

God As Animator

NTS Thesis by Chris Lines (N1838-1163)

August 19, 2012

"The author retains the copy write of this document and hereby grants to Northwestern permission to reproduce and to distribute publicly paper and electronic copies of this thesis document in whole or in part in any medium now known or hereafter created."



We must become aware that God dwells within us and do everything in Him, then we are never commonplace, even when performing the most ordinary tasks.

-Blessed Elizabeth of the Trinity



Table Of Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| Introduction | 1 |
| God As Animator | 6 |
| Genesis Account | 10 |
| Made In His Likeness | 13 |
| The Soul In Philosophical and Theological Writings | 15 |
| Consciousness/The Mind/Soul/Holy Spirit | 20 |
| Non-Canonical Scripture and Lost Scriptures | 25 |
| Explanations Across Time | 31 |
| Summary | 33 |
| What Matters and What We Are Not | 36 |
| One Spirit, Indivisible | 37 |
| Belief In A Single God | 38 |
| Scripture About The Single God | 39 |
| Omnipotence/Omnipresence/Omniscience | 41 |
| Logos | 42 |
| Thermodynamics | 44 |
| Summary | 46 |

continued

| | |
|---------------------------------------|----|
| Practices Through History | 47 |
| Variety of Beliefs in 1 – 5 centuries | 48 |
| Heresy and the Unorthodox | 48 |
| Philosophers and Theologians | 49 |
| Western Thought | 51 |
| Modern Day Examples | 54 |
| Summary | 58 |
| | |
| The Role of Jesus | 59 |
| | |
| The Kingdom | 61 |
| | |
| Scriptural References | 63 |
| | |
| Conclusion | 66 |
| | |
| References and Further Reading | 70 |



Introduction

Try if you can, to internalize the idea that your soul or spirit is actually God. Let yourself consider that the very essence of the mental/spiritual ‘you’ is the breath of the Almighty God. Your body moves, your heart beats, your lungs expand and contract with air, but it is the essence of God that lives inside each of us and allows us to reason, act and be alive. God is the quality that animates the human body.

As our Creator, God initiates our soul, our mind, our spirit, our self. It is the spark of life that animates the body and brings people to life. This soul/spirit/mind/consciousness/self is housed in a physical body, and the blend becomes each of us, individually. Humans are shaped by what occurs around us and our response to it. The personality and mental capacity of the individual shifts and evolves, but the soul of the individual continues to burn; our life continues to hum in concert with the life-sustaining organs of the body. The continued life of the physical body depends on the continued existence of the soul, spirit, or mind within.

James writes that “the body apart from the spirit is dead” (2:26). Here we see the idea that the life of the body depends on the life of the soul. Philosophers and even some physicians agree that without the soul, without consciousness, the physical body cannot exist. There are just as many arguments opposing this view, claiming that the soul and the body are the same substance. For these people, when the body dies and the mental processes stop, it is truly the end. Brain death is the number one indicator of physical death in medicine today. What is known as the Mind/Body Question is explored later in the paper.

The idea of God As Animator is seen in various religions using various symbols and interpretations, and has been addressed by thinkers and philosophers from the beginning of time. The idea is first affirmed Biblically in the Book of Genesis, when God breathes himself into a clay figure and the first human is created. It is the only time we read of God actually breathing himself into a creation to give it life. Of course each of us cannot be the figure of clay. We are (our bodies are) the result of a physiological process we know as human procreation. However, the clay figure is our ancestral and spiritual Father.

The Genesis account is perhaps the most significant lesson about the power and love of God toward his human creation. It is a story of giving the gift of life and the recipient's responsibility to live meritoriously. As the first book of the Bible, Genesis sets the stage for the entire story of humankind through the Old Testament as well as New Testament. It is the first time we see concepts of atonement and resurrection. God's love shines through the Genesis account by giving life and creating the universe in which we live. Some Christians believe the God As Animator idea as if it is a fundamental thought for all people. Other Christians feel the idea is sacrilegious or even dangerous. Great thinkers who were non-Christian (Jesus would not be born for centuries) perpetuated the idea that God or the Supreme Being, indwells humankind. The breath of life blown into the nostrils of the clay figure in Genesis is the Spirit of God, the animator of humankind.

The 8th Century theologian John Damascene points to the Apostle Paul, who contends that in our human life we carry the divine indwelling life within us "as in vessels of clay" (2 Corinthians 4:7). He says there is the real probability that humans will choose sin over the indwelling God in us. Damascene says that the human's individual level of understanding in the afterlife will depend on the depth and sincerity of our relationship with God while we are alive. The further the person from God while on the earth, the further the individual from any sort of reward or "divinization" upon death.

Divinization is defined in Christianity as "...deification, making divine, or *theosis* is the transforming effect of divine grace." In literature and legend, Divinization is the "becoming more and more perfect," or "the becoming more godly," as the human individual matures and becomes more self-aware and has a harmonious view of human understanding. The notion of humans, or their souls, growing more and more god-like as the end goal can be seen in many belief systems such as where humans strive for Self-Actualization, reaching a state of Nirvana, or for those who practice Hare Krishna, reaching a state of Krishna Consciousness. Divinization is a state some hope to reach at the end of the physical life, and there are other terms from other belief systems stating something very similar.

Self Actualization is a term originally introduced by Kurt Goldstein, the German Jewish neurologist and pioneer in modern neuropsychology. Self-Actualization is identified as the single most important motivator in one's life. Goldstein says the goal is to realize one's full potential, and that actualization is the master motive, the only real motive: "the tendency to actualize itself as fully as possible is the basic drive...the drive of self-actualization." [1] Psychologist Carl Rogers similarly wrote of "the curative force in psychotherapy - *man's tendency to actualize himself, to become his potentialities...*to express and activate all the capacities of the organism." [2] Again, something to strive for...an ultimate goal. The term Self-Actualization received its highest exposure in Abraham Maslow's "Hierarchy of Needs," a theory that the final level of psychological development that can be achieved when all basic and mental needs are fulfilled and the "actualization" of the full personal potential takes place. In some

religious teachings, Self-Actualization is the goal to get to the next level, the next higher stage of evolution, or to heaven itself.

The term Nirvana indicates the ultimate in a favorable after-life and a peaceful state of mind. It is another “ultimate goal” in modern religions, but is rooted in ancient traditions including Buddhism and Hinduism. There are a number of spiritual practices, old and new, where Nirvana is the ultimate state. Nirvana is an ideal condition of rest, harmony, stability, or joy. In Buddhism, Nirvana is the ineffable ultimate in which one has attained peace of mind, disinterested wisdom and compassion. In Hinduism, Nirvana is the emancipation from ignorance and the extinction of all attachment. It is becoming one’s true self and becoming one with everything.

Krishna consciousness is a state Hare Krishnas reach when they have learned to act in harmony with ultimate reality—the Supreme Person. Krishnas believe we are all naturally Krishna conscious but we are not aware of it. In what Krishnas call ‘human illusion’, we think we’re the center of the universe and our bodies are our real selves. Krishna consciousness means becoming free from that illusion, and experiencing our true blissful, eternal nature. Krishna consciousness is both a "practice" and the goal of the practice. The goal is to be Krishna conscious. The practice is to always stay conscious of Krishna.

From Christians and spiritualists who can relate to divinization and an individual becoming Divine, to states of mind displaying peace and reason, to joining the Ultimate One as part of the greater whole, the concept is apparent of the everlasting soul being the ultimate goal. This belief gives us hope that there is something beyond human life on the planet earth. What does it mean in Matthew 22:31-32 when Jesus says, “God is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living.”? The Scripture has a number of interpretations, but given the topic we are addressing, it may mean that God lives within those who are alive with breathing, functioning bodies. It is true in the literal sense that God is the God of the living, because the indwelling God lies within each living human. Should the body die, the spirit moves on. Of course God is not worshipped by deceased human bodies, but he is the God of the living.

In Isaiah 57:16, God talks of “the souls which I have made.” The verse is part of a larger conversation Isaiah relays to listeners, where God through Isaiah tells them in a somewhat dark manner that their behaviors must improve. In this scripture, the Prophet shows that the punishments which they shall endure will be for a short time, and that God won’t be angry with them forever. He tells them that those worshipping idols shall come to nothing; but those who trust in God’s grace, shall enjoy heaven. This pertains to all humans, within us are the “souls that God made.”

Where do we come from and what is the origin of the soul? How does the soul come to be within us, and is there the difference between the soul and our physical bodies? In reviewing the

literature, it is clear that these questions have been around since long before Christ. Ancient philosophical writings detail arguments about the origin of the soul, and various people through history have explored the idea. Additionally, there is the concept of Consciousness and questions surrounding what it is that comprises Consciousness, how it might work, and what are its implications with the physical body. Like the Soul and the Mind, everyone seems to know what it is, but no one can identify it for anyone but themselves.

The range and depth of opinion on the God As Animator topic is evident in two interviews I have conducted for this thesis. One minister I approached on the subject responded, “Of course it is God animating humans. There can be no doubt. He is with us always.” This minister conveyed the opinion that while the idea of God as Animator could be interpreted both logically and Scripturally, some people are afraid to entertain the idea because such a notion may cause people to believe that they are God. In Revelation we are told that the end is near when man begins to regard himself as God. Another minister immediately began arguing aloud and rejecting the idea before I was done explaining the question. This minister said that anyone expressing such an idea was actually working to “destroy the church.” He labeled the idea “heresy” and advised that I stop talking about it all together.

Yet even to naysayers, the idea has some resonance. Some ministers are aligned with the idea of God as Animator, some are violently opposed, and some point to Scripture as a means of validating the idea. King David quotes the words of God in Psalm 82:6-7, “I said you are gods, you are all Sons of the Most High. But you will die like mere men; you will fall like every other ruler.” Jesus also quotes this Psalm in conveying to His disciples the awesome power within. He paraphrases God in telling them that even though they were endowed with the essence of the Almighty God, as humans they would ultimately die.

As humans we too often do not realize the unbelievable power with which we are endowed. We are able to create life, as we are able to destroy life. We make up our own minds, and we fashion our own realities. So it is with theology. The individual theology one builds as they begin to seek out a relationship with God and Jesus is truly their own. It may resemble a Methodist practice or that of a Baptist, but what is in your head and your heart is yours, alone. Everything we choose and everything we perceive is ours only. We must understand this if we are to understand one another and carry on with dignity and grace.

The most important thing this paper may bring to others is an alternate way to try and understand our relation to God as well as our relationship with Him. Possibly someone will for the first time begin considering the concept of God As Animator. Certainly our relation to God is one of subservience since He is our Master and Creator. Certainly our relationship with God is deeply personal and unique. By considering God as the Animator of humans, we see that we are exploring this world together with God, and that God has a stake in how we behave and interact with the rest of His Creation. God indeed walks among us and is with each of us every step of the way. When we open our hearts to God and when we see that He is alive and well within us,

our relationship with Him is enhanced and becomes more profound. The gift of God within is precious.

The God within is seen in an ancient story recounted by architect, writer and stage designer Claude Bragdon:

There is a Hindu tale that at one time, all live beings were gods, but man sinned and abused the Divine, causing Brahma, the god of all gods, to decide that the godhead should be taken away from man and hidden some place where he would never again find it and abuse it.

“We will bury it deep in the earth,” said the other gods. “No,” said Brahma, “because man will dig down in the earth and find it.”

“Then we will sink it in the deepest ocean,” they said. “No,” said Brahma, “because man will learn to dive and find it there, too.”

“We will hide it atop the highest mountain,” they said. “No,” said Brahma, “because man will someday climb every mountain on the earth and again capture the godhead.” “Then we do not know where to hide it where he cannot find it?” asked the lesser gods.

“I will tell you,” said Brahma, “hide it down in the man himself. He will never think to look there.”

And that is what they did. Hidden down in every man is a part of the divine. Ever since then man has gone over the earth digging, diving and climbing, looking for that godlike quality which all the time is hidden down within himself. [3]

This folkloric tale from Hinduism does not say that God is the animator of humans, but it does say that the spirit of God dwells within. It is an entertaining way to make people think and develop their ideas around what it may be that makes them tick.

Acknowledgement of the God As Animator idea has been fluid and dynamic across the span of humankind. Like most questions that have stymied human thought, it has generated various degrees of interest and practice over time. It is a pleasure and a challenge to research, interview people as to their understanding of the issue, and try to convey questions that have been with us from the beginning. God As Animator is truly a scientific, as well as a philosophical and theological question, and a question pondered by all humans. As a theological thesis, the bottom line is that this effort will not “prove” anything, but seeks to examine an interesting concept about the nature and function of God. God’s interaction within and amid His people is intriguing. The most seasoned preachers will tell you God is illuminating our lives from within. The Bible tells us that God indwelling is the order of things. Great and not-so-great thinkers have speculated the origin of the soul.

Allow yourself to consider the idea that God animates us and is in fact the life and energy that makes our human bodies function and act. He is closer than we may know.

God As Animator

This paper will examine the age old idea that God is the Animator of humankind, and that God indwelling gives humans life, consciousness, reason, and discernment. This is to say the physical energy that animates the human body is the spirit of God. It is that simple...and that remarkable. It is to say that there is a distinct tether between humankind and the Creator. It is to say there is a tether between everything the Creator has created. It is also to say that without the indwelling Spirit, the physical body is nothing.

In the Book of Ecclesiastes King Solomon writes, “the dust returneth to the earth as it was, and the spirit returneth unto God who gave it” (12:7). The Creation story recounts that the figure of man was formed of clay, so would it not follow that the spiritual portion of man (soul/spirit) would be formed of spirit (God)? Hebrews 12:9 refers to God as “the Father of our spirits,” revealing that the spiritual source of the soul is God.

The idea is expressly not promoted in modern theology, yet it emerges throughout the Old and New Testaments as well as in the weekly words of ministers across the world. Branded as “heretical” as early as the 300s AD and buried as an idea incongruent with orthodox Christian beliefs over the ages, the idea of God As Animator does not go away. The literal words of the Genesis account of Creation and evidence throughout Scripture tell of God breathing Himself into man, and there are words and images throughout the rest of the Old Testament and through the New Testament that support the idea that God/Jesus is alive within every person. From the beginnings of organized thought, ancient writings and philosophic thought have supported the idea that what animates humans is the Spirit of God, and not something of this world. This is not a New Age trend, but Ancient Proclamation.

There are a number of Scriptural examples of the God As Animator concept in both the Old and New Testaments. Our human need to have things “proven” or “validated” causes us to demand, or at least insist, on Biblical proof. Read in plain English, the below Scriptural references are clear and plain to understand in their relevance to the God As Animator concept. Scriptural references to the concept are presented in Chapter 7.

From a literal as well as a subjective point of view, the following two examples, one from the Old Testament and one from the New Testament, can be interpreted to connote the Spirit of God as the life-spirit indwelling human beings:



The spirit of God has made me, and the breath of the Almighty gives me life. (Job 33:4)

Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's spirit dwells in you.
(1 Corinthians 3:16)

In these examples the reader of the Scripture is being told that the breath of God has given us life and resides inside each of us. It is an affirmation of God's omnipresence and instills confidence by assuring us that we are not alone. This is the true message of the Creation story.

The Old Testament Scripture from Job 33:4 could not lend itself more to the idea of God As Animator, for it says *the breath of the Almighty gives me life*. The story here is that Job's friend Elihu rebukes him for his seeming lack of faith. In the Scripture Elihu is explaining to Job that the two of them were created the same in the eyes of God.

The New Testament example, 1 Corinthians 3:16, is another "crystal clear" example when read literally. The Scripture tells us that God lives within, and that our bodies are the temple of God. Of course God lives in the Temple, where else would he be? So, the notion is not so incredible that the spirit and essence of God lives within the Human Temple, which God himself made. We human bodies are God's home here on earth.

The Harper Collins Bible Concordance says that in 1 Corinthians 3:16, "You are God's temple" refers to the post-Jesus spiritual congregation in Corinth. The congregations in Corinth were very troubled, and Paul gave to them guidance in written form as well as in person. Paul visited Corinth in 56 AD, staying for 18 months. In 1 Corinthians 3:16, it is said that Paul uses metaphor when explaining to the Corinthian church that the congregation (the body) is the Temple where God lives.

This is the standard interpretation of 1 Corinthians 3:16 and it is completely understandable. Paul is expressing to the Corinthians that God lives within their church body/Temple (congregation) and they should act accordingly. But what if we read the words literally? Paul says in the literal sense that God is living in the human body, and that our physical shell is the Temple. There are Old Testament verses that speak of God living in the Temple, written long before there were Jesus followers in Corinth. As we will see, the notion of God As Animator predates Paul's letters to the Corinthians by thousands of years.

As a child I was intrigued by the Sunday School claim that God and/or Jesus was alive in my heart. It is a fascinating concept. That sense of intrigue has remained with me always. When I became involved in religious and Biblical studies, I hoped I would find one or two examples of Scripture where it was confirmed that God is the indwelling human animator. In my studies, Scriptural examples demonstrate a common theme running throughout both Old and New

Testaments. Two additional Scriptural references to God As Animator from the Old and New Testaments follow :

The Old Testament offers Zechariah 12:1, saying,

“Thus sayeth the Lord who stretches out the heavens, who lays the foundation of the earth, *and* who forms the spirit of man within him, declares...”

This example says that God has formed the spirit of man within men. We see the creator and the created, as well as the essence of God playing a part in the human creation. The language is clear, the spirit of man within him was created by God.

In the New Testament, 2 Corinthians conveys a distinct message regarding God As Animator from the words of God, Himself, relayed by Paul,

“God hath said, I will dwell in them and walk in them; and I will be their God and they shall be my people.” (2 Corinthians 6:16) In the most literal interpretation, God is telling us that He indwells us.

What does God mean when He says “I will dwell in them.”? This thesis will explore the idea that God lives within every human, and in fact gives us action and humanity. Without the indwelling God, we are a mere physical body void of life. Romans 8:9 says “You are not made in the flesh; you are in the Spirit since the Spirit of God dwells in you.” Paul is to be commended for his strong, clear use of verbiage. Read Romans 8:9 again.

Some have asked, “Why God indwelling?...what is the purpose?” Such questions provide great fodder for intellectual exchanges, but my view is that we are indwelt by God because He loves us and wants intimate communion with His creation, or more romantically, His children. God wants a relationship with us. By being the life spirit within us all, God cannot be closer to His creation and hence understands each of us and our infinite needs. Where else could God go to be an active part of the lives of His creation? How much closer could He be to you and me?

