the vast majority of the messages in the Holy Scriptures of most of the world's religions are of enormous value, and can be trusted *to the letter* to provide wise, caring, insightful, and beneficial observations. They thus offer us wonderful guidance.

Are there some cases, nonetheless, where the advancement of human understanding may add useful expansion to the time-honored words of our Ancient Story?

Of course.

And this *expansion into new territory* is what the second of the Five Steps to Peace invites us to undertake.

It also lures us with its wording, inferring that, should we be daring enough to look beyond the parameters of our present perceptions, we might chance upon deeper spiritual truths, *the understanding of which would change everything*.

This is not a small enticement.

A Brief Notice

May I please take a break right now from this narrative to offer a brief explanation as to style?

You have no doubt already noticed that the track of this text is annular, circling back on itself in clearly observable repetitions. That is by intention, and should not be considered a fault of redundancy, but rather, a deliberately employed literary convention. It is used because the narrative of *Conversations with God* itself, upon which this book is based, is also circular, making its points over and over again in contextual roundabouts, until they become familiar enough to reveal themselves as straight-line logic.

Now, to return to the narrative . . .

Step Three

Even the acknowledgment that there may be something still to learn about God and Life is not the end of our task. We must *announce that we are willing for new understandings of God and Life to now be brought forth, understandings that could produce a new way of life on this planet*.

What good does it do to know that your car keys are missing if you're not willing to go looking for them?

Observing Earth's societies today, it is clear that we're stalled, and we can't get the engine going again without some key elements in place. Yet if we're unwilling to look for the keys, we'll never get anywhere.

That's where we are now. We're at a major intersection here—a three-way intersection between Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow—and the engine has conked out at just the wrong time, inviting a huge crash. We've got to get out of this intersection and on our way.

We've got to find those keys! And we won't find them if we're not willing to look anywhere but the same old places they used to be, but are no more.

Recently I bought an old reference book that I was excited to read. But when I got to the end, I found that there were pages missing. It was a much-sought-after book that I'd found in a used bookstore, one that must have been treasured and read by many. I was frustrated by the lack of a concluding narrative, but I didn't simply sit back and say with a sigh, "Well, I hope that what was on the missing pages isn't important and that all there is to know on this subject was contained on the pages that I did read." I went to a bookstore that sold *new* books, found an updated text on the topic, and got it!

Humanity has "bought" a lot of ideas about itself, about Life, and about God, but now we're discovering that there are some pages missing in these wonderful old books we've been reading. We need to get a new book, one with no missing pages!

This doesn't mean that we're *throwing out* the old books, it merely means that we're willing to *not stop there* when it's obvious to us there's something missing, and that we're choosing to add to what we've learned by reading something more, expanding what is already known with additional information.

Forever Stuck, or at Last Made Free?

So, the “key” issue now is: Are we willing for new understandings about God and about Life to be brought forth? Are we open to finding our keys, even if they are not where we thought they would be? If our answer continues to be no, we may be forever stuck in an old story with missing pages.

Of course, this brings up other concerns that have caused humanity to stumble and stop at this third step in the past. Top among them: What new ideas, from what new sources, should we seriously consider? It’s a fair question. Do we listen to just anybody standing on a soapbox under a sandwich board declaring the End Is Near?

That’s not something I would do. I wouldn’t read just any book, buy just any recording, attend just any lecture, go to just any workshop or retreat. I’d want to know something about the source of the material I was considering, and I’d want to know if anyone else felt good enough about that material to recommend it.

If I found new messages in a book that was read by millions in thirty-seven languages, I would probably be encouraged to consider it. I might not automatically agree with it, but I might want to know, if nothing else, why so many millions found it of value and made it a bestseller.

It has been my experience that material that reaches such a level of popularity does so not so much because it brings people something new, but because it causes them to *recognize and remember* something they *already know*.

This feeling of instant recognition is experienced when the Soul tells the Mind: “Here is pure and deep truth of which you have always been aware, but which you may have forgotten.”

Having felt that impulse, I would nevertheless—after investigating where it took me—listen to myself. *I would never take anyone*

else's word for anything. Rather, I would tune into my own inner guidance, to see what it told me about what I was exploring. That is why Step Four of the Five Steps to Peace invites you to embrace new ideas about God and about Life only “if they align with your personal inner truth and knowing.”