The ultimate message here is that if we acknowledge God as the life within, we will see great rewards across our lifetimes and God will manifest Himself time and again in the way of lessons, blessings and abundance. If we know that God is living within, it enhances one’s self-image and makes us care more about everyone and everything around us. It allows us to see through eyes that are divine in nature because we share a very personal link to everyone and with everyone.

God is within everyone and has animated human life, from Adam to the present day. If we can allow ourselves to trust and believe in ourselves, and if we look carefully for the God within others, we will know strength and courage. If we ask God into our lives, we will not need to be afraid. If we will recognize and nourish His presence, we will connect with others and begin to see God within everyone we meet.



The breath of life, the breath of God inside of humans, is what differentiates us from the other creatures inhabiting the earth. The presence of God within is what ties us directly to our God, and directly to one another. When we consider this similarity, those around us begin to take on a different significance. If what lives inside you is also living within me, my personal actions and judgments may be more measured and understanding.

Scripture supports the God As Animator belief, as do ancient writings and the works of some of the world's greatest thinkers from Greek antiquity and the Golden Age of Thought. Philosophers and theologians from different ages have studied the 'God As Animator' idea by way of structured arguments and questions posed in written materials. Various and diverse groups over time have incorporated the belief as part of their spiritual worship. Some of these beliefs became religions and religious practices, some faded from view after being branded as heresy. Today there are groups that recognize God As Animator.

When hearing the God As Animator idea for the first time, many people say, "Of course it's true...the Spirit of God is within." Yet when they have had a chance to actually consider what this idea means, many people back away from it, either reevaluating their acceptance of the belief or unsure exactly what they think about that which causes their physical body to "be alive." Give it a serious thought. What is it to have God indwelling? To consider this as reality would require a complete paradigm shift for most people in the modern world. The human intellect is the greatest obstacle in our quest to understand the indwelling nature of God within humans. The God As Animator claim cannot be read on any meter or gauge. It is not qualitative. Like consciousness or the mind or the soul, we know what it is but we cannot adequately define it.

Of all the wondrous medical doctors who have populated the earth since the dawn of time, not a single one of them can say what it is that brings the human body to life. They can all say how the body operates and that the heart pumps blood out to the hinter regions of the body; that the lungs supply oxygen; the brain processes stimuli; but as for what it is exactly that causes all of this to occur, or what is the catalyst, doctors cannot say.

No one can say but God. The "spark of life," as it is called by poets, is an age-old mystery with as many theories and hypothesis as there are theologies. Scientists want to know more about and understand consciousness and the mind. Psychologists refer to our inner self, and religious people refer to the Soul or the Holy Spirit. Each term is different and specific, though we know all of them as intangible and inexplicable.

Some social activists contend that this indwelling spirit enters the body at the moment of conception, while others disagree. The argument conveys the underpinnings of the debate over abortion in America, and it demonstrates how little we can say for sure about the phenomenon of human life on earth. When does life begin? and more importantly, What is that momentary

spark of life that animates the human body and gives it the ability to think, feel, reason and remember? The idea that God is the animator of humankind is one that was believed by some groups following the Crucifixion, and theologians have pondered the idea since Moses conceived of and received the Book of Genesis.

God As Animator was a traditional early Christian belief until the official church Canons were established, and we know this because the idea is seen in the discovery of gospels not within the official Canon. The idea was known and rejected by those selecting the official Canon. It was branded as “heretical” and some believers were persecuted as the official Canon was identified and the Roman State Catholic Church was instituted. ‘God As Animator’ and acknowledgement of the ‘indwelling Spirit’ have known various levels of belief over history, but it is interesting in that the idea has stayed with us through history in various forms.

Our bodies are the vessels through which God will project Himself at our direction. This makes the human being incredibly powerful. Perhaps that is the lesson. But if we think about it, our lives are a daily, ongoing process of making choice after choice, many of which are quite significant. As a rule, humans make a huge number of choices each and every day involving life and death. Of course the ultimate show of power and control which is known also the ultimate sin, is to end one’s own life by committing suicide. We have the choice not to cause death, and we have the choice to give life. The very act of getting into a car and driving is an exercise of staying out of harm’s way and keep ourselves and others safe/alive by the choices we make in obeying the rules of the road.

Exercising good judgment and treating all of God’s creation with total love and respect is how we regulate the incredible power we have been given as humans. Perhaps this is the greatest challenge given humans. The God As Animator idea gives people something to consider as we develop our personal concept of God and our relationship with Him. Critical thinking developed in humans, causing them to wonder how their bodies worked and what it is that gives life and takes life. From the first critical thoughts of the human species to the first pages of the first Book of the Bible, we see that God is alive within humans, and we learn the story about how it happened.

Genesis Account

The Bible begins in its opening pages by explaining that the universe was created and the earth came into being by the magnificent power and glory of God. The light and darkness were separated. The land was made and the seas came to be. God willed animals and birds, and they came into being; God “faithed” the very existence of living creatures and they were...animals, birds, reptiles and fish existed. He proclaimed them “good.”



But something very different happened when God created humankind. As Genesis 2:7 tells us, God made a clay figure in His own image, and when God blew Himself into the nostrils of the clay figure, the figure became a human being. It's right there in the Word. The first human was once a clay figure, and it had nothing but the characteristics of a clay figure, until God blew Himself into the nostrils of the figure. It was the birth of humankind. It is the birth of every human.

In Genesis 1:20-31 God speaks of *nephesh hayyah*, which is Hebrew, translated literally as “soul breathers” or “life breathers.” From *nephesh*, the individualized anima or psyche and *hayyah*, a living being or entity, such as a beast or a human being. This part of Genesis is where all the creatures are “faithed” into being by God, and humans are created with the breath of God. A common interpretation is that when God breathed into the clay figure and it became a human being, it was given its Soul or Spirit. “Spiritus” is the Latin origin of the word spirit, and literally means “breath.” When we learn that the man became a human being, we are learning that God created man with His own breath (His own essence), we learn that God gave life to the physical human body.

As with many of the most important Biblical accounts, the story of human Creation is actually reported twice, in both the first and second chapters of Genesis. The first report is Genesis 1:27 which reads:

So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female he created them.

Genesis 2:7 gives us this version:

And the Lord God formed the man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and the man became a living soul.

The first verse conveys a simultaneous creation of the genders, while the second verse reads clearly that man was created first. Whether simultaneous or sequential, the first verse tells us what is planned, and the second verse tells us how the plan is implemented. The order here is important because with regard to the plan outlined in 1:27, the question becomes what is meant when we are told “God created man in his own image”?

Could it mean that in the mind of God he sees himself in human form? Some have surmised that God conceived the perfect human form that could sustain the Living God within, and we were created. Others contend that God was not referring to the physical image of the human, but our spiritual imprint that is beyond what is tangible. This intangible spiritual imprint could be referred to as the soul, or the mind, or even the Holy Spirit. God created humans and they were instilled with an immortal nature, the soul, or Holy Spirit. This is a critical understanding. The indwelling spirit is different than the body. It means essentially that the spirit of an individual lives on after the bodily vessel gives out or cannot sustain the life of its Spirit.

God Himself is spirit (John 4:24), and a spirit “hath not flesh and bones” (Luke 24:39). These two Scriptural references say that the spirit lives and thrives on its own, independent of the body. This may also be the thinking of most Christians, that the Spirit inside each of us lives on after the death of the body. It is in line with the Christian belief in resurrection. We must remember that there is no scientific proof that the soul/Spirit lives on after the body dies because there is no way to know for sure what happens to the inner-Spirit and the energy that is humankind, ceases to be. If the Spirit, or soul, lives on after the death of the body, this after-death life is something we cannot explain, though people have been speculating about it for as long as there has been human thought.

The notion here is that the Spirit of each individual is part of an all-encompassing whole, like a raindrop, unique unto itself, is a part of the greater ocean. As humans we are encumbered by our humanity and our humanness (our physical bodies), and when the human body is no longer fit to sustain our spirit (soul), it perishes and the spirit again becomes part of the whole of God. It is an interesting idea conveyed most often as individual raindrops becoming part of the greater ocean.

Another interesting comparison would be the unique phenomenon of the Hologram. The Hologram is a three-dimensional image formed by the interference of light beams from a laser or other coherent light source. The three-dimensional nature of Holographic photography demonstrates the ‘whole dividing itself’ without losing the essence of the original. Holographic photography on glass can be shattered, and a complete image of the original can be found on every shard. As explained in his work *Holographic Universe*, M Talbot says, “Three-dimensionality is not the only remarkable aspects of holograms. If a piece of holographic film containing the image of an apple is cut in half and illuminated by a laser, each half of the image will be found to contain the entire image of the apple! Even if the halves are divided again and then again, the entire apple can be identified on each small portion of the film. Unlike normal photography, every small fragment of a piece of holographic film contains all the information recorded in the whole.” [4] In this comparison the Holographic photograph is God, and the shards are the individual souls containing the essence of the original.

So what is the Soul? Is it a concept that we all know but have difficulty defining? It means many things. To some it is the repository of our destiny and the place where our inner secrets are held. It is a spiritual term meaning the inner self and that quality we want to have ready for God at any time since this is what He desires. Some say the soul is the seat of human consciousness.

Adam and Eve were the first humans and therefore the first to be indwelt by God. As we read the Book of Genesis it clearly states that God brought the clay figure to life by breathing himself into its nostrils. Only after God’s breath was blown into the figure did humans become human beings. It was only through the Spirit coming into man by way of God that we are alive today.



Made In His Likeness

When we think of the creation account in Genesis, we imagine God shaping a clay figure in his own image or likeness, who becomes a human being once God breathes into its nostrils. Most of us reference our human selves when we think of being made in the image of God, thinking of our physical bodies. When we are told that humans are made in God's image, why couldn't it be a reference to humans being made by way of the essence of God; by His very breath?

In early Greek, the words image (eikon), and likeness (omoiosis) gave early church fathers the concepts they needed to develop their theology, based in bringing humans to a mature relationship with God. [5] Whereas God had been an unreachable, ultra-powerful deity to be feared, the individual's relationship with God and his knowledge of God was stressed and taught. The preferred relationship with God was heavily based on the progress, the evolving development, and the understanding of God's activity in one's life.

Likeness means physical image as well as the very essence of our beings, living energy. The idea is that the whole person, physical and spiritual, is being created in God's image. The words "image" and "likeness" are used to indicate both a human's material and immaterial aspects in this assessment. The person of Christ consists of the essence of humanity, but also in the essence of the Holy Spirit as well as God. Whenever man has worshipped a god, he has created an image (idol) of that god so he could be reminded of it, and to have it close by in a tangible form. With Jesus there is no need for idols, because we are reminded of our humanity and our God-ness whenever we look into the eyes of another person.

The God of Abraham and the God of Christianity made the practice of idolatry unnecessary, for He has given to us a personal identity, a personal self of spiritual and physical traits, over whom we have almost total dominion. The figure of Jesus also makes idolatry unnecessary in the broad scheme of Christianity. The image of Jesus is a cultural staple and is universally accessible to people who seek it. There is really no greater example of God indwelling than the life of Jesus, the man, representative of God in every way and sent to earth as a teacher and a martyr for our sinful ways. The image of God is with us in a much more significant way as well. As a being "made in the image" of God, whenever we look into the mirror or look down to see our hands at work, or see our smile reflected back to us in the face of another, we have the physical reminder that God is with us and within each of us. Part of God's strict prohibition on idolatry and worshipping anything other than Himself comes from the fact that God sees our need to recognize and appreciate ourselves, and understand that in God and Jesus we are here living life and performing human and superhuman feats each and every day.

We are taught that strictly speaking, man's physical body is not patterned after the physical appearance of God, but certainly it is possible that the physical body in some way reflects of the image of God. We exist currently as body and soul in the human form. It is an academic exercise to speak of us as just a soul or just a body when we are alive and functioning as human beings only when the two are in co-existence. This is another affirmation that our physical body and our inner spirit are intricately intertwined to make us unique individuals. We are the image. God created humans in His image and likeness in part so that worship for idols would be unnecessary. With God's own image encasing God's indwelling spirit, we see the metaphorical object of our worship each time we see another human, and whenever we look in the mirror. If we could learn to treat one another with superior respect and learn to "idolize" one another's inner spirit, the world would be a better place.

Some people believe that humans were created by God so that God would have a place to live on earth. As Andrew Murray expressed to the Mowbray Convention in 1897 regarding the human body as a vessel in which God dwells, "...this was the glory of God's divine creating love – God wanted to give man all He had Himself – God gave Himself to be man's life and joy." [6] Earlier we discussed Scripture where God proclaims that he will live among and walk among His creation, and this is what Murray was referencing. God lives on earth within his creation, giving everything to create life and joy. One thing that undoubtedly leads us to believe it is God giving of himself to give us life, is the incredible power we possess as the children of God. Humans are incredibly powerful. And whether or not we understand the source of our innate power within, it is there. At its essence, it is what we are without the trappings and the attractions of the human body. It is the calibration and discipline involved in promoting this power and making life-affirming decisions in the name of God.

So we've been given this wonderful gift of life...and this body in which to do it. The object of God's desire is for us to care for the hardware (the body) and the software (the soul), in hopes that we will carry the will of God with us and be the architect of His Kingdom right here on present-day earth. Being created in the likeness of God, whether we are referring to our physical presence or our spiritual essence, gives us something that the rest of His creation does not possess, the ability to think and make a reasoned choice. What we humans do with this awesome responsibility is up to us. My belief is that we are here to improve things on the earth in whatever way humanly possible. Striving to be our best selves is a tall order, but doing so makes us an appropriate model for others, and allows God to see His creation actively working to make the world a better place.

We are empowered as humans in ways we can only try and understand. The ability to reason and to make choices about our actions makes us unique among creation, and whether or not we acknowledge it, this power makes us responsible for our own actions. The power of God within each of us is daunting if we think about it. It is an immeasurable power we may not even realize. Paul often mentions the God within us. In the third chapter of Ephesians, Paul states that we

have “the power to grasp the length and width, and height and depth of the love God has for us.” (Ephesians 3:7-20) With this power we are able to better understand the vastness of God’s love and his blueprint for our individual lives. Once we have acknowledged the power God has given us, we may go on to construct a positive life of giving and encouragement. The choice is ours.

We must begin to see ourselves as created “in God’s likeness,” and try to understand favorable ways to utilize the power and abilities we have been provided as human beings. We must acknowledge and respect our similarities and our differences, always turning to communication and diplomacy in solving problems and addressing issues. We must turn to and trust the God within. World leader Nelson Mandela best expresses the God within, and our awesome responsibility as children of God. Read the words:

“Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness, that most frightens us. We ask ourselves, who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, and fabulous? Actually, who are you not to be? You are a child of God. Your playing small doesn’t serve the world. There is nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people won’t feel insecure around you. We are all meant to shine, as children do. We are born to make manifest the glory of God that is within us. It is not just in some of us, it’s in everyone. And as we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same. As we are liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others.”

The Soul In Philosophical and Theological Writings

Philosophers and thinkers predating Aristotle have contemplated the idea that something supernatural and unexplainable animates humankind, often explained as the *Soul*. Some say the soul is the indwelling God, or the Great Creator. Of all the important and impactful ideas that philosophers have contemplated across history, perhaps no question has been more significant and elusive than the essence of the soul, because it speaks to our person, our inner self, our purpose, our humanity and even our mortality.

Over the history of human thought the idea of the soul has been hashed and rehashed. Preachers “save souls”; our grandmothers perhaps wished others well by saying, “Bless their souls.” Through history the soul has had a religious or spiritual connotation and is these days a nice tag for a certain genre of music. Today the word “soul” means many different things to many people. Still, the questions surrounding what it is, what it is made of, and how it works are the same questions that were being asked centuries ago. In their search for understanding a person’s soul, thinkers and people in medicine theorized as to when a person gets a soul. The notion of ‘Ensoulement’ came about as a result of contemplating the soul. Ensoulement refers to the moment at which a human being gains their soul, thought by Aristotle to be when a male fetus is 40 days old and a female fetus is 90 days old. Aristotle believed that this was the moment in the

pregnancy when movement of the fetus could be first felt in the mother's womb. [7] Ancient thinkers surmised that a fetus early in gestation had the soul of a vegetable, evolving into the soul of an animal, and at 40 or 90 days became animated with a human soul. Stoics thought that the human soul was gained at birth as the fetus came into contact with air, and that this soul evolved to a rational being at fourteen years of age. As late as the 1600s, the Theologian Amandus Polanus believed that boys had souls at forty days, and girls were given souls at 80 days following conception.

The human mind is something that becomes energized when questions are answered and we gain an understanding of things that were unknown to us. This is why early humans asked what made the sun come up each day?; what constitutes the wind?; and what makes us alive? Over time, this indescribable quality that causes humans to live and act became known as the 'soul.' Ancient Greeks used the same word for 'alive' as for 'ensouled', indicating that the earliest surviving western philosophical view believed that the soul was that which gave the body life. The soul was considered the incorporeal or spiritual 'breath' which animates the living organism. Around the time of Socrates' death there was an evolution of the definition. Some have called it a semantic shift, which was not unusual given early communication and the blending of different languages between clans and tribes. The soul came to indicate that which causes humans to be alive. It is something we cannot touch or measure, but it is the inner self. As humans cross new philosophical and scientific frontiers, new ways to understand "the soul" have come to the fore again and again. The soul is what causes humans to be alive. The soul is the inner self that regulates behavior. It cannot be identified, but we all know what it is. Since the moment humans became self-aware, the question of where the human soul came from has been pondered. What is it that brings the human being to life, not what it is that keeps us alive, but what is it that gives life, and thought, and reason, and action? Throughout history, in literature, music, philosophy and even in science, this intangible thing within each of us has been called the soul.

Mariam Webster defines the concept of Soul as: "1. the immaterial essence, animating principle, or actuating cause of an individual life. 2. the spiritual principle embodied in human beings, all rational and spiritual beings, or the universe." One internet definition of the word soul is, "the corporal essence of a person or other living thing." The first definition includes all living things, and the second limits the soul to humans only. This is an interesting discussion unto itself because no one can argue that plants and animals are alive, but for our purposes we will focus on the presence indwelling every human being which is the soul, or the essence of God. The soul is the intangible inner self we each possess.