But I certainly would not fail to explore a new idea simply because it seemed radical. I would give everything a chance. For it is as I have said earlier . . .

Only when we are open to all *ideas* are all *possibilities* open to us.

Step Four

Okay, now it's time to put up a sign: Bravery Needed.

Once you have entered into a state of willingness to allow new understandings about God and Life to be seriously considered, the next step will require spiritual stoutheartedness—for now you will be invited to courageously examine these new understandings and, if they align with your personal inner truth and knowing, to *enlarge your belief system to include them.*

This is not a small step by any means. Some of your own most sacredly held ancient spiritual stories, and the sources from which they came, will no doubt be put to question, and it will take bravery—intellectual and spiritual bravery—to withstand the mental buffeting that such inner questioning often produces.

And this says nothing of the public ridicule and marginalizing that will take place (you can count on it) should you confront your questions out loud, much less *dare to offer answers* that violate orthodoxy.

Yet today, if we truly want peace in our lives and peace in our

world, we would do well to look at the outcomes that our ancient story has produced in our lives, and ask whether there might be another way to achieve what we say we seek to accomplish as a species.

It will take the spiritual version of Ignaz Semmelweis in this the twenty-first century to do that. Who shall be the spiritual version of Ignaz Semmelweis? And, will there be more than one? Might there be thousands? Maybe even millions?

That is what the Civil Rights Movement for the Soul invites: Millions of Semmelweises.

Idea Heroism

It was in 1847 that Dr. Ignaz Semmelweis, working at the Vienna General Hospital's maternity clinic, made a remarkable and, no doubt, scary observation: At least one way that medicine was being practiced was actually killing people.

In Vienna, as elsewhere in European and North American hospitals, puerperal fever (or childbed fever)—which caused a fatal infection in women during childbirth—was becoming an epidemic, sometimes affecting up to 40 percent of admitted patients. Dr. Semmelweis theorized that doctors who had recently conducted autopsies were then giving internal exams to pregnant women, thereby transferring decaying matter from the corpses to the genitals of the women. He proposed a new hand-washing procedure using chlorinated lime, which has since become a known disinfectant.

Having the courage to explore his idea—which was radical in that moment—Dr. Semmelweis found that its application *reduced the incidence of fatal childbed fever tenfold* in maternity institutions.

It didn't matter.

That's right. That's what I said. All the evidence didn't matter.

Dr. Semmelweis's thoughts were contrary to the medical beliefs and practices of the time, and so his ideas were ridiculed and rejected and he basically became an outcast in the medical community in Vienna, dying in 1865 in a mental institution.

It was not until the twentieth century that his ideas were accepted, with untold numbers of babies' lives having been saved since.

Idea Heroism is what I call this, and there is no doubt that had there been hundreds of Ignaz Semmelweises displaying such heroism and supporting such obviously beneficial changes, the outcome would have come about faster, and his own life would not have ended as it did.

Yet how long will it take for others—not just a stray individual here and there, but hundreds or thousands of others—to come along to challenge the *biggest* beliefs of our species, our *spiritual* beliefs, and to propose obviously beneficial changes? And who will begin?

Put more directly: If not now, when? If not you, who?

Step Five

The last of the Five Steps to Peace is where the rubber meets the road. Having accepted that some of our old beliefs about God and Life are no longer working, having seen that this may be because there is more to know on these subjects, having moved into willingness for new understandings to now be brought forth, and having enlarged our belief system to include those new understandings that align with our inner truth and knowing, we now are called

upon in Step Five to *express our life as a demonstration of our highest beliefs, rather than as a denial of them.*

It is not easy to “walk your talk.” I learned that very quickly. After producing twenty-seven books about what I have experienced and declared to be conversations with God, I have been expected (rightly so) to live up to my own writings. Of course, they were not my own writings at all, and that is all I can offer as a weak defense when others point (rightly so) to my failings. “You aren’t a very good example of the messages you proclaim in those books,” they tell me when they get to know me, and they’re absolutely correct.

“You probably didn’t even get the ideas in your books from God,” others say. “How dare you claim such a thing? God does not talk directly to people, and He certainly doesn’t give them entire books!”

Well, let me address that last comment first.

I know of a man who once said that God spoke directly to him—and five books arose out of those inspirations. That assertion seems perfectly acceptable to people. The books are called Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. The man’s name was Moses. An entire religion sprung up around those books.

I know of a man who claimed that an angel directed him to buried golden plates inscribed with revelations that he published in what he said was an English translation of the plates, calling it the Book of Mormon. His name was Joseph Smith. An entire religion sprung up around that book.

The list of people in this category could go on. And I am not suggesting for one minute that a religion should spring up around the books in the *Conversations with God* series. But I am suggesting that we may wish to explore what came through in those books, and not simply dismiss them out of hand because the human scribe

who wrote them down is still living, or because the incident happened less than twenty years ago, rather than twenty centuries ago.

As for being a not very good example of the messages in those books, at the very least this could help to establish the veracity of their source. If the books were filled with ideas and notions, proclamations and declarations that I simply made up, you would think I would at least make up stuff that I could live up to! (Nobody likes to be called a hypocrite or a faker—and those are two of the milder invectives that have been used on me.)

So no one is more aware than I am that the last of the Five Steps to Peace is very challenging. Yet it is for me the most inspiring step of all. It calls me every day to a new level of commitment, invites me every day to a deeper determination, beckons me every day to re-create myself anew in the next grandest version of the greatest vision ever I held about who I am and who I choose to be in this world.

That's the opportunity here. For me and for you and for the whole human race. And actually, it has nothing at all to do, in the specific sense, with *Conversations with God* or the New Spirituality. Step Five, and *all* of the Five Steps to Peace, can be taken by every member of every one of the world's organized religions—and by people who belong to no religion at all.

What the Five Steps to Peace are all about is simply looking at what's going on in our world and in our individual lives and, if we would like to see some things change for the better, undertaking a fair exploration to determine if there might be something that we don't fully understand about Life and, yes, about God, the understanding of which could alter the entire experience. Then, it's about incorporating into our daily lives what our exploration has brought us.

It's as simple—and as daring—as that.

Applying This Message to Everyday Life

If I were asked what actions the average person could take to bring peace to their lives and to our world faster than any other, I would choose these invitations in Message #24 from the thousand-word summary of *Conversations with God*.

Here are some suggestions for application of this insight into your daily experience:

- Print out a copy of the Five Steps to Peace and post them somewhere in your home—on the refrigerator, or the mirror in your bathroom, etc.—where you will see them every day. Then, read them every day as if you have never seen them before. Even if you’ve read them so often that you can recite them, read them again. Keep bringing them to the forefront of your mind. This is where you make decisions about how to react to daily life.
- Post the Five Steps to Peace in the guest room in your house, the guest bath, or elsewhere visitors to your home might be expected will see them. This may generate spontaneous conversations about them with friends who read them and ask you what all of that is about and where you got them.
- Have a number of extra copies of the Steps printed in advance and located in a place where you can easily find them, so that if someone says, “I wish I had a copy of those,” you can say, “You do now,” and hand one to them.

- Start a Steps-to-Peace Journal and make an entry when you find yourself challenged by the Five Steps—especially Step Five. Ask yourself, in writing, “What aspect of what I truly believe about God and about Life am I having a difficult time embracing right now? What, if anything, could I do tomorrow to embrace and live this belief?” Then, answer your own questions with a short essay in the journal.
- Start an Evolution Revolution Group in your community and invite its members to meet once a week or twice a month and discuss the entries in their Steps-to-Peace Journal. Design ways to support each other within the group in embracing the highest beliefs you hold about God and about Life, and in demonstrating them daily.
- Post the Five Steps to Peace on the church house doors in your community, as Martin Luther posted his *Ninety-Five Theses* on the doors of All Saints’ Church in Wittenberg, Germany, in 1517. His action ignited the Reformation. Your action could ignite the Civil Rights Movement for the Soul. Ask the pastor for permission to do so. If permission is not given, ask why not? What about the Five Steps to Peace is not acceptable? Start an Evolution Revolution Group at your church to discuss these steps, whether or not you’ve been allowed to post them on the church doors.
- Hand the Five Steps to Peace to friends, put them under windshields in cars at shopping centers, publish them in Letters to the Editor in your newspaper, pur-

chase small ads in the paper, in your church bulletin, etc., listing the Steps.

- Call radio talk shows and discuss the Five Steps to Peace.
- Truly begin, truly be the instigator of, a Civil Rights Movement for the Soul in your community, state, or nation based on the Five Steps to Peace. Place a petition on the Internet. Get the energy around this idea moving.