In the Bible the word soul is used often and with a number of meanings throughout the Old and New Testaments, in both Hebrew (*nephesh*) and Greek (*psyche*). One meaning of the word soul represents an individual person, or a group of people collectively. In Leviticus, God says to Moses, "Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, 'If a soul (*nephesh*) shall sin through ignorance against any commandments of the Lord concerning things which ought not to be

done.’ An account of the Great Flood by says, “few that if eight souls (psuchi) were saved from the water.”

The word soul is also used to refer to life, as shared by the animals, which ceases to end when the body dies. Psalm 78:50 says about the Egyptians who felt God’s wrath at the time of the Exodus, “He spared their soul (nephesh) from death, but gave their life over to pestilence.” Soul also is used to refer to the emotions or inner thoughts of human beings. Here nephesh is translated as “heart” such as when Jesus says in consultation with an attorney, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul (psuche), and with thy mind.” (Matthew 22:37). The word soul is also used in Scripture in many ways to represent that part of each individual that is immortal and never dies. In response to the death of a woman’s son, the prophet Elija shouted to Jehovah, “O Jehovah my God, I pray to thee, let this child’s soul (nephesh) come into him again” (1 Kings 17:21).

Hebrew and Greek translations of the word *Soul* and the way the word is referenced throughout the KJV

| <u>Hebrew, Nephesh</u> | <u>Greek, Psuche</u> |
|------------------------|----------------------|
| Soul - 472 times | Soul - 59 times |
| Life - 118 times | Life - 39 times |
| Mind - 15 times | Mind - 3 times |
| Heart - 15 times | Heart - 1 time |

So what is the Soul? It seems to be a spiritual form of energy that is different from the mechanical energy we utilize in the physical world. The soul is the seat of our inner-self. The souls is God.

The soul is in itself a most lovely and perfect image of God. –St. John of the Cross

Two arguments, or questions, that have sparked philosophy since the dawn of complex thought have to do directly with the soul. First, the question of the “Origin of the Soul” has been mused throughout time and is alive in our culture today. Questions regarding the soul; where it came from?, how it comes to be within each of us?, and what is its function?, have been debated and pondered from antiquity. In many ways, you and I think about the origin of the soul whenever we question our personal origins. Also, the Mind/Body Dilemma has entertained thinkers from



the beginning. Simply put, this question is whether or not the physical body and the soul are one in the same, or is the soul another substance altogether from the body?

Discussions and thinking from the beginning of time address questions about the origin of the soul. Since humans became self-aware, they have wondered what it is that creates the inner essence of humankind. Some people believe there is no human soul, and that when the human dies, that is the end of everything that came together to “make” the human...their body, their identity, their personality, their “selves.” If there is a soul, it too, dies at the death of the body. The end is truly the end.

Still others believe that the spirit/soul which animates the human body is something that lives independent of the body. For these people, when the body dies, the inner spirit continues to live on. For some this is a belief in angels, for others it is a look at reincarnation. In fact, those who have contemplated the origin of the soul, there are primarily three schools of thought. The first is that there is a Preexistent Soul. This view is similar to the concept of reincarnation practiced in Eastern religions such as Hinduism.

Theologian Origen (185-214 A.D.) believed that a preexistent soul lives within men (and women), and that this soul lives the present life as a penalty. In 1939, theologian historian Berkhof said of Origen, “Origen looks upon man’s present material existence with all its inequalities and irregularities, physical and moral, as a punishment for sins committed in a previous existence.” [8] Of course we see a theme from the Book of Job, where friends tell Job he is quite probably suffering as a result of sin. This view dominates various religious denominations to this day.

A second perspective regarding the origin of the soul is called the Creationist View. As the name suggests, Creationists believe the soul was created by God. Such a perspective is consistent with Isaiah 57:16, where God refers to “the souls which I made.” In later translations of the Bible the phrase has become “the breath of man that I have created,” but the meaning remains, that the soul is created by God.

There is also the Traducian view regarding the origin of the soul promoted by Tertullian, which says we are sure to inherit our parent’s souls including their spiritual and moral tendencies, just as we are to inherit their physical traits. This includes the tendency or probability to inherit the sinful nature. Opponents think that each soul is created by God, unique unto itself, so spiritual tendencies and propensity to sin cannot be passed on from parents to children.

Theologians regard the soul as the most treasured gift from God, and the very element of every human that God wants for Himself. The Soul is the moral regulator or the conscience of humans. We are both physical and spiritual creations as human beings. As with all things philosophical and theological, there are conflicting views about the make-up of the spiritual natures of human beings, some believing the human is comprised of three elements: the mind, soul and spirit. These people believe a trichotomy exists that makes up humankind. Of course

we cannot deny the obvious similarities to the concept of the Holy Trinity. There are similarities to Freud's Id, Ego and Super Ego, the story of the Three Little Pigs, and the study of Transactional Analysis.

Probably more common are Dichotomists, who believe the human is made up of two component parts, the body and the mind/spirit. This belief is that the human person is a composition of the material, the body as well as the spiritual, the mind or spirit. The dichotomy is the most likely explanation in my view because it seems to be the most Biblically consistent position. Consider the following points:

The words "soul" and "spirit" are used interchangeably in the Old and New Testaments...see these references: Genesis 35:18; 1 Kings 17:21; Luke 23:46; and Acts 7:59. In Genesis 2:7, the words "soul" and "spirit" directly point to the immaterial aspects of a human being's nature found in union with the body.

The Mindy/Body Question is a philosophical dilemma in which some believe that mental phenomena are something distinct both qualitatively and substantially from the physical body, while others believe the mind and body are one. Those who say the mind and body are different substances are known as Dualists. Monists, or Materialists, believe the mind and body are the same substances and are one. While it is the view held by the great majority, the first significant argument against Dualism came from Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679) in his Materialist critique of the human person. Hobbes argued that the entire human experience is nothing more than a number of biological processes taking place inside the human body. It really comes down to physiology and nothing more. By boiling things down to biology and bodily functions, Hobbes' critique was and is embraced by many people.

The truth is that the Bible seems to portray a dualist mentality in Scripture as we see in 1 Corinthians 15:44, where we are told "It is sown a natural body, and it is raised a spiritual body." Christians interpret this as addressing those who say there is no resurrection after death. In this interpretation the emphasis is on the word "raised" with the idea being the resurrected body is raised via the spirit.

Paul tells us very clearly that there is a physical body and there is a spiritual body. The words Paul uses are familiar from 1 Corinthians 2:14-3:1. The adjective translated "physical" here is *psychikos* the same word used in 1 Corinthians 2:14 to say that the *psychikos* person does not receive the things of the Spirit. The term is derived from the Greek word *psyche* which meant "self, person, or living being." It was used in the Greek translation of Genesis 2:7 where God breathed the breath of life into the first human body and the person became a "living *psyche*." A *psychikos* body is the psycho-somatic means of existence that we all share. The spiritual body, or the soul, exists apart from that which is physical, or natural.

Given the many ways people have used the word 'soul' throughout history and the many meanings it has had, it is reasonable for writers and scholars to use the word interchangeably with other words meaning something personal. The Bible weighs in most significantly via John, who tells us "The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing." (John 6:63) Paul is stating that God has given humans a life comprised of the soul (spirit) and physical body (flesh), and the physical part of the equation is not as valuable as the spiritual side. It seems to me that the mind and the soul are the same thing, or at least parts of the same thing.

Consciousness/Mind/Soul/Holy Spirit

In considering the God As Animator theology, it is important to have an understanding of the terms Consciousness, the Mind, the Soul, and the Holy Spirit. These are the intangible concepts that comprise the "self." Therefore they are all very personal terms, while being broad terms that we share with most people around the world. Scientists, philosophers, theologians and people in general seem to understand, or at least have a widely-shared intuition about the meaning of these terms. It is also instructive to consider these terms in comparison with what we have learned about the term "soul" and its use throughout history.

In his writings on human behavior and thinking, Plato (428-348 BC) used the concept of the psyche, consisting of the mind and soul. Plato saw the human psyche as the seat of all knowledge, thought, and emotion. Plato's student Aristotle (384-322 BC) used the words 'mind' and 'soul' interchangeably in his work *Para Psyche* (About The Mind). He says that the mind/soul is the primary reason for the functioning and existence of the human body. Aristotle believed the mind/soul could live independently of the body.

All of these great thinkers also conceived of what constituted the idea of Consciousness. For the sake of definition, consciousness is the relationship between our minds and the world with which we interact. But philosophers and scientists want more answers. What is the nature of consciousness? Is consciousness only as mental state? What is the relationship between the human body and consciousness? Is consciousness merely brain activity? These and an infinite number of questions make the study of consciousness the top issue in modern philosophy, and it has been broadly discussed in theology, medicine and science in today's world.

Consciousness is an interesting term in that everyone "knows what it is," yet no one can pin it down. It is historically ambiguous, with each definition generating still more questions as to the nature and make-up of one's consciousness. The first English usage of the word "conscious" and "consciousness" was found in the 1500s. The Latin word from which it is derived is translated as "knowing with oneself." Consciousness has been defined in many ways over the history of humankind, yet each definition, while relevant, is true only for the one doing the defining.

In *The Blackwell Companion to Consciousness* Max Velmans and Susan Schneider say: “Anything that we are aware of at a given moment is part of our consciousness, making conscious experience at once the most familiar and most mysterious aspect of our lives.” [9] Psychiatrist Richard Maurice Bucke identified three types of consciousness: Simple Consciousness, or one’s awareness of their body, possessed by many animals; Self-Consciousness, or the awareness of being aware, possessed only by humans; and Cosmic Consciousness, or an awareness of all life and the order of the universe, possessed only by humans who are completely enlightened. What is being said here is that any organism that senses its environment has a form of consciousness.

In comparison with the other terms, Consciousness can be measured, while Mind and Holy Spirit cannot be measured, per se. It is quite clear when someone is not conscious, or unconscious. There are ways that professionals can determine whether or not one is in a conscious or unconscious mental state. It is also clear when someone is not alive. It may not take technological assistance to determine if a person is dead or not, but such technology exists. However, the concept of the Mind and the idea of the Holy Spirit are not measurable by way of technology. There is a generalized concept as to what each of these immeasurable terms may mean. The terms, whether measurable or not, may well be the key to understanding the indwelling God in each human being. The terms may well represent the same thing.

Two competing theories about the nature of the mind, the soul, and consciousness are Dualism and Materialism, in line with the mind/body question described earlier. Rene Descartes (1596-1650) was the first influential philosopher to examine the mind. There are of course variants and nuances to both theories, but the Dualist belief is that the mind and body are two distinctly different entities, or substances. Descartes emphasized that there were two substances making up the universe, matter and spirit. Dualists believe that consciousness resides within an immaterial domain Descartes referred to as “the realm of thought.” Dualists say that the conscious mind or the conscious mental state is somehow non-physical.

Materialists contend that our conscious mind is the brain, or is the result of our neural activity. The view is that of a chemistry project, where neural processes provide evidence explaining perceptions and even our response to the perceptions. This is understandable, but nothing about the human brain when surveyed as a physical system, declares it to be a bearer of that self-interested, personal, interior dimension that we all experience as consciousness. However, science is showing that conscious mental states such as visual perceptions are identical with certain neuro-chemical brain processes.

Most of the philosophers who followed Descartes held the Dualist view that the physical body and the conscious mind differ, including G.W. Leibniz (1646-1716), who further refined a definition to include different kinds of world perceptions and the importance of personal realities. Another influential philosopher addressing the mind was Immanuel Kant (1724-1804),

who discussed in detail various mental structures. The writings of Kant on consciousness and the mind significantly impacted several different fields of thought.

The explosion of interdisciplinary research and theories on the actual functioning and structure of the human brain as well as the science of consciousness at times seem to support the materialist theory. Scientists Francis Crick and Christof Koch in the 1990s showed how a number of specific kinds of neuro-chemical activities can underlie and explain conscious mental activity. Basically these scientists showed that mental states become conscious when large numbers of neurons fire in synchrony within so many cycles per minute. This field of study is known as the search for “neural correlates of consciousness.” It must also be noted that Crick and Koch themselves have stated their research only provides the necessary condition for consciousness, and does not explain or define consciousness. [10]

Modern day cognitive theories of consciousness are fascinating in their complexity and their potential to foster a possible understanding of the way consciousness works. The research and writing on consciousness is gathering momentum in today’s world, but American philosopher, writer, and cognitive scientist Daniel Dennett offers an interesting theory called the multiple drafts model (MDM) of consciousness. In brief, MDM holds that all kinds of mental activity occur in the brain by parallel processes of interpretation, all of which are under frequent revision. The MDM rejects the idea of some “self” as an inner observer, rather, the self is the product or construction of a narrative which emerges over time. [11] This could very well be true, but it seems to try and explain away consciousness instead of explaining what consciousness is.

The questions around consciousness have been critical in medicine across time. For doctors in the earliest of days, the concept of consciousness was significant and mysterious. In early medicine, unconsciousness was certainly mistaken for death often until people gained a knowledge of the unconscious state and began to identify and treat it. The practice of anesthesia has its roots in the early study of the unconscious mental states. In the field of medicine, consciousness is assessed by observing one’s arousal and responsiveness, so the operational definition of consciousness is reportability. There are questions surrounding reportability though, because consciousness and reportability are different things. Medical practices will no doubt change as knowledge about human consciousness comes to the fore and research perhaps shows how consciousness can be used to assist in pain management or in slowing down the progress of diseases. Of course we hear rare stories of people who have been unconscious or in a coma, only to awaken years later from a vegetative state. As the medical community learns more about human consciousness, many scientists, philosophers, mathematicians, and those studying theology believe we will learn more about God as well as the mysterious inner world we call the Soul, the Mind, and the (Holy) Spirit.



In psychology, people have been fascinated by the study of consciousness from the beginning. Trying to find ways to unlock or at least analyze human consciousness and the mind have captured the minds of psychologists who even now are researching the human “self.” Writings in the late 1890s and the early 1900s by names such as Wilhelm Wundt and Alfred Titchener focused on first-person methods of investigating the mind. Sigmund Freud was critical to bringing about a universal acceptance and interest in unconscious states of mind.

Like God, consciousness is omnipresent. Consciousness is with us and is us always. If we are not conscious, everything ceases to exist for us. Consciousness is the inner self, the soul and the spirit. British author and producer Peter Russell proclaims on his website, “What scientists and physicians are really saying is that the pure self, the most fundamental level of our being, is God. In other words, God is consciousness -- not consciousness of any particular thing, but the very faculty of consciousness that is present in all things. As Ramana Maharshi said, "I Am is the name of God. God is none other than the self". Or, in the words of a Sufi mystic, "When thou knowest thine own existence, then thou knowest God". [12]

God is where we end up once we start investigating the true nature of consciousness. Although science doesn't realize it, once it embarks upon this exploration and begins to delve into the deep mind, it is going to find itself confronting the one thing it has avoided and denied for so long -- the nature of God. If “consciousness,” the “soul” and the “mind” are facets of the indwelling God, they are truly what makes us live and experience human life.

The American Heritage Dictionary defines the term “mind” as follows:

1. The human consciousness that originates in the brain and is manifested especially in thought, perception, emotion, will, memory, and imagination.
 2. The collective conscious and unconscious processes in a sentient organism that direct and influence mental and physical behavior.
 3. The principle of intelligence; the spirit of consciousness regarded as an aspect of reality.
 4. The faculty of thinking, reasoning, and applying knowledge: *Follow your mind, not your heart.*
 5. A person of great mental ability: *the great minds of the century.*
 6. A reference to intellectual power
 - a. Individual consciousness, memory, or recollection: *I'll bear the problem in mind.*
 - b. A person or group that embodies certain mental qualities: *the medical mind; the public mind.*
 - c. The thought processes characteristic of a person or group; psychological makeup: *the engineering mind.*
 7. Opinion or sentiment: *He changed his mind when he heard all the facts.*
 8. Desire or inclination: *She had a mind to spend her vacation in the desert.*
 9. Focus of thought; attention: *I can't keep my mind on work.*
-

10. A healthy mental state; sanity: *losing one's mind*.

The above definitions convey different interpretations of the mind, and could also be ways to define God, knowledge (Sophia), and The Word. The mind is a temporal aspect of the soul, acting as a “connector” for interactions between the soul and our physical bodies. If we can contemplate that the mind, the soul and the spirit are essentially the source of human life, we begin to see the dynamic way the concepts of Energy, Thought and Activity complete the human person and are wrapped up within each individual. If we can make the leap to consider that the soul is actually God indwelling each of us, suddenly we are linked to everything and everyone.

The Bible tells us that God is many things. It says that God is light (1 John 1:5), and that God is spirit (John 4:24). Light and Spirit are actually Energy and Life. Energy and Life in action equal Activity. God is energy, life and activity. God is. The Bible tells us that knowledge and understanding are given to us by way of the spirit. So it is the Spirit that provides us with energy, life, activity, knowledge and understanding. When God blew Himself into the nostrils of the clay figure, He was blowing into us a portion of Himself that endowed us with everything we need to survive and utilize the human body while moving toward inner-peace, happiness, and union with Him. Becoming acquainted with this inner life, we begin to grow a relationship with God.

The last of the terms examined here is the Holy Spirit. Irenaeus (115-202 AD), a high profile figure in early theological thought, is viewed as a Theologian of the Holy Spirit. He writes about the Holy Spirit as “the principle and source of the Divine Light within us.” [13] He says it is the Holy Spirit who “has formed us to the likeness of God.” The quote seems to say that the Holy Spirit is God, who is the source of our consciousness or awareness, and that we are in some way the Holy Spirit, made in God’s likeness. That’s a deep thought, and it is congruent with the indwelling God.

Basil the Great (330-379) identified the Holy Spirit as the way one could actively participate in God’s own Divine life. Basil writes that **the Holy Spirit is analogous to the form or soul of the human, material body** (emphasis mine). Through the Holy Spirit we are informed by a spiritual form, allowing us to perform virtuous acts we could never perform by ourselves. The Holy Spirit is the supplier of life, omnipresent, the origin of sanctification, light perceptible to the mind, supplying illumination to every faculty in search for the truth. [14]

The Holy Spirit as a personal trait within every person is God’s greatest gift. It is the channel through which God communicates with His creation, and hopefully the means by which we communicate with one another. Luke 12:10 and Mark 3:29 both tell us how much God values the gift He has given to each of us. In these Scripture Jesus proclaims that if people degrade Him, they will be forgiven, but if one degrades the Holy Spirit, that person has committed the

greatest sin. It is a lesson about respecting the gift God has bestowed on us, and that God's children should respect themselves as that gift.

So, much like consciousness, the mind, the soul, the Holy Spirit is an intangible essence that lives within every human, representing knowledge, understanding, and most importantly, love. It could be argued that the Holy Spirit is life itself. While we cannot say that life and energy have the same definitions, it is clear that life depends upon energy or it is not life, it is the opposite. The reason for writing about the words here is to stress that what lives inside us is energy and life, consciousness, the soul, and the Holy Spirit itself. The concept of these unique yet common qualities within each person is referred to by philosophers, researchers, poets and novelists as "the Spirit." These terms are the names given to what animates humankind.

Non-Canonical Scriptures and Lost Scriptures

Modern academic theology shows us that in the years following the death of Jesus, many groups holding quite divergent views came and went, calling themselves followers of Jesus. These groups and individuals were the original Christians. There was no universal doctrine for Jesus followers at that point in time. These groups were ministering and writing to different audiences and different interests with different motivations. The stories about Jesus were a broad oral tradition that no doubt varied and emphasized different points to different groups, evolving over time and changing as generations came and went. Since most people were illiterate and could not write, the oral transmission of Jesus' history was the single means of communicating and passing on to future generations the Good News. Oral Tradition describes the main form of communicating stories and information in the earliest history of humankind. It is the lore, traditional knowledge, and beliefs of cultures having no written language. The oral tradition of any people is transmitted by word of mouth and consists of prose, poetry and song, legends, dramas, comedies, rituals, and proverbs. Nearly all known peoples in the history of the world have an oral tradition, shaped by timing, economics, politics and other societal variables. At the dawn of humankind the oral tradition was shaped by an extremely high rate of illiteracy.

Oral traditions stood the tests of time and until about 4000 BCE all literature was oral. At some point between 4000 and 3000 BCE, writing developed both in Egypt and in the Mesopotamian civilization. Environments where the habitual use of writing was considered normal became established over Asia, North Africa, the Mediterranean lands and eventually over the whole world. Nevertheless, during all the centuries in which the world has learned to use writing and even in our age, where technological advances make easier the sharing of the written word, the stories and oral traditions do not die out. When the large majority of humankind was illiterate, the oral tradition was the only accounting of history and day-to-day events. It is the way the Old Testament was transmitted for years before humans began to write and record things.

Until 325 AD there was no “recognized” scripture or belief system among those practicing Christianity. By creating a universal Christian Canon some contend Roman Emperor Constantine and his supporters made a move to consolidate power for the Roman Empire by controlling the economy, the government, and the spiritual beliefs of the people throughout the Empire by making Christianity the state religion. Constantine himself said he saw a vision of Christ telling him how to achieve victory in a military battle and made Christianity a lawful practice as a result.

Before 325 and subsequent efforts to make mandatory the Christian faith, different groups were using varied texts to convey their beliefs in Jesus and the manner in which his teachings were to be interpreted. Hundreds, perhaps thousands of texts and scriptures were circulating in the years after the death of Jesus. Few of them exist today, and we know of some essays and papers that were written only by their notation or mention in documents that did last over the past 2000 years. In the early centuries as the canons were being established, human thought was expanding at a faster rate than humanity itself. The rate of printed works was expanding also. As such, numerous books of a spiritual nature, some about Jesus or the Disciples were copied and in limited distribution, given to individual “early Christian” sects, or groups of believers with their own slant on worship and oral history. Some of these works have endured the rigors of time and are known as the Apocryphical books of the Bible.

The Apocryphical books fall into two categories: texts which were included in some canonical version of the Bible at some point, and other texts of a Biblical nature which have never been canonical. Apocrypha means “things hidden” in Greek. While the books may convey “hidden” or “Gnostic” thoughts and ideologies, they were not hidden or kept from the public in any way, at least not until after the Canonical books were established.

The Deuterocanonical Books of the Bible are books which are included in some versions of the canonical Bible, but which have been excluded at one time or another, for textual or doctrinal issues. These are called 'Deuterocanonical', meaning literally ‘the secondary canon.’ Many books, letters and written works, some even known as Gospels, exist today in fragmented form. One of history’s challenges was to create a worldwide set of books that by in large laid the groundwork of dogma and doctrine for what was to become one of the world’s largest organized religions. The new branch of Judaism known today as Christianity began spreading around the Mediterranean region and circulated as far east as the orient and even onto the continent of Africa within a relatively brief period of time. Let us consider the relatively brief time span between Paul (5-67 AD), when the earliest of the Canonical books were authored, and Constantine (272-337 AD) when Christianity became the national religion of the most powerful and widespread imperial movement in history.

Seeing a political opportunity, and proclaiming to have said he received a revelation from Christ himself, Roman Emperor Constantine set out to create a doctrine and a Scriptural combination of material that would become the King James Version of the Holy Bible. The foundation of the Holy Roman State church and the establishment of a standardized doctrine were tools that Constantine and those who followed used to consolidate power; they were tools that changed the history of the world.

The Roman Empire had outlawed Christianity and had been persecuting Christians since Nero in 64 A.D. Most emperors felt that Christianity diminished their power, and in the early fourth century, Diocletian and Galerius called for the burning of churches and the capture and torture of Christians who refused to deny Christ and the church. In 312 A.D. the 24 year-old Constantine was in the middle of a political dynamic that had him marching to Rome with a small army to take on Maxentius, a political rival. On the eve of the battle in 312 Constantine had a vision or dream assuring him of victory if he and his soldiers would go into battle in the name of Christ, with his soldiers' shields bearing the symbol of Christ. The next day the smaller army of Constantine defeated Maxentius, and Constantine rode into Rome brandishing the head of his foe. Constantine's rise to power marks the turning point in history where Christianity was permitted to be practiced. Despite many accounts that Constantine forced Christianity on the Roman Empire, he merely made it legal to worship as a Christian. Constantine retained many pagan beliefs and did not mandate a transition to Christianity.

Constantine convened a group of scholars and theologians in what became known as the First Council of Nicaea in 325 AD with the charge of arriving at the Holy set of books that would be the universal doctrine of Christians in the Roman Empire. The reason the meeting was convened was to settle a dispute over whether Jesus was Divine or merely a human being. Contemporary author Bart D. Ehrman says the battle to establish the Canonical books of the Bible took over 300 years. [15] The fact that there were a finite number of books accepted as within the canon means that there was a significant set of books rejected as "Canonical." We have scant information on how the unselected books were sorted out and rejected, but a small number of these "lost scriptures" are with us today despite their rejection. Most people don't know that the First Council of Nicaea institutionalized, or "canonized," Scripture to bring a unity to Christian beliefs for the State church of the Roman Empire. Perhaps the move was at its core political, designed to consolidate power for the Empire. Once the die was cast and the official Scripture was established, it became easy to label anything not included in the Bible as something "heretical" or unorthodox, though the "other writings" remained in circulation, and in many instances were quite orthodox in their message and practices but for some reason didn't make the grade.

Many texts that did not agree with the canon were destroyed at the hands of Roman and other government forces and are lost forever to human knowledge. Others, like the Nag Hammadi Library, found hidden in Egypt in 1945, is a collection of twelve leather-bound codices made up of fifty-two books or chapters believed to be hidden around 367 A.D. after a local Bishop

forbade the use of non-canonical texts. It is believed that the codices were hidden so the manuscripts would not be destroyed and would one day be found. This is also the conventional wisdom in terms of how the Dead Sea Scrolls, a set of 972 texts of Biblical and non-biblical manuscripts written circa 150 BCE and 70 CE on parchment and papyrus, were originally hidden. The Dead Sea Scrolls were found and gathered between 1947 and 1956 from clay vases in caves along the shore of what is now known as the West Bank. They are renowned for preserving the vast diversity in late Second Temple Judaism and unlocking many questions about the historical times following the death of Jesus

Many of these Lost Gospels and ancient Christian writings refer to the idea that God lives inside humans, but for whatever reason, such material did not make it into the official version. Also called by some “The Gnostic Gospels,” these lost scriptures were in wide circulation, written by Jesus followers and used as official texts by various groups scattered throughout the Mediterranean regions and beyond. The word “Gnosticism” is from the Greek adjective *gnostikos*, meaning “learned” or “intellectual.” [16] Strangely the term does not show up in ancient sources and was first coined by English philosopher Henry More in describing heresy in the regions known today as Turkey. There is speculation that Gnosticism predated Christianity, though no Gnostic texts exist prior to Christianity’s onset. There are various Gnostic texts and Gnostic belief systems that have been recorded across history. “Hidden meanings” are often contained within the Gnostic writings. Historians have said the Gnostic Gospels were written in a way of “reading between the lines” and making mystic interpretations. The Gnostic Gospels give us a glimpse of other belief systems and alternate telling of familiar stories from the Gospels we read today. A majority of theologians have stated for hundreds of years that the Gnostic writings are more along the lines of mystical beliefs, and that anything outside the official canon cannot be taken seriously.

Theologian John Owen (1616-1683) proclaimed that Gnosticism introduces alternative doctrines and notions of divine things that are “absolutely exclusive of the person and mediation of Christ.” [17] Some older perceptions characterize Gnostics as people who preyed on the early church in the period immediately following the apostles. Owen taught that Gnostics created fables and questionable genealogies to confuse and sway believers. In his words, Gnostics “took away all differences of good and evil, and gave people the liberty to do as they please without a sense of danger and punishment.” Owen even declared that Gnosticism was the first way Satan attempted to destroy faith and the church.

One Gnostic point of view is that humans are spirits who have fallen from the divine realm and become trapped in matter, or inside their human bodies. The lives led by these beings (we humans) and the choices we make across a lifetime determine the quality of our lives on earth, and certainly the life our Spirit leads once the human body becomes unusable to the Spirit.

Today we know much more about the history and nature of Gnostic teachings and Gnostic gospels. Contemporary thought is that it would be foolish to dismiss them as without value. The

Gnostics, their writings and their perspectives give Christians today much food for thought and can be valued as academic for the lessons they convey. As with all of theology and Biblical interpretation, the Gnostic writings can help or harm God's people and they must be approached with the knowledge that they are additional perspectives to our "canonical understanding," from people and groups supplementing the Gospels. The majority of the Gnostic Gospels emphasize love as a guiding principle, which is consistent with the books of the canon.

More contemporary theologians and scholars find the Gnostic Gospels and other "out-lying" scriptural writings to be very important as we develop an understanding of the entire picture in the infant years of Christianity. Being able to see the various texts gives researchers more knowledge of the political and social climates that existed immediately following the death of Jesus, and the spreading of the Jesus message. Interesting variations on the exact message Jesus was espousing come to light in the ancient Christian writings, confirming that there was no orthodox or standard beliefs in the early days.

The idea of God as Animator is written into orthodox, Canonical scripture as well as within the Lost Gospels. There are numerous references to God living within humankind within the canon including clear verbiage such as Ephesians 4:4-6;

There is one body and one Spirit – just as you were called to one hope when you were called – one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all, and in all.

and Romans 8:9;

And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you.

Gnostic books, or Gnostic Gospels offer a great number of passages about God indwelling. In the *Gospel of the Egyptians*, lost in the earliest days of Christianity, a saying emphasizes the Gnostic notion that the revelation of God will be complete when human life is over and people will "trample on their shameful garment (the human body) and all things are restored to a state of unity." In other words, when our human bodies become useless to our souls, our beings will become unified, male will become female, and we will be unable to differentiate...again we see the theme of individual raindrops becoming one with the ocean.

In the first part of the 2nd century, the *Gospel of the Egyptians* was quoted by Clement of Alexandria, an early church father. Clement quoted from the lost gospel, which is mostly a verbal exchange between Jesus and a woman named Salome, who was mentioned in the New Testament as one of the women who went to Jesus' tomb after the crucifixion. At one point

Salome asks Jesus, “How long will people continue to die?” To her question Jesus replies, “When you trample on the shameful garment and when the two become one, and the male and the female are neither male nor female.” Similar sentiments are found in the Coptic Gospel of Thomas. This Gospel is another document from the Nag Hamaddi Library and is believed to be written in the early second century, likely independent of the New Testament Gospels. *The Coptic Gospel of Thomas*, verse 3 reads:

Jesus said, “If those who lead you say to you ‘See the kingdom is in the sky,’ then the birds of the sky will precede you. If they say to you, ‘It is in the sea,’ then the fish will precede you. Rather *the kingdom is inside of you*, and it is outside of you. When you come to know yourselves, then you will become known, and you will realize that it is you who are the sons of the living father. But if you will not know yourselves you will dwell in poverty and it is you who are that poverty.” [18]

In Verse 37 of *The Coptic Gospel of Thomas*, we see another familiar theme. Jesus is talking with the disciples:

“His disciples said, “When will you become revealed to us and when shall we see you?” Jesus replied, “When you disrobe without being ashamed and take up your garments and place them under your feet like little children and trample on them, then will you see the son of the living one and you will not be afraid.” [19]

The Gospel of Thomas is where Jesus indicates to those who are listening to him that they are each endowed with a spark of the divine from heaven. By in large the Gospel of Thomas has been seen as a work of Gnosticism, though scholars believe it was a top contender for inclusion in the original Canons.

The Letter Of Clement is another piece of lost scripture that was composed to former pagans who had taken to Christianity in the mid-second century. It was considered standard scripture for Christians of all types until the fifth century.

Clement 12:2 says: “For when the Lord himself was asked by someone when his kingdom would come, he said, “When the two are one, and the outside like the inside, and the male with the female is neither male nor female.” And “the outside like the inside” means this: the “inside” refers to the soul and the “outside” to the body. Just as your body is visible, so too your soul should be clearly seen in your good deeds.”

In the Gnostic text *The Treatise On The Resurrection* written in the late second century, one of the central themes is that after death the material body dies, a person’s spirit will ascend to the heavenly realm, drawn up by Jesus. The flesh is transitory but the spirit is eternal. It is quite reminiscent of things told to us by Paul. *The Treatise On The Resurrection* states, “As the flesh passes away, the soul becomes part of the greater power.” This is similar to our example of the single raindrop becoming part of the greater ocean.

Seeing these ancient Christian writings, Lost Gospels, Gnostic beliefs, and differing interpretations, as part of the entire picture of ancient Christianity helps us better understand what was occurring in the times during which the material was written, and the writings can be meaningful tools in identifying our beliefs and composing our personal theology.

Explanations Across Time

God As Animator is an idea that has always been alive in the fields of theology, philosophy, literature, and even medicine. The life within us, how it begins, how it is sustained, and what happens at the moment of human death are questions that will still be asked thousands of years from now. Since we all are born and die, questions about death and the next realm are pondered by us all. These questions are as prevalent today as they were thousands of years ago.

Some people take the view that what happened in Nicaea 354 was an act of Divine intervention and that the selection of the official Canon was the work of God. There is a great deal to be said for this view. These people might also say that God As Animator is not within the Canon and therefore cannot be accepted as “legitimate.” Later chapters of this paper will look at the idea of God As Animator spelled out in Canonical Scripture.

Once the official Canon was agreed upon, it became quite easy for those ideas previously thought of as “normal” or even “holy” to become viewed as heresy, or in opposition to the “true and correct religion.” Individuals and groups were persuaded to accept the new true Christian Canon, or be punished, at times by excommunication or death. No doubt some groups of believers went underground and continued to worship in their personal way, but the majority of groups following Jesus Christ became Christian groups by adopting the official Canon as the basis of their faith and religion.

Earlier we discussed examples where Roman Emperors persecuted congregations by burning churches and physically torturing believers. There also exist accounts of individual Christians targeted by government officials and made examples of for their faith. Those who copied texts interpreted as being “unorthodox” were maimed and even killed for their efforts. In many ways it was a lawless time where the powerful majority often dispensed justice as they wished. Heresy hunters were born, preaching righteous justification and striking down identified non-believers and their fellow worshippers. A question arises: how someone who believes in Christ but practices a different sort of worship than the established church could be justifiably killed as a “non-believer”? The question emphasizes how abuses certainly came to pass and were glossed over by “the church.”

Heresy hunters are alive and well today. Google the term ‘Heresy Hunters’ and you will be delivered to over 5, 450,000 entries. As with all claims there is strong support for attempts to say who is and is not practicing heresy, but by in large these people are seen as trying to shove

their views and their traditions down the throats of everyone else. There is little tolerance by these zealots, who identify and call negative attention to what they perceive as “incorrect beliefs and practices.” The similarity between the heresy hunters and those who believe in God As Animator is that both groups are looking for answers and seem to have found what makes sense to them.

Every day there are concerted efforts to explain the things we do not understand. There are those who try to explain God, or the Creator, or the Divine essence, just as there are efforts to explain or better understand the human psyche, human consciousness, and the origin of the soul. In 1997 scientists announced that they had discovered an area of the brain they believed was the driver of the human evolutionary instinct to believe religion. This “God module” led some scientists to surmise that the experience of religious belief is “hard-wired” into the brain. They say religious tendencies are with the brain from birth. At the extreme are people who say this demonstrates that God does not exist and is merely a hard-wired tendency within the human brain.

A study of epileptics who have profoundly religious and spiritual experiences shows that a tight circuit of nerves in the front of the brain demonstrates actual electric activity when the person thinks about God. These studies have been repeated with the same results. [20] Factual statements about the brain give us interesting information as to how the human body as a machine responds to experiences (stimuli), but they do not explain the part of the person that is outside the physical. The above examples do not explain human consciousness or self-awareness. They do not explain the energy within the human body and the life that sustains.

We must respect and try to understand that the belief in God As Animator of humankind was declared “heresy” and “unorthodox” in the official church Canons. Perhaps the declaration of heresy toward God As Animator is also a Divine directive...who knows? As the beliefs of the early Jesus followers varied from group to group and certainly from region to region, the groups worshipped together and held their beliefs close, often within their own immediate family or township. These groups represent the beginnings of Christianity, but the practices or core beliefs of these various groups are possibly not part of the official Christian Canon.

Any time there is a thesis, there is an antithesis. Objections across time to God As Animator have stemmed from the “fact” that it is not in Scripture, or part of the Canon. This is debatable. The efforts to explain God or explain what actually brings the human being to life are important to our perspectives and our biases in life.



Summary

The concepts reviewed in this section are broad and indeed, and open to interpretation. We are discussing whether or not God As Animator could be a reality, and we are discussing the significance of God. The greatest minds in human history have contemplated the meaning of these concepts and their meaning to the human experience. Each of the concepts has a meaning that is personal and perhaps unique to each of us, but the purpose here is to examine the similarities, or the unique strands that bind us together as humanity.

Consider the intimacy we have with each of these terms: the mind, the soul, consciousness, the Holy Spirit. While not the same and really not even synonymous, the soul, the mind, consciousness, and the Holy Spirit are elements representing one's self. The intangible self that we all are, apart from the body we inhabit. We are talking about our personality...we each have one, and it is shaped by the world and how we react to stimuli through the filter of our earthly existence. If one has no faith, they are but a wandering spirit inside a human shell. If one possesses faith however, there is a mooring. One with faith can find a meaningful centeredness and a peace while stepping through the adventures our lives have to offer.

Ancient philosophers debated whether one's mind and body were the same thing (the same material), or if they were different essences altogether. This is important because it takes into consideration the idea that humans have an intangible essence to begin with. If we have an intangible essence within and the tangible human body, the Dualist belief prevails. The acknowledgement of an inner self, the mind, the soul, our state of consciousness, and even the presence of the Holy Spirit establish that there are two things at play, one tangible and describable, the other only describable.

It is accepted and acknowledged that the mind, the Holy Spirit and the soul all flow from the Divine Source. God is omnipotent and omniscient. God's existence is the energy that propels us through this human life. Our state of consciousness allows us to live and be aware. In examining the terms and concepts above, we have seen that there are similarities and differences, but that these things are inside us in a very true way.

The point is that within each of us is the same God. We are not the same person, but we share the same essence. There is no division because we all experience the indwelling of God. The indwelling God is the common thread running between all of us. The differences between us come about as a result of the body we were born into, to whom we were born, and at what cultural time we came into being. There are indeed physical differences but the indwelling God unites us every one, in a spiritual way. This realization causes us to see at least some familiarity with everyone and perhaps would cause us to think before snapping to judgment or creating disharmony with others.



The so-called “Lost Gospels” or ancient Christian writings have at various times through history have been minimized, dismissed, and even scandalized by theologians and those who care. At various periods throughout history, things not of the Canon were seen as unclean, further solidifying the Canonical books and calling into question anything not approved as “orthodox.” But this is a human world and as time went by, historians and scholars began seeking the complete historical story of Jesus and his times before and after the crucifixion. How did Jesus and his followers live? What is the history of material written after the death of Jesus? Reviewing writings not included in the Canons has significantly propelled our understanding of the social fabric, as well as the religious and political environments in the years after Jesus died. Most of the discoveries of such writings and collections of writings were documented and received media attention, such as the discovery of the Nag Hammadi Library and the Dead Sea Scrolls during the 1900s. Other discoveries of fragmented writings receive minimum attention.

There currently seems to be a growing interest in these writings for their historic importance and their importance to the entire view of early Jesus followers and evolution of Christian communities across an incredibly broad geographic region. Ministers do not often emphasize differing traditions and cultures within the early church, but for every group and individual believer in the “new” religion growing among followers of Jesus, there was an individual, “personalized” set of beliefs that allowed one to become a part of the interesting set of beliefs the world would come to know as Christianity. So it is as we construct our own personal theology.

For each group, their values and mores became “true religion,” and were memorialized in the written form for various congregations to read and adhere to. Of course this set up groups of people whose entire reality and behavioral expectations were wound into their way of following Jesus. This distilled Christianity in the world-wide sense gave way to a standardized version of books and beliefs still subject to broad interpretation but at least achieving the goal of having everyone reading from the same page, so to speak.

Whether it was a Divine encounter with Christ or a pragmatic design to consolidate religious and state power, or a bit of both, Constantine put in motion the wheels of creating a universally accepted Canon of religious books that stands today. The Bible is the most widely read, widely purchased, widely published and widely transcribed book in the history of humankind. It is likely within a few feet of you at any time in a given day. The Bible may have taken another 300 years after Nicaea to be established worldwide, but it is here for better or worse...and it is the choice of every individual to assign the Bible its due reverence and acknowledgement.

From the beginning of human self awareness, people have wondered what it is that animates the human body, and whether the animator is something separate from the body altogether. Where does the person go when their body dies? We have before us a dead body, but we have no evidence that the personality, or the soul, or the spirit of the individual has either lived or died...we just have the body. The concept of consciousness is that quality of having an inner mental world that reasons and makes choices given stimuli from outside and is only sustained

within a live body. Consciousness is the interaction between our inner selves and the world around us. It is another mystery to science and everyone else. Philosopher Alfred North Whitehead wrote that consciousness is an intrinsic property of creation.

For some the questions are answered by science or other human ways of understanding. Others find their answers in the way they have come to interpret Faith, and its gravity in the life and actions of humans. The Bible begins appropriately at the very beginning where God creates the earth, the heavens, the universe, life, and human life. Only by becoming an active part of the creation of the first human did God create him. The human figure only became a human being once God had blown His breath into the nostrils and he came to life. What is it that animates the human figure? The breath of God. The given soul. Consciousness. The human energy that allows us to think and reason and act. The Holy Spirit emerging within.

All of the topics examined, the soul, the mind, the spirit, the Holy Spirit, and consciousness make up who we are as individuals. Within these elements are our personality, or thoughts, our aspirations, our identity, and physical life itself. The concepts are uniquely different from one another, but barely. Perhaps they are all facets of the same jewel. Consciousness, the mind, the soul and the Holy Spirit are things that illuminate every human.. As the Chandogya Upanishad avowed over three thousand years ago, “That which is the essence of all things, That art Thou.” [21]

When God formed the human figure He proclaimed the being would be made in his image, in his likeness. Debate continues as to whether or not this means we resemble God in a physical manner, or if it is our spiritual self (soul, mind, consciousness, Holy Spirit) that resembles God? The true answer is that we as humans enjoy a human body which carries our soul, the breath of the Almighty, through this life for better or worse. The body is the vessel through which God is expressed at our individual direction. It is the most precious gift we have been given by God. Putting it to use in the name of God is the most critical responsibility we all have.

Finally, what is it that actually brings humans to life and sustains that life? The Book of Genesis tells us it was the breath of God that inspires life within the human form. When we look at questions about the Mind, the Soul and our Consciousness, we see that questions outnumber answers. Suffice it to say here, the soul, mind, and consciousness are intangible qualities as to now unexplained at least scientifically. They are different facets of the same phenomenon, known here as the indwelling God. God As Animator explains in my theology where human energy, thought and activity originate.



What Matters and What We Are Not

It would seem blasphemous for someone to say “I am God,” and that is certainly not being said here. God is God, and we are human. God As Animator holds that the mysterious essence of the human being is the essence of God. We are of God and with God. We are not God.

The early Greek Fathers insist almost unanimously that, no matter how closely we are linked to God, He always remains distinct (though not separate) from humankind. This distinction is important. We humans are not God, though the Spirit of God is alive within us and is giving us our very lives. The spirit is hidden very well, and very close to each of us. It is retrievable by personal choice, and it is up to each of us whether to nourish the indwelling God and develop a relationship, or put the treasure under wraps, holding only as a topic of philosophical discussion or not at all.

The God As Animator concept does not include anything about humans being divine or humans being Gods. Only God is God. We are most certainly NOT Gods. The fallibility of humankind is not debatable, so it is that humans are not God. God is who humans worship, adore, and want to please. God is our Creator and we are dependent upon and subservient to God in every way.

The point is that we humans are nothing without the Spirit of God dwelling inside each of us. God gave us life to begin with. So while God lives within us, we are not God. From the seeds of human thought and the pursuit of knowledge, great thinkers and theologians alike say there is something “supernatural” or “otherworld” that gives us life. Biblically, from the early pages of Genesis, through the prophets, through the life of Christ and beyond the Epistles of Paul, there is a theme of God animating humans and indwelling each of us. From God breathing himself into the nostrils of the clay figure (Genesis) to Paul saying, “There is no Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all and is in all.” (Colossians 3:11)

What matters most for Christians is that Jesus is the Christ. God indwells humans and he indwelled Jesus also. Jesus is the only begotten Son, and hence Jesus is God. We are exploring the idea that God is the Animator of humankind, but our true focus today must be emphasizing the truth of Christ within, and helping others to see the power of good and righteousness God had presented each human. For Christians it is the Spirit of Jesus that resides within us, giving strength and confidence as we go forward in our lives. For those with questions about the status of Jesus of Nazareth, he is the ultimate example of God indwelling.

When people can consider that God is indwelling and the indwelling-God is the catalyst of our individual life/lives, they may be more open to taking the next step to knowing Jesus Christ as the Son of God and the Savior of humankind. Christ is the core of Christianity and in this age of declining faith we must be open to whatever it is that will bring people to a place where they can

know and love Jesus as the Messiah and enjoy their walk with Christ. I also believe that if people can look at one another and see that God is the common thread running between all of God's children, one's perspective will change and a more humane communication will ensue.

God is God. Jesus is the only begotten Son of God and hence He is God. We are humans. The God As Animator idea deals with the essence of life and energy we share with God. God came to earth in the human form of Jesus. Jesus lived as an example for each of us through his words and deeds, and demonstrated in his example as well as in hid expressed lessons that God is love, and He lives in each of us through light, knowledge, wisdom, and Holy Spirit.

One Spirit, Indivisible

The Bible tells us again and again that there is only one God and one Spirit. This is significant because if all humans indeed share the Spirit of God, and the Spirit is the actual energy that animates us, we are a part of the same whole. Ephesians 4:4-6 says, "There is but one body and one spirit; one Lord, one faith, one baptism." God Is. What more can be said? It seems so easy, yet God is so complex we cannot begin to fathom. The notion that the energy and spirit of God animates us isn't all that radical when we consider the vast power and presence of God.

Whatever it is and however one may actually conceive of it, the vast majority of people believe there is a supreme power, or something that is greater than us all. Ask someone. As of 2005, the most reliable data said approximately 88 percent of the world's population believe in God. In the United States the number is 95 percent. [22] Belief in God is varied from individual to individual, much in the way that theology is a uniquely personal thing.

We are told again and again, and even by God himself, that there is only one God. The edict is so powerful, it is even the first of the Ten Commandments, Exodus 20:3.

The unity, indivisibility, and supremacy of God are at times used to argue against the God As Animator concept. These people argue that God could not be the animator of humans because to be such would mean that God had "divided" himself among the just over 7 billion human beings now alive on the earth. The argument holds no water because one cannot divide infinity. God is now. He has always been, and He will be forever. The idea that the breath of life, given us by the Almighty God, is something we have in common with every living human, dispels any idea of division. God indwelling is what we hold in common with every other human being.



Belief in a Single God

The belief in a single God is important in that it focuses us on what is. God is. We are told throughout the Bible that God is everywhere and is everything. God is a single, undividable spirit. This conception may lead us to better understand the description of a single raindrop and the existence of the broader ocean. If God indeed dwells within each of us, we are the raindrops. When our physical bodies become unable to sustain life, the God (consciousness/spirit/energy) within each of us is set free and the spirit (God indwelling) presumably becomes one with the ocean (God) once again.

So there is a single God...how can we be sure? It certainly makes sense to have gods playing to their strengths when ruling the world, as in the number of gods in Hinduism overseeing various elements of life, or in Greek Mythology where Aphrodite is the Goddess of Love and Beauty, and Poseidon is the God of the Sea. It is logical for the Sun God to rule over the day time and the God of Crops bringing rain to thirsty fields. We can buy into this system because it resembles hierarchy and established order. This Polytheism, or looking to more than one god, is interesting because in nearly every example the believers recognize a "chief god," or a "penultimate deity." So even where multiple gods are recognized and worshipped, there is a ruling figure that is God to the gods, such as Brahma in Hinduism and Zues, who ruled all gods from Mount Olympus in Greek Mythology.

Monotheism is the belief in a single god. Most people today would say that monotheism is linked directly with the onset of Judaism and Christianity, but history tells us that widespread belief in a single god started thousands of years before. In the 13th century BC, Egyptians worshipped a sun god named Aten. The pharaoh Amenhotep IV changed his name to Akhenaten out of respect and deference to Aten. Akhenaten expressed his feelings about Aten in a classic poem titled, "Great Hymn to Aten," which some scholars believe to be the basis and inspiration for Psalm 104. Amenhotep IV, another Egyptian ruler attempted to impose this same version of monotheism during his tenure following Akenaten. When Amenhotep died, his people banned everything associated with him and they reverted to practices of idolatry and polytheism.

Zoroastrianism is another example of monotheism was founded in Greater Iran (Persia) some time before the 6th century BC. It was a religion and philosophy based on the teachings of the prophet Zarathustra (Zoraster), and was one of the world's largest religions. Zarathushtra preached that there existed one God, whom he called Ahura Mazda, Ahura meaning "Lord," and Mazda meaning "Wise."

Monotheism reached its highest and most lasting expression in the Judeo/Christian religions around 1800 BCE, when Abraham refused to worship the idols which were common during that period. Even though we have just seen monotheistic practices in early human history, conventional wisdom is that Abraham is considered the first individual to believe in a single God who ruled over everyone and everything, as opposed to the belief in several gods for instance a

different god for each season of the year. Authors Timothy Freke and Peter Grandy write in their book *The Jesus Mysteries*, “Five hundred years before Christ, Xenophanes had already written: 'There is one God, always still and at rest, who moves all things with the thoughts of his mind.' The legendary Egyptian sage Hermes Trismegistus is credited with teaching: 'Do you think there are many Gods? That's absurd - God is one.' The Pagan sage Maximus of Tyre declared: “The one doctrine upon which all the world is united is that one God is king of all and father.” [23]

Pythagorus (550-495 BC), the famous mathematician and leader of a pagan religion, preached single-god pantheism as part of a mystery religion. This is from the “God is everything” school and would include the dimension of God As Animator. This in turn makes God the common thread between humans and everything else including the earth and all its splendor, the joy of one another, the mystery of the universe and the cosmos.

Hinduism knows a single God named Brahman who is the universe and all space. Brahman is source, soul and creator of all beings and all that is. He is everything that is and everything that was Brahman is infinite consciousness and infinite being. While Hindus worship a number of gods and goddesses, these gods and goddesses represent different aspects of Brahman. In Hinduism the self is referred to as the soul. In Hinduism, the animator of humans is Brahman, or God.

In many of the ancient religions in addition to early Christianity, the idea was commonplace that scattered souls come together at some point to be a part of the greater whole. In this paper it is often likened to an individual raindrop becoming a part of the greater ocean. Establishing God as the singular God over all heaven, earth and beyond makes sense One God significant in the idea of God As Animator?

Scripture About The Single God

The Bible clearly states there is but one God, the Creator of the universe, and that Abraham was the individual who originally began worshipping God the Father. The idea that there is only one God and one Spirit come to us time and again in Scripture, and the Book of Isaiah repeats the theme from God Himself. The power and clarity of the Scripture in Isaiah cannot be overemphasized. Read the following:

“I am the first and I am the last apart from me there is no other God.” (Isaiah 44:6)

“I am God and there is no other; I am God and there is none like me.” (Isaiah 46:9)

“Before me no God was formed, nor will there be one after me.” (Isaiah 43:10)



"For this is what the LORD says - he who created the heavens, he is God; he who fashioned and made the earth, he founded it; he did not create it to be empty, but formed it to be inhabited - he says: 'I am the LORD, and there is no other'" (Isaiah 45:18)

"...there is no God apart from me, a righteous God and a Savior; there is none but me. Turn to me and be saved, all you ends of the earth; for I am God and there is no other." (Isaiah 45:21-22)

There are places through the Old Testament aside from Isaiah where the singular power, authority, and being of God are proclaimed, including three verses in Revelation that are similar but make the point:

I am the Alpha and the Omega, says the Lord God, who is and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty. (Revelation 1:8)

I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the ending. (Revelation 21:6)

I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the beginning and the end. (Revelation 22:13)

God is so serious about us knowing He is the one and only, the first of the Ten Commandments says, "I am the Lord thy God who brought you out of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. You shall have no other God before me." (Exodus 20:3) Our understanding of the single God is important as we begin to consider that God lives within each of us and the common thread running through all of us. It also explains the imagery of the great ocean being comprised of singular, unique raindrops.

The New Testament also brings us a number of statements that confirm God lives within us. The difference between what the Old Testament has to say about God indwelling and what the New Testament stresses, is that once we get to the New Testament we are talking about Jesus being the Son of God, and coming to live within us alongside God and the Holy Spirit.

In studying this idea we must consider 1 John 4:15, "If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in him and he in God." This Scripture offering would have us believe that in order to know the God within, we must proclaim that Christ is the Son of God. The difference here is understanding that God lives within us and gives us life, and the understanding as a Christian that Christ/God continue to live within us. God is always within every man; understanding this and declaring that Christ is the Son of God makes one a Christian, which intimates the relationship we have with God and expands the power of the individual to do benevolent things.

Omnipotence, Omnipresence, Omniscience

A look at God would not be complete without taking into account the words that say it all. Throughout the history of humankind and throughout the Bible we are told that God is each of these things at once, but this has implications as to the complexity of God and our individual understandings. As humans we can understand parts of God, but we cannot understand Him fully. The vastness and complexity of God might make people want to contemplate something else, but we should never stop wondering about God's nature and striving to understand those parts of God that are accessible to us. God is so complex and so vast we can only try to understand His nature and motivations.

Omnipotence, Latin for "all power" is often listed as a quality of a deity. Omnipotence is unlimited power and authority. It is the ability to do anything. Omnipotence is pure and total agency. Another term representing omnipotence in the Bible is "Almighty," or the singular God. The God of Abraham is certainly omnipotent. Naturally, there are claims and proclamations throughout the Bible of God's omnipotence, and in the New Testament Jesus claims to be "One with the Father," who is omnipotent. The Gospel of John is the most direct about Jesus being God. Examples of God's omnipotence can be found in the following scripture:

| | |
|-----------------|-------------------|
| Revelation 19:6 | Psalms 33:8-9 |
| Genesis 17:1 | John |
| Psalms 107:25 | Luke 4:6 |
| Jeremiah 32:27 | 2 Corinthians 4:4 |
| John 2:24-25 | John 6:64 |

Omniscience is the capacity to know all there is to be known and to know it infinitely. It is having complete and unlimited knowledge, awareness, and understanding of all there is.

Scriptural references to omniscience include:

| | |
|----------------|--------------------|
| Job 37:16 | Psalms 139:12 |
| Psalms 44:21 | Hebrews 4:13 |
| Isaiah 46:9-10 | 1 Corinthians 2:10 |
| Psalms 147:5 | Job 28:24 |
| 1 John 3:19-20 | 1 Samuel 2:3 |

Omnipresence is another descriptor of God, which is the property of being present everywhere at once. God is certainly with us always as the creation made in His image. Scripture about omnipresence include:

Psalm 139:8

Romans 8:9

Psalm 137:9-10

Job 1:6

Jeremiah 23:23-24

Acts 17:24-28

1 Kings 8:27

Hebrews 4:13

Many who proclaim the Bible to be the inerrant Holy Word of God, and claim that every word recorded in the Holy Bible to be the absolute truth will not accept the God As Animator idea, though the Bible tells us God is everything, everywhere, and all-knowing. If God is everything, He is certainly you and me. The Bible tells us so, yet even the most literal interpreter of the Bible who proclaims God is omnipotent, omnipresent, and omniscient will deny that God is the soul or consciousness or spirit. How can people claim that God has unlimited power and authority, knows everything there is, and is everywhere at once, yet say God As Animator cannot be true? The Bible says that God Is Animator in actual, literal words. The concept is implied in still more Scripture. Humankind's greatest and most expansive thinkers pondered the notion, never coming to a conclusion but affirming that our inner selves are born of something supernatural or unworldly.

If we agree with the words and stated beliefs about God, that God rules everything, is everywhere, and knows everything it is quite possible, perhaps probable, that God is the animator of humankind and is the breath of life within each of us.

Logos

Logos is an important concept in studies of philosophy, psychology, theology, rhetoric and religion. Over time, Logos has come to represent "everything." The word originally meant "a ground", "a plea", "an opinion", "an expectation", "word", "speech", "account", and "reason." In the 470s BC, Logos became a technical term in philosophy, used first by Heraclitus to mean "a principle of order and knowledge."

Aristotle defined the Logos early on as the capacity to express one's inner feelings. Aristotle said that the Logos made it possible for humans to perceive through reasoned discourse the differences between good and evil, just and unjust, and between what is harmful or to one's advantage.

Logos was used by Stoic philosophers long before Christ as well as during the development of early Christianity to identify the divine animating principle pervading the universe. The Stoics seemed to understand the idea of God indwelling. In about 300 BC Zeno of Citium began Stoic philosophy, claiming that each human possesses a portion of the divine Logos. Zeno of Citium was a respected philosopher and founder of the Stoic School of Hellenistic philosophy. He believed that man had enough of the divine Logos within that societies could get along without an economy or organized institutions.

Philo (20 BC AD 40) adopted the term into Jewish philosophy, writing that “the Logos of the living God is the bond of everything, holding all things together and binding all the parts, and preventing them from being dissolved and separated.” [24] Philo contended that the Logos acts on behalf of God in the physical world. Philo believed that the Logos was God’s instrument in the creation of the universe. Reviewing the definition given by Philo above, it can be said that the Logos is seen as omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent, and is the soul itself. The Logos is the foundation of knowledge and wisdom. Further analysis allows us to see that in Philo’s definition, the Logos is energy and the Logos is what acts on behalf of God in the physical world. In other words, the Logos is the indwelling spirit within each human body...within each of us.

Clement of Alexandria (150-215 AD) believed that the Logos is the means mankind can use to realize the interior mind of God the Father. For Clement, the Logos is the teacher sent by the Father to teach us the necessary knowledge of God. In the Book of Acts the Holy Spirit is identified as the instructor (comforter) sent by the Father as a teacher. Clement says we become divinized by learning from the Christ.

In Christianity, the opening sentences of the Gospel of John identify the Logos as divine, and as the thing through which all is made. The Gospel of John identifies Jesus as the personification of the Logos. Theologian Frank Staggs writes:

As the Logos, Jesus Christ is God in self-revelation (Light) and redemption (Life). Jesus is God to the extent that he can be present to man and knowable to man. The Logos is God, yet the Logos is in some sense distinguishable from God, for “the Logos was with God.” God and the Logos are not two beings, and yet they are not simply identical. The Logos is God active in creation, revelation, and redemption.” [25]

In academics the Logos is still most often used according to its Greek origins, or to more contemporary meanings such as uses within modern philosophy, Sufism, or the analytical psychology of Carl Jung.

Clement contended that the Logos will teach us necessary knowledge of God that when attained, awakens the God within. It is very reminiscent of the Holy Spirit, or Counselor, Jesus promised the Disciples at Pentecost. Once the Disciples were endowed with the Holy Spirit, they could communicate in all languages of the earth, and had the ability to cast out demons and perform

miraculous feats. With Clement, when the human becomes aware and responsive to the indwelling God, Logos begins to occur as a process of assimilation between the Holy Spirit within each individual and God by way of knowledge.

The word *Logos* is the term by which Christian theology in the Greek language designates the Word of God. Before the author of John's Gospel legitimized this term by using it in writings, the Greeks and the Jews had used it to express religious conceptions, which had a certain influence on spiritual practices. These influences can be seen in ancient philosophic writings as well as in the Old Testament. In the New Testament, John uses the Logos as the personification of Christ. In other writings, specifically in the Epistles of Paul, the theology of the Logos emerges and is established again and again. In Paul's writings to the Corinthians, Christ is called "the power of God, and the wisdom of God" (1 Corinthians 1:24) and "the image of God" (2 Corinthians 4:4). In the Epistle to the Colossians it is more evident (Colossians 1:15); and above all in the Epistle to the Hebrews, where the theology of the Logos lacks only the term itself. The doctrine of the Logos entered into Christian theology simply because as God is everything, so is the Logos. The Logos is singular. The Logos is omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent. The Logos is within you and me.

Thermodynamics

Even some of the faithful are looking for scientific evidence to substantiate their beliefs. The science of Thermodynamics seems to me to be one kind of science that establishes God as Creator, and even upholds the idea of God as Animator. Thermodynamics is a branch of physics concerning the relationships and conversions between heat and other forms of energy. The term comes from two Greek words, *therme* meaning "heat," and *dunamis* meaning "force" or "power." As with all scientific theories, thermodynamics is governed by a set of laws or functioning principles. Much of the engineering technology available today is based on the fundamental elements embodied in the laws of thermodynamics. The interesting principles set the stage as to why the universe acts as it does, and some believe that the link between the spiritual and science can be found in the laws of thermodynamics.

The first and second laws of thermodynamics are quite technical and involved. Evolutionist Willard Young said in defining the first law of Thermodynamics "Energy can be neither created nor destroyed, but can only be converted from one form to another." [26] This is also called the Conservation of Energy principle, referred to by Young as "...the single most important and fundamental law of nature." This principle is factual and without exception. Energy is. Energy is one. Energy can neither be created nor destroyed. Make the leap with me to a discussion about God. God is. God is one. God can be neither created nor destroyed.



Jeff Miller, PhD says writes the following thought on thermodynamics and God:

“The Universe could not have come into existence without the presence and intervention of a Force outside of the closed system of the entire physical Universe. The Universe therefore must be an open system that was created by a non-physical force not composed of mass, matter, and energy outside of the physical boundary of this Universe (above nature, or supernatural) with the capability of bringing it into existence out of nothing. That Force can be none other than the supernatural God of the Bible. Scientifically speaking, the Universe could not and did not spontaneously generate. Until the First Law of Thermodynamics ceases to be a fundamental law explaining this Universe, the spontaneous generation of this Universe from nothing is impossible.” If in the beginning the Universe as a whole and contained no mass, matter, nor energy then it spontaneously generated all of the mass/matter/energy in the Universe, the First Law would be violated because energy cannot be created.” [27]

The second law of thermodynamics builds off the first, in that while the constant amount of energy in a system is transforming into various states, the energy is becoming less usable. For instance, if we burn a piece of wood the amount of energy within the wood is transferred to another state, such as the heat and ash. The ash is not as usable for energy as the original piece of wood. This process, called Entropy, is irreversible and demonstrates the second law of thermodynamics: “All things move from a state of order to a state of disorder.” What a concept to consider, yet we see it every day in our physical world. Consider how the new paint job on your house looks after six months, a year, five years. Think about the orderliness of your home...it is constantly becoming disorderly and needing attention. All things are constantly eroding and moving toward disorder. This is best exemplified in the evolution of the human body. There is that moment in conception when the egg and sperm meet, chromosomes order themselves, and the development of the fetus begins. From that moment, the human body is aging and moving closer and closer toward death (disorder). This is the experience of each of us. The unavoidable movement from order to disorder is called entropy and is a law of nature in this world. Alfred Einstein said that entropy is the premier law of all science.

The use of thermodynamics as a rationale for the existence of God is explained as follows:

There are only three possible explanations for the existence of matter in the universe:

- 1) Either matter is spontaneously generated, it came into existence out of nothing;
- 2) It has always existed, or it is eternal;
- or 3) it was created.

Without an outside force (a transcendent, omnipotent, eternal, superior Being), there are no other options for the existence of the universe. However, the laws of thermodynamics prove that the

spontaneous generation and the eternity of matter are logically and scientifically impossible. The only possible remaining option is that the universe was created by the Creator. Thus a creator of the universe (God) is established using thermodynamics as a link to hard science.

In closing, we return to Lord Kelvin, the Father of Thermodynamics, for some fitting final thoughts:

“I cannot admit that, with regard to the origin of life, science neither affirms nor denies Creative Power. Science positively affirms Creative Power. It is not in dead matter that we live and move and have our being, but in the creating and directing Power which science compels us to accept as an article of belief.... There is nothing between absolute scientific belief in a Creative Power, and the acceptance of the theory of a fortuitous concurrence of atoms.... Forty years ago I asked Liebig, walking somewhere in the country if he believed that the grass and flowers that we saw around us grew by mere chemical forces. He answered, “No, no more than I could believe that a book of botany describing them could grow by mere chemical forces.... Do not be afraid of being free thinkers! If you think strongly enough you will be forced by science to the belief in God, which is the foundation of all religion. You will find science not antagonistic but helpful to religion.”
[28]

Some people “prove” the existence of God for themselves by making the link between spiritual matters and science. Some people find in the laws of thermodynamics proof that God exists. Of course there are those who say the field of thermodynamics actually offers dis-proof of God’s existence. These people think that everything moving from a state of order to a state of disorder denies God, because then God himself would be eroding , or experiencing entropy. Everything mortal/organic experiences entropy, but we know that God is not mortal or organic. Again we see the questions that arise when humans attempt to explain God by using human values and the laws of our physical universe. God cannot be limited by human constraints or universal laws. We know that God is omniscient, omnipresent and omnipotent . God is the master of thermodynamics and is the master of all things.

Summary

The fact that the amount of energy in the world is finite is noted in the first law of thermodynamics. Our world is a closed system and therefore energy is one. The notion that God is one has been with us since the beginning of time and is noted often throughout the Bible. The concept of a single God is significant because if God is indeed omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent; if God is indeed all-powerful, knows everything and is everywhere, there can be no doubt that God As Animator is a possibility. In this work we have again and again talked about the singular and unique raindrop becoming part of the greater ocean. We looked briefly at the

phenomenon of Holographic cells being broken, and each broken piece of the Hologram has upon it the complete image that is conveyed on the original. These two scenarios demonstrate the unique nature of the inner human (soul, consciousness, the mind) melding with the greater God when the human body is of no further use. The Holographic cell example is used to show how God might divide himself and still remain true to the whole. The fact that some people see the laws of thermodynamics as proof of God's existence makes some logical, scientific sense, but this is theology, which is subjective in nature and open to individual interpretation. The most logical sensible scientific expressions are in response to question regarding how things interact with God and our precepts of His nature.

A great many people regard thermodynamics as the marriage of science and spirituality. Those who are looking for tangible evidence that God exists and cannot be divided find thermodynamics to be an answer.

Practices Through History

The idea that God is the human animator is as old as human thought. Even before Moses penned the Genesis account of Creation, we have seen that scholars and philosophers mused it is the soul that gives life to the human body, and that without the soul, the body is just a bag of bones, tissue and water. As humans began to contemplate the origin of the soul and the purpose of life itself, they recorded the thoughts for posterity and a grand age of thinking came upon the world.

The new thinking professed to be more systematic in nature as opposed to the previous ritualistic or superstitious tradition which was based largely on survival and day-to-day living. The new thinking contemplated a future and behaviors became more pragmatic. In many ways, the grand age of thinking took away humans' emphasis on God. In many ways, the grand age of thinking caused humans to be more independent and less reliant on God. This is likely due to the fact that an evolved people became less fearful of things in general and less fearful of things they did not understand. The grand age of thinking propelled philosophy, theology, and complex thought to new heights and new realities.

Five hundred years later when Jesus was born in a stable in Bethlehem, many philosophic and theological questions were given a new answer and a new relevance. The first centuries after the death of Jesus saw Christianity become somewhat standardized while the church grew inside and outside the Roman Empire. As things became standardized, new theological questions and concepts were branded as heretical if they did not stand up to the scrutiny of church officials.

Early Christianity was nuanced from group to group, from congregation to congregation, and from individual believer to individual believer. There were broad variations of practice and

belief from group to group as well as minor but important variations and emphasis. Actually it is the same today. Each church is its own unique group of believers with their own tendencies and biases. The “bandwagon effect” of many churches causes people to be comfortable with congregations of people who hold similar values and similar beliefs about the purpose and nature of God.

Variety of beliefs in 1-5 centuries

Author and theologian Bart D. Erman cites an interesting portrayal of early Christian times by German scholar Walter Brauer in his 1934 book *Orthodoxy And Heresy in Early Christianity*, “In almost every instance, our earliest records of Christianity in most of these regions do not embrace the views that later came to be declared orthodox. Instead...they embraced alternative forms of Christianity. In the early centuries Egypt was dominated by Gnostic Christians and various sects existed. Early Christianity consisted of an enormous range of faith and practice, not one solid monolith.” [29]

With this backdrop, it can be seen how even after a “Universal Doctrine” had been adopted following the First Nicaea Council in 325, broad numbers of “Christian” groups practiced in their own way and under their agreed-to values and understanding of Jesus’ message. What became known as Gnosticism was a practice stressing the importance of secret knowledge that would allow one to escape the trappings of the physical world. Some Gnostics believe that we are endowed with a spark of divinity (or Sophia, ultimate wisdom), and that on this earth the human body was created to house the spark of this divine being, Sophia. Gnostic beliefs and other strong early Christian belief systems lasted long beyond the establishment of the King James Bible and the State Church of the Roman Empire, yet those practicing such beliefs were at times driven underground. The Gnostic Gospels and stories often include the notion that God lives within every human and is working through education and self-enlightenment to achieve a state where the Spirit within is set free to ascend to a better place.

Heresy and The Unorthodox

As humans, everyone thinks their personal views are orthodox. What we mean when we identify an orthodox belief is not only that it is the correct belief, but that it was correct all along. The word ‘orthodox’ is translated in Greek, *orthos* meaning “right,” and *doxa* meaning “opinion.” So those Christians whose books of Canon were selected as “official” had won the struggle for legitimacy, and to fortify the victory, they labeled the official beliefs as “orthodox,” meaning these beliefs had been the correct beliefs from the beginning. Any belief not a part of the official canon was immediately identified as ‘heresy,’ from the Greek word for choice.

Tertullian (160-225) was an early Christian activist, famous for rooting out heresy. He believed the church had a monopoly on righteousness and justice represented by the official canon, the practice of faith, and its worship traditions. Anyone who questioned the church or behaved in practices outside the orthodox tradition was to be punished in the name of God. For Tertullian, reading any spiritually-oriented materials outside the Bible constituted heresy, and any doubt expressed about church dogma or the actions of the church were worthy of death or excommunication. Any learning that expanded the mind or required one to think critically was suspect. Tertullian said, "Indeed heresies are themselves instigated by philosophy."

An organized group dedicated to fighting Christian heresy was the Order of Preachers, or Dominicans (1216-1227), who performed inquisitions into heresy in medieval Europe. The Dominicans were preaching, teaching, and provided pastoral care to "save souls" that had been tempted by the heresies popular in western Europe. The Dominican Order has been held up as well as criticized through history for proclaiming righteousness yet partaking in the repressive persecution that constituted heresy inquisitions: the arrest, interrogation, torture, punishment, and sometimes execution of those who deviated in belief from Roman Christianity.

God As Animator was an idea that brought persecution in early Christianity. When the 14th-century Christian priest Meister Eckhart preached that "God and I are one" he was brought before Pope John XXII and forced to "recant everything that he had falsely taught." Others suffered a worse fate. The 10th-century Islamic mystic al-Hallaj was crucified for using language that claimed an identity with God. [30]

Groups and individuals have come onto and off the world stage, committed to identifying and persecuting preachers, writers and academics for heresy. Nearly all of these heresy hunters rail against any understanding of the Gnostic writings and non-canonical gospels, most of which as we have seen at least suggest God As Animator. While it is not a fundamental part of today's Christian message, God As Animator is a familiar concept to most people. Those in the clergy know the concept and are generally uncomfortable discussing it since it "...isn't Biblical." However, a surprising number of ministers, priests, and clergy embrace the idea. One Pastor in Denver said that God indwelling had better be true since he had been preaching to and preaching about the "Christ within" throughout his entire ministry.

Philosophers and Theologians

As we have seen, questions about the soul and the essence that makes us human have been on the mind of humans since the beginning. These questions existed before humans even knew how to communicate and no doubt became part of the oral tradition and the focus of expressive art as humans became more aware of themselves and began to track history (or at least their own histories).



When human thought became organized and structured, when humans became aware of thought and how to express or share their thoughts, Aristotle, Plato and other great thinkers explored the idea of the soul and how it is originated. This was of course ages before the birth of Jesus or the development of Christianity. They also explored the question of whether there exists a link between the human mind and the human body. Are the mind (soul) and the body one amorphous mass that exists until death, when it all goes away and is over completely? Or are the mind and body separate entities, the continued existence and functioning of the human body being dependent on the mind being bound to the body? These arguments and questions have not stopped coming and even today we know these issues and debates from college courses and as far as they have become part of our popular culture. The “Origin of the Soul” question and the philosophical “Mind/Body” debate stimulate thought and conversation across the world every day, just as they have across the span of human time.

Of course these debates are enriched following the birth of Jesus, the resurrection of Christ, and the spread of Christianity worldwide, because now we are talking about the Son of God, who defied death and whose spirit reanimated a dead human body at the will of God. The advent of Jesus the Christ created a whole new examination of questions regarding the origin of the soul and whether or not the mind and body exist co-dependently. It also makes us look anew at the life of Jesus, and theologians during the time of the embryonic Christian church viewed the God As Animator idea with new eyes.

Clement was a theologian and philosopher who is credited with his attempt to draw understandings between Greek pagan philosophy and Christianity. Using his extensive knowledge of the Bible and philosophic thought, Clement made the claim that the Old Testament is the source of the philosophic construct. He describes philosophy as a direct operation of the divine Logos, working through it as well as through the law. Clement defined for Christians the philosophical concept of the Logos, the principle of true Christian gnosis, through whom alone God's relation to the world and his revelation is maintained. Clement cannot explain God other than to say God is a Being who cannot be defined or comprehended.

Origen (184-253) was a theologian who took up the Platonic idea that life assimilates life. This was likely a strategy used by him to connect with a populace of potential believers who were steeped in Platonic thought. By making Christianity an intellectual endeavor and by making it accessible to mass audiences, these intellectual perspectives of Christianity became part of the fabric of society. Clement of Alexandria and Origen fought pagan Gnosticism by creating and nurturing a brand of Christianity that embraced a Christian gnosis as a contemplation of our union with God. [31]

Another philosopher who thought about the essence of God as the animator of humankind was Zeno of Citium (334 BC-262 BC), the founder of the Stoic school of philosophy. Zeno claimed that the universe is God. He said the universe/God is a divine reasoning entity, where all the

parts belong to the whole. Reminiscent of pantheism, Zeno spoke of a divine artisan-fire which foresees all things, and extending throughout the Universe, produces everything. Nature is defined by Zeno as an artistically working fire. This divine fire, or *aether*, is the basis for all activity in the Universe. Individual souls are part of the same fire as the world-soul of the Universe. In the philosophical beliefs of Zeno, God is everything and we are like individual drops of water becoming part of the greater ocean, or in Zeno's view individual fires that become part of the greater inferno.

German philosopher Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) is a more contemporary thinker who coined the term "the transcendental unity of appreciation," referring to that which comprises "the 'soul,' the 'spirit,' and the 'essence.'" [32] Kant is identifying what we have sought to show in this thesis as true consciousness. For Kant the transcendental unity of appreciation is this indescribable element of life that animates the human body, allows us to act physically, and allows us to think, reason, and make choices. He is lumping together the parts of human existence we cannot explain and giving it a term. "The transcendental unity of appreciation" is a term used in philosophy and theology courses across the world to reference one's inner self. It may also be thought of as the soul, the mind, human consciousness, and the Holy Spirit.

Western Thought

Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803–1882) was an American essayist, lecturer, and poet. He is remembered today through dozens of published essays and more than 1,500 public lectures across the United States. Best known for his works "On Walden Pond," Emerson also wrote religious texts as well as philosophical works. In one of his essays on spiritualism titled, In "The American Scholar," Emerson asserted, "It is one soul which animates all men." [33] Emerson rejected traditional dependence on the dictates of the Christian church encouraged his readers to understand one's unique place in the universe. Emerson believed that God Is the Animator of human kind and even says so..."We do not need to seek the source of authentic religious experience outside ourselves; we can discover salvation by the revelation of the God within."

Emerson goes on in the same essay to further articulate his view of this dichotomy between phenomenal plurality and transcendental unity:

We live in succession, in division, in parts, in particles. Meantime within man is the soul of the whole; the wise silence; the universal beauty, to which every part and particle is equally related, the eternal ONE. And this deep power in which we exist and whose beatitude is all accessible to us, is not only self-sufficing and perfect in every hour, but the act of seeing and the thing seen, the seer and the spectacle, the subject and the object, are one. We see the world piece by piece, as the sun, the moon, the animal, the tree; but the whole, of which these are shining parts, is the soul.

Emerson and a small group of Unitarian ministers formed the Transcendental Club, promoting a philosophy that emphasizes the soul's inborn knowledge of ultimate realities of the universe, and emphasizes the soul's transcendence in life as the fundamental goal of man. Transcendentalists contend that each soul carries the whole of the cosmos within it, interconnected yet independent in power and truth. Emerson declared, " Obey thyself. That which shows God in me, fortifies me. That which shows God out of me, makes me a wart and a wen." [34] Emerson discovered a religious power within himself, a direct intuition of a spiritual God common in the soul of every person. Emerson's contention is that we do not need to seek the source of authentic religious experience outside ourselves; we can discover salvation by the revelation of the God within.

In "The American Scholar," Emerson could not be more clear when he states, "It is one soul which animates all men." He rejected traditional dependence on the dictates of the Christian church, and regarding our place in the universe. Transcendentalists affirm that humanity has the capacity to find illumination and salvation independent of church dogma. The individual rises in self-trust and self-expectation, while assuming responsibility for one's actions. "In self-trust, all virtues are comprehended," said Emerson, "and self-trust leads to harmony of the individual soul with God. Transcendentalism celebrates the interconnectedness of souls that happens simultaneously as each person finds his/her own role and path in life."

Emerson stresses autonomy, though he intimates a healing of the self rather than alienation from or rejection of society. Humankind can choose to face the earthly reality in society and the world and be constructive, or not. The idea of self actualization may be the point when we understand that every soul can break through the earthy reality and strive for improvement and divinization. Emerson demonstrates that God As Animator and the indwelling God are concepts well-established in theological and philosophical thought.

Emma Curtis Hopkins (1849-1925) was a woman who taught about the indwelling God and had a broad influence on what would become the New Thought movement. Hopkins was a follower of Emerson and other pioneers of "New Thought" Christianity including Mary Baker Eddy of the Christian Science movement and Charles and Myrtle Fillmore of the Unity School of Christianity. She is seen as a prominent feminist, a mystic, and a teacher who ordained women at a time in American history when such practices were revolutionary.

Hopkins was a writer and includes among her works *Twelve Powers Of The Soul*, where she asks the question:

What was that which was not born when you were born, has never been interested in anything you have done while you have been on this planet, and will not die when you lie down? This is the 'Jesus Christ' in you. It is sometimes called the divine ego in you, sometimes called the divine soul of you, sometimes your deathless, changeless spirit. [35]

In the above reference, Hopkins affirms that (God) Christ lives within, and propels the idea of dualism, that the body and the soul are two differing things, and that when the body stops functioning, the spirit lives on as one's "deathless, changeless spirit." The spiritual thought inspired by Hopkins included caring for and nurturing

American writer and spiritual teacher Ernest Shurtleff Holmes (1887-1960) founded the Religious Science spiritual movement which was based on a spiritual philosophy known as "The Science of the Mind." Holmes wrote several books and founded Science of the Mind magazine, in continuous publication since Religious Science was founded in 1927. He influenced American Christianity along with others of his day in ways that are distinct and with us today.

In the 1920s Holmes printed a statement of beliefs that spells out the idea of God as Animator and affirms God indwelling...

- I believe in God, the Living Spirit Almighty; one, indestructible, absolute and self-existent Cause. This One manifests itself in and through all creation, but is not absorbed by its creation. The manifest universe is the body of God; it is the logical and necessary outcome of the infinite self-knowingness of God.
- I believe in the incarnation of the Spirit in all, and that we are all incarnations of the One Spirit.
- I believe in the eternality, the immortality, and the continuity of the individual soul, forever and ever expanding.
- I believe that the Kingdom of Heaven is within me and that I experience this Kingdom to the degree that I become conscious of it.
- I believe the ultimate goal of life to be a complete emancipation from all discord of every nature, and that this goal is sure to be attained by all.
- I believe in the unity of all life, and that the highest God and the innermost God is one God.
- I believe that God is personal to all who feel this indwelling Presence.
- I believe in the direct revelation of Truth through my intuitive and spiritual nature, and that anyone may become a revealer of Truth who lives in close contact with the Indwelling God.
- I believe that the Universal Spirit which is God, operates through a Universal Mind, which is the Law of God; and that I am surrounded by this Creative Mind which receives the direct impress of my thought and acts upon it.
- I believe in the healing of the sick through the power of the Mind.
- I believe in the control of conditions through the power of the Mind.
- I believe in the eternal Goodness, the eternal Loving-kindness and the eternal Givingness of Life to all.
- I believe in my own soul, my own spirit, and my own destiny; for I understand that the life I live is God. [36]

The purpose of featuring Emerson, Hopkins and Holmes is to show that the idea of God indwelling has had an impact on American Christianity and American culture. Each week

preachers in churches all over the world implore us to let God shine through us and that we should care for our physical bodies because “the body is God’s temple.” The words, the Scripture, and the concepts are there. God is the animator of humankind.

Modern Day Examples

We have examined the idea of God As Animator and seen that since the dawn of understanding humans have pondered where their soul originated and questioned if a separation exists between one’s mind and one’s body. These ancient philosophical writings set the stage for centuries of questions, and there were certainly groups who worshipped according to a belief that they were a functional part of everything going on around themselves, and that as part of that great Creation, had the Almighty God alive within them.

So, are there modern-day people who practice a spirituality where the indwelling God is acknowledged, respected and worshipped? Are there people and groups of people who believe that God is the Animator and use this as the foundation of their practice? The answer to these questions is affirmative, and as with all groups surrounding religions and spiritual practices there are broad variations to the theme.

Pantheism

Pantheism is congruent with a belief that God animates humankind. The word “pantheism” derives from the Greek (pan) meaning "all" and the Greek (theos) meaning "God". As such, Pantheism denotes the idea that "God" is best seen as a process of relating to the Universe. For Pantheists God is everything and is in everything. Dictionaries define Pantheism as a doctrine identifying the Supreme Being with the universe and its phenomena. A second definition says Pantheists believe in and worship all gods. Theologian John Owen writes that in Pantheism, the world and all its elements are either identical with God, or is in some way a self-expression of God’s nature.

Of course there are divergences within Pantheism, including differing texts with differing emphasis, but the central idea found in almost all versions is that the Cosmos has an all-encompassing unity and there is a sacredness of Nature. In Pantheism, God is identical with the universe. In Pantheism God is within and also beyond or outside of the universe. In Pantheism the notion of God is so complex we cannot begin to comprehend His presence, but if He is everything, perhaps it is quite easy to understand God

Some notions termed “pantheistic” are found often in the Gnostic writings such as the Gospel of Thomas, where Jesus says to the Disciples, “Split wood and I am there...turn a stone and you will find me there.” Popular writer Lee Strobel identifies Pantheism as the idea that Jesus is



coterminous with the substance of the world, or is of the same substance as everything. This is consistent with God As Animator, because God is.

Today the Pantheist movement has realized new momentum as a result of increasing concerns about our earthly environment. The “World Pantheism” website encourages people to join because it is a spirituality that worships all of creation and does not depend on miraculous events or a sacrificial Savior. The website provides the following as their statement of beliefs:

Our beliefs and values reconcile spirituality and rationality, emotion and values and environmental concern with science and respect for evidence. Our statement of Belief embodies the following basic principles:

- Reverence, awe, wonder and a feeling of belonging to Nature and the wider Universe .
- Respect and active care for the rights of all humans and other living beings.
- Celebration of our lives in our bodies on this beautiful earth as a joy and a privilege.
- Strong naturalism - without belief in supernatural realms, afterlives, beings or forces.
- Respect for reason, evidence and the scientific method as our best ways of understanding nature and the Cosmos.
- Promotion of religious tolerance, freedom of religion and complete separation of state and religion.

The World Pantheism website continues by asking readers “Why an organization?” then provides the following answers:

The major aims of the movement are:

- To promote the values of environmental concern and human rights.
- To sponsor Nature conservation activities and help members to conserve Nature
- To make earth-honoring life-affirming naturalistic beliefs widely available as a spiritual option and a rational alternative to traditional religions.
- To build up membership in localities and promote the formation of local groups.
- To create a network of celebrants for Nature and life-oriented child dedications, weddings, and funerals.
- To promote an expanding presence for these beliefs and values on the Internet and in other media of all types.
- To assist in the production and publication of media promoting these beliefs and values.

There seem to be some very politically-oriented ends to this particular organization. However, this website, the clear statement of belief, recent concern for the health of our earthly environment, and a desire for a faith that is not Christianity all account for the uptick in interest concerning Pantheism.

|

Native American Beliefs

Those indigenous to the North American continent have a broad history with unfortunate overtones we see playing out before us on reservations across the country. Proud Native Americans continue to keep their ancient traditions alive by way of educating, story-telling, dancing, and spiritual practices. Native Americans give us a “pantheistic” perspective where God is the earth and everything in it. Robert Staffanson, the Executive Director of the American Indian Institute, tells us that differences in Native American beliefs and practices differed by tribe, geographic location, and personal experiences, but there exist several defining characteristics:

Native Americans believe that all life is equal. Among their primary beliefs is the idea that the presence of the life-spark implies a degree of the spiritual, whether in humans, animals or plants. For Native Americans all species of animals and birds, as well as plant life, have the same "right" to exist as humans do. Respect for life (respect for all Creation) is paramount. [37]

Among Native American Indians there is a recognition of the interconnectedness of all Creation, and the responsibility of human beings to use their intelligence in protecting the interconnectedness, particularly the life-giving elements: water, air and soil. Their primary concern is with the long-term welfare and sustainability of life. They consider all issues and actions in relationship to their long-term effect on all life. Thankfulness to the Creator is a hallmark of the spiritual beliefs of Native Americans. Prayer, ceremonies, meditation and fasting are an important part of the Native American culture. However in their prayers they ask for nothing, giving only thanks for all forms of life and for all the physical and spiritual elements that make life possible.

God is the Animator of all life and is all life in the Native American belief system. The innate spirituality of everything alive is the underpinning of life, and we can here see the actual practice of the raindrop being special and unique, yet being a part of the greater ocean.

Quakers

A more contemporary Christian practice that captures the idea of God indwelling humans is Quakerism. Also known as the Society of Friends, Quakers have as a fundamental belief that divine revelation is an individual phenomenon that is immediate, personal, and there for the taking.

Quakers feel that each individual is a potential vessel for expressing the word of God, hence they do not pay clergy or administrative leaders. Unlike most other spiritual orders, Quakers did not

begin as an organized religion, but originally were followers of George Fox, an English lay preacher whose message was accentuated by the doctrine of “Christ within,” or what he popularly termed the “inner light.” Fox is considered the Father of Quakerism. The Encyclopedia Britannica entry on “inner light” stresses that Fox and the Quakers believed the inner light to be “God found in every man.” Quakers believe that the Inner Light becomes manifest in humans when we work for the good of others.

Anabaptist Hans Denck (1495-1527) taught that “each man has a Teacher within himself who, if rightly followed, would lead him in the path of duty and whose prompting must be obeyed at any cost.” [38] Some have said this combination of a teacher inside is our conscience. With Denck, the living word of God within is more important than Scripture

Critics draw a sharp difference between what George Fox and Hans Denck consider God indwelling, and the Holy Spirit or the Spirit of Christ. To the critics, the Holy Spirit is something outside of the human body; something outside of “where we are.” To the critics, the Holy Spirit is something to be attained or something that is given to believers, and is certainly not something innate.

The beliefs of the Quakers are often aligned with what is known as the Keswick teachings. Essentially the Keswick teachings say that as humans we need to ‘Let Go And Let God.’ The belief is the total surrender to Christ in order to know Him and get to heaven. The sinful nature of humans cannot be eradicated by surrendering to Christ, but can only be counteracted by the intervention of the Holy Spirit, brought about by right actions. For these believers, sanctification is accelerated by faith-choices, and hindered by a state of un-belief. In the Keswick teachings, the indwelling life of Christ is there to guide and assist us, but whether or not we are listening, learning, and following are different matters.

Hinduism

Also known as Vedantism, Hinduism flows from ancient texts called the Upanshads that extol a system of philosophy developing the implications that all reality is a single principle, Brahman. In this belief system, the believer's goal is to transcend the limitations of self-identity and realize one's unity with Brahman. Brahman is the unchanging, infinite, immanent, and transcendent reality which is the Divine Ground of all matter, energy, time, space, being, and everything beyond in this Universe. Brahman is the one supreme, universal spirit. Brahman is referred to as the Absolute or Godhead which is the Divine Ground of all being.



Hinduism, a religion practiced today by over 900 million people, does not adhere to a strict orthodoxy, but there are a number of principles acknowledged by most Hindus believe in:

- The three-in-one god known as “Brahman,” which is composed of: Brahma (the creator), Vishnu (the Preserver), and Shiva (the Destroyer).
- The Caste System.
- Karma. The law that good begets good, and bad begets bad. Every action, thought, or decision one makes has consequences – good or bad – that will return to each person in the present life, or in one yet to come.
- Reincarnation. Also known as “transmigration of souls,” or “samsara.” This is a journey on the “circle of life,” where each person experiences as series of physical births, deaths, and rebirths. With good karma, a person can be reborn into a higher caste, or even to godhood. Bad karma can relegate one to a lower caste, or even to life as an animal in their next life.
- Nirvana. This is the goal of the Hindu. Nirvana is the release of the soul from the seemingly endless cycle of rebirths. [39]

Interestingly there is a trinity of gods that compose Brahman – Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva. Hindus also worship additional gods and their wives, as well as gods and near gods. By some counts there are Hindu gods and goddesses numbering over 330 million. Hinduism is monotheistic, polytheistic, and pantheistic. At the same time, Hinduism teaches that all living things are Brahman at their core, or to say, all living things are Brahman/God. Enlightenment is attained by discovering and nurturing the Brahman within. Only by reaching this state of inner-self, or self-awareness can one reach Nirvana, the ultimate state of being.

Summary

This section is offered to give a historical look at God As Animator over the history of thought, and to examine the staying power of the God As Animator idea. Most people believe that after Christ was crucified and rose in three days, the practice of Christianity sprang up and spread like wildfire much as it is today. In fact, this perception could not be more mistaken. After the death and resurrection of Christ, groups and sub-groups and splinter groups and sects were established with practices commemorating Christ and paying homage to his teachings, or a particular interpretation of his teachings. These groups centered around tribal or clan boundaries, and the form of Christianity they followed had a great deal to do with their geography or their politics in relation to the Roman Empire. This went on for hundreds of years as Paul and his compatriots spread the Word initially from Jerusalem throughout the Near East, into places such as Syria, Assyria, Mesopotamia, Phoenicia, Asia Minor, Jordan and Egypt. Christianity was adopted in the 4th century as the state religion by Armenia in 301, Georgia in 319, Aksumite Empire in 325, and then the Roman Empire in 380. It became common to all of Europe in the Middle Ages and

expanded throughout the world during Europe's Age of Exploration from the Renaissance onwards to become one of the world's largest religions. Through all of this, God As Animator remains an idea worthy of consideration.

The concept of Heresy and how it came into being excites conspiracy theorists across the world, as *The DaVinci Code* brought to the fore. The development of doctrine and its relationship to orthodoxy, and the relationship between the various academic and theological opinions are matters of continuing debate. Since most Christians today subscribe to the doctrines established by the Nicene Creed, modern Christian theologians tend to regard the early debates as establishing a unified orthodox position against a minority of popular heretical practices and writings. Other scholars, drawing upon distinctions between Jewish Christians, Pauline Christianity, and other groups such as and Marcionites, argue that early Christianity was always fragmented, with contemporaneous competing beliefs.

Philosophers and theologians set the stage for the God As Animator question very early in the process of human abstract thought. Philosophers posed questions regarding the origin of the soul and the inner world of the human being. Once the theologians got a hold of it, the question became how did God work it so that human beings came to be? If we put God As Animator into the equation, the answers are somewhat more digestible despite their being labeled heretical.

The Role of Jesus

If God dwells within us, why Jesus? How much more intimate can we be with God if He is actually alive within? The physicality of Jesus was necessary for a number of reasons including the cessation of animal sacrifices, so that humans would no longer need an idol to remind them of the power and glory of their Creator, and frankly, the treasure of God within is so blatant and yet so hidden and unknowable by humans, Jesus had to come as God incarnate so humans would recognize via the human Jesus, that God is indeed within each of us. Without the God incarnate Jesus, we would only know our God through mediums such as the prophets who interpreted acts and foretold events, and writings which are always criticized and called into question surrounding the subjectivity of the author.

Jesus is the ultimate way we can know God. Jesus is how we see and hear God's expectations, and Jesus helps us understand the plan for Salvation. We are the hands and feet of God on earth, and should we ever need an example as to how we live our precious lives, we need only look to Jesus. Jesus is our perfect reflection. A most interesting analogy used often by Jesus is the imagery of the Temple. The indwelling of the Spirit in the people of God is said to make them the Temple of God. Compare the following two pieces of Scripture:



Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you? (1 Corinthians 3:16)

and

And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit. (Ephesians 2:22)

These are clear messages from Paul that the indwelling God lives within our physical, human temple. Jesus is the living example that God is Animator. He is the ultimate human creation of God. Some scholars and theologians refer to Jesus as the "Archetype human," or the original pattern or model from which all things of the same kind are copied or on which they are based. The Archetype of anything is a model, a first form, or the prototype. If it is true of Jesus that he was God's model man, what about Adam, the first man? In Systematic Theology there are some who say the original man was part of the plan before the clay figure was ever formed, and that God's model human, His most perfect man-creation, was sent by Him throughout the Bible in different forms. These people say the possibility exists that the Archetype man was sent to earth first as Adam, he then came to Abraham as Melchizadek, and later took the human forms of Elijah, Moses and Jesus in history. In some distinct ways, this theory supports the God As Animator idea and the idea that God breathed himself into the first man and he became a human being...the first human was endowed with a Soul, a Mind, human Consciousness and the Holy Spirit. We have explored the question of God creating humans in His spiritual and physical likeness, arriving at the conclusion that God made us in His image, giving us both physical as well as spiritual elements of Himself.

When examining the role Jesus has played and will continue to play until the end of the age, we must also consider the idea from Systematic Theology that the likeness of God we see in Jesus is his imprint as the "archetype man." Through this imprint came Adam before Jesus, and everyone who has come after Adam and Eve. We are the spiritual and biological legacy. What Christ demonstrates on every level is how close to God we really are as humans. Having a positive relationship with God has a great deal to do with the relationship one has with themselves. As in all relationships, close proximity demands communication. Therefore, one's personal relationship with God is key in finding peace and striving to be a constructive force on earth.

A discussion that has gone on in theological circles as well as weekly Bible studies for hundreds of years is that of the Trinity. The Trinity is a uniquely Christian concept, but it is an expression of personality and is made possible by the birth of Jesus. The Trinity is a description of the personality, or essence of God Himself. Trinity describes the triune-God, and consists of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit/Holy Ghost. The persons of the Trinity consist of God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit. The Trinity is a concept that most people fumble over if asked what it is because there is not a great deal of information available for the common (lay) student of Christianity. In

reality the Trinity is a tool for human reference and understanding only. The idea of the Trinity means nothing to God. God is. The notion of God being divided into three distinct modes of understanding likely helps humans be closer to God because there is something in the Trinity for all followers. For those who want to follow, there is the Father, who is the literal father of the Godhead. For those who prefer a hierarchy, there is a Father and a Son figure in the Trinity; and for those who want to work in partnership with God there is the Holy Spirit which we know is a part of our inner-selves. For the discussion in which we partake here, the Holy Spirit is comparable to the soul, the mind, consciousness, energy, and life itself. The Holy Spirit is in critical partnership with the human body for us personally. It is the intangible quality we each possess, that is a single part of the Greater God.

The humanness of Jesus makes Him someone that humans can relate with and at least try to understand as a fellow human being. This takes a great deal of the abstractness out of the equation, since Jesus looks like all other humans. It also removes the need to use an idol for worship. When humans look in the mirror, they see a sacred object of God's creation. In the mirror they see a being that resembles God, since humans were made in the image of God.

Historians and theologians tell us that Jesus was well-versed in Old Testament Scripture and was known as Rabbi, or teacher. Jesus speaks of the indwelling God during his ministry and quotes Psalm 82:6 in talking to the Disciples in John 10:34. One of the themes running through the teachings of Jesus is the power of the individual and to "Look within" for answers and guidance toward our highest and best good. In this Scripture Jesus seems to encourage the Disciples to challenge themselves to understand the difference between the indwelling God, and the mortality of the human being. The Spirit lives eternally, and the Temple can be destroyed.

Just as the Temple is used beautifully by Jesus in metaphor, so too does Jesus use the image of the Kingdom of God continually in his preaching and teaching. It is apparent that the ministry of Jesus consisted of preaching about what we call today the End Times, or Eschatology. Jesus referred to the coming new world as "the coming Kingdom of God."

The Kingdom

Jesus tells us in specific words that God is within when He is confronted by the Pharisees about His message regarding The Kingdom of God (Luke 17:20-21). When the Pharisees ask where they can go to see the Kingdom, and what time does it start?, Jesus responds by telling them the Kingdom isn't an event or a place, but that "the Kingdom is within."



Like all things Biblical, there are divergent views as to what Jesus is saying here. There are numerous translations of the Greek and Aramaic portraying Jesus as saying, “the Kingdom is among you.” Or “the Kingdom is amid you.”

“The Kingdom is among you” would be a message to the Pharisees that since they are in conference with Jesus (God personified), the Kingdom is indeed among them. In this example Jesus is quietly proclaiming that he is God. The second translation where Jesus tells them the “Kingdom is amid you” speaks to the idea that the Kingdom is the Soul or the Spirit. So when Jesus says the Kingdom is “amid you,” he means within all of you...which is where we began, with Jesus claiming that “the Kingdom is within.” The Kingdom Jesus was talking about may be the indwelling God that is so obviously hidden from each of us. In 1 Corinthians 5:20, Paul powerfully expresses a point about The Kingdom when he reminds readers, “The Kingdom of God is not a matter of talk, but of power.” The Kingdom is about action, not words; about life, not yammering.

Others have contended that the Kingdom is actually Heaven; to say then, that Heaven is within. This is certainly an intriguing notion if we consider what the concept of Heaven is for each of us. Of course we might think visually of golden roads and staircases in a harmonic otherworld. Heaven represents peace and serenity. Heaven is a state of mind, and some people today interpret points Jesus made about the Kingdom during His ministry to be referring to we humans being able to achieve the state of Heaven within ourselves in the present, right here on earth.

There are also huge numbers of theologians who contend that the Kingdom of God spoken of by Jesus actually represents an actual kingdom here on earth that will come about after the Son of Man has returned to earth, separated the good individuals from the bad, then passed judgment on the bad folk and banishing them to a lake of fire. After the baddies are gone, a millennial Kingdom with Christ as King will ensue. In this belief system the Kingdom is something that is coming in the future. It is something to look forward to for those who live a life worthy of Jesus’ mercy. It is something to fear if one isn’t behaving well and does not come around to a moral lifestyle.

Still others read the message Jesus conveys of the coming Kingdom to be the world in which we live today. To these individuals the Kingdom has already come, and in fact the Kingdom came upon the world when Jesus was born into it. The Kingdom, and salvation, and justification are only relevant in the now. Our task from Jesus then, is to create the closest thing we can to the ideal Kingdom by living rightly today. Given this interpretation, the Kingdom is among and amid and within each of us.

Whether the Kingdom represents Heaven in metaphor, or it represents God in the literal; whether or not the Kingdom represents present company when Jesus is in the room or the blessing of a peaceful state of mind, we are told again and again through the Bible and specifically in the

words of Jesus that the Kingdom is within. We are being told in clear language that God is the indwelling Animator of humankind.

As always, it is favorable when Old Testament and New Testament examples can be given side-by-side to illustrate a point. Let us take the above-paraphrased Scripture, Luke 17:20-21 about Jesus informing the Pharisees that the “Kingdom is within.”, and the below offering from Deuteronomy:

Surely, this commandment that I am commanding you today is not too hard for you, nor is it too far away. It is not in heaven, that you should say, “Who will go up to heaven for us, and get it for us so that we may hear it and observe it?” Neither is it beyond the sea, that you should say, “Who will cross to the other side of the sea for us, and get it for us so that we may hear it and observe it?” No, the word is very near to you; it is in your mouth and in your heart for you to observe. (Deuteronomy 30:11-14)

Each of the Synoptic Gospels has as a central theme “The Kingdom of God.” Teachings about the importance and the immediacy of The Kingdom are at the core of Jesus’ message, especially in the Synoptic Gospels. References to The Kingdom are prevalent in all four Gospel accounts, and while the Gospel references indeed convey that the Kingdom of God is present in Jesus’ ministry and in the person of Jesus Himself, the Gospels also stress the critical nature of the future Kingdom. The Kingdom of God is a metaphor Jesus uses again and again in expressing his points via parable. For instance, Jesus says the Kingdom of God is like a mustard seed as an example of the potential of the indwelling Kingdom.

Once Jesus had ascended to heaven to live with God the Father, the spirit within the human race, within the body of the church, and within each individual is what remains to spread the light and walk with confidence in Christ. It s up to us to do God’s/ Jesus’ work here on earth. This is a monumental responsibility.

Scriptural References

The following list of Scripture contemplates that God Is Animator. The Scripture either references the indwelling God and/or the indwelling Christ, or specifically says that God is within every human. Some of the words could not be more clear.

The spirit of God has made me, and the breath of the Almighty gives me life. Job 33:4

There is one body and one spirit – one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is all, and through all, and in all. Ephesians 4:4-6



Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's spirit lives in you?
1 Corinthians 3:16

God is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living. Matthew 22:31, 32

I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God. Galatians 2:20

The Lord God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a human being. Genesis 2:7

But you are not in the flesh; you are in the Spirit and the Spirit of God dwells in you.
Romans 8:9

...the dust returns to the ground it came from, and the Spirit returns to the God who gave it.
Ecclesiastes 12:7

Thus sayeth the Lord who stretches out the heavens, who lays the foundation of the earth, and who form the spirit of man within him declares... Zechariah 12:1

...it is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. 1 Corinthians 15:44

Do not neglect the gift that is within you. 1 Timothy 4:14

I said you are gods, you are all Sons of the Most High. But you will die like mere men; you will fall like every other ruler. Psalm 82:6-7

The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. John 6:63

What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? For we are the temple of the living God. As God has said, "I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people. 2 Corinthians 6:16

When he looks at me, he sees the one who sent me. John 12:45

...for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to His good purpose. Phillipians 2:13

To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. Colossians 1:27

And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit. Ephesians 2:22

Then God said "Let us make man in our likeness, and let them rule over...all the creatures that move along the ground." Genesis 1:26-27

Once having been asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come. Jesus replied, “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

There is no Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all and is in all. Colossians 3:11

For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the man’s spirit within him? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the spirit of God. 1 Corinthians 2:11-16

Now we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands. 2 Corinthians 5:1

Jesus answered them, “Is it not written in your Law, ‘I have said you are gods’?” *quoting Psalm 82:6 John 10:34

Then the Lord said to Moses, “See I have made you like God to Pharaoh.” Exodus 7:1

Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather be afraid of the One who can destroy both the soul and the body. Matthew 10:28

(He is) 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 in you. John 14:17

On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you. John 14:20

We have this treasure in jars of clay to show that all power is from God. 2 Corinthians 4:7

And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws. Ezekiel 36:27

...that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so the world may believe that you sent me. John 17:21

And we all, who with veiled or unveiled faces reflect the Lord’s glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord who is Spirit. 2 Corinthians 3:18

He has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them we may participate in the divine nature, having escaped corruption in the world caused by evil desires. 2 Peter 1:4



Conclusion

The greatest limitation to this study is the centuries of theological history saying beliefs such as God As Animator are heresy, or worse, are corrupting and destroying the church. Some of the most renowned theologians and philosophers across history have studied the idea that God lives within and have even said the words, yet when confronted with the idea that the essence of humanity is God, some theologians backtrack and say that God is something apart from us and could not possibly be the true animator of humankind. Why can it not be both? Some theologians even go so far as to say entertaining the God As Animator idea lives in opposition to God and what He is telling us.

If anyone were to look at God As Animator and say, “I am God” not only would they feel uncomfortable saying it, they would be wrong. We are humans. We are mortal. However, the mystery of what it is that causes us to be alive continues to refuse us an answer. Is it our consciousness? What is the soul and the mind, and what roles do they play in the mystery of life? What about the Holy Spirit? The possibility is quite real that these elements are God living within. The reason these questions have not been answered scientifically is the same reason that the existence of God cannot be proven. There is no adequate way to measure or report these phenomena.

It seems to me the real heresy lies in limiting God. By saying that God “could not be” or “would not be” the Spirit within, we are saying that we know more than God Himself. By holding to what God is or isn’t, we are putting false limits on the God we love and worship; the God who is omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent. Paul tells us there is a clear distinction between the body and the soul, many Scriptural references hold that the body is the temple...of course it is. Where else would God live?

The words translated “belief” and “faith” come from the same Greek word. The importance of faith in any spiritual endeavor is not arguable. Then there are those who require proof or evidence, and those boiling spiritual experiences and encounters down to science or physiology. What we see and what we believe are often two different things. If we can see it and touch it, it is matter and it is real. If we cannot see it or feel it, it is an issue of faith. This is the common wisdom in today’s age. Peter Russell is clear and direct in his assessment that when we are able to finally uncover the secrets of consciousness, we will know the critical link between humans and God. This assessment would lend itself to the idea of God As Animator, and is an affirmation that God indwells His human creation.

God within roots us in our being and encourages us to live in peace while helping other in their day to day struggles. God is alive and working through us each and every day...the question is how we are responding to His offer of partnership? One of the ways God manifests Himself in humans is that only humans can be aware of God and are capable of fellowshiping with Him.

While it seems to me that plants and animals have a soul, it is not the human soul and they do not have the capacity to know or try to know God. As we are told in Genesis, the animals are spoken or “faithed” into existence by God, whereas humans did not come to be until God blew himself into the nostrils of a clay figure which then became animated and the human race was born.

One practice that lowers blood pressure and makes a marked difference in the individual involved is prayer. Prayer is one of those things some people reserve for when they are feeling desperation and feel there are no other options available. Others pray only at appointed times, when in church or before going to bed each night. Still others walk through life going from one prayer to the next. For these “day-prayers,” there is a constant internal conversation about what actions to take and how to approach different situations through the day. The “internal dialogue” of prayer is mentioned here because it is how we humans can communicate directly with the indwelling God. Going within to meet God and find our calm center allows us time to verbalize our fears, concerns, and gratitude. By sending our concerns and hopes to God, we are finding support, and if not support, at least someone to talk with. Those who pray often find a different perspective and can look at a situation through another set of eyes. The very act of giving voice to our thankfulness and articulating our troubles is a stress reliever and can help lead to improved mental health. When we pray in the way of the Internal Dialogue, we are not praying for intervention to an outside, external God, but we are praying to the presence within. This Divine partnership is available to any and everyone.

At this juncture in the thesis I must point out the fact that Theology is a very personal and individual thing. Theology and the belief system one builds for themselves is as individual as one’s fingerprints. No matter what church you belong to (or don’t belong to); no matter what books you read or whom you worship with, the critical feelings, emotions, and beliefs we produce are our own. One may proclaim that they follow this belief system or that belief system, or that they belong to this congregation or that. You may feel that the values of your congregants are the same as yours, but they are only similar. Only you have your belief system and behavioral patterns. We may all worship the same God, but as humans the individual ways in which we worship and show our gratitude are uniquely our own. It is the only real truth. The fact that there are 7 billion people on earth means at least that many theologies and belief systems exist regarding the nature of God and the individual power and authority of God Almighty.

A great deal of time is spent worrying about the afterlife, and it makes sense that humans look to what may be ahead. However we are too transfixed on how our behaviors today will provide salvation following our death. In fact, we may even believe that if we don’t act we will not risk committing sin, living a life of silent desperation. I contend that salvation is something we want while we are on earth now. The entire focus of the topic has traditionally been on behaving well on earth and acting in accordance with God’s law in order to get to Heaven, or enjoy everlasting life. Let us live lives worthy of salvation each and every day.

There are stories and lessons throughout the Bible, drama, and literature that substantiate God As Animator. Perhaps most obvious is The Golden Rule, where we are told to treat others as we would want to be treated. This is all well and good, but if we know the indwelling God, what the Golden Rule really says is to treat everyone as if they were you...because they are you at the very core. We are all part of God in that our lives have been cloaked with a human body and a set of individual circumstances that have shaped us in a uniquely special way. How we relate to God on the journey and how we respond to these challenges in our personal circumstance is what life is about. It is the relationship we have with God. It is knowing and loving the God within. It is searching for that inner source of strength and spirit that moves us through daily life.

A belief of God As Animator will likely always exist, but is likely never to become a part of the cultural mainstream. Such a paradigm shift is never easy or swift. People and societies do not change easily. People and societies are so ferociously embedded in their beliefs in science and social culture that “reality” is seldom questioned. Such ferocity in belief brings friction, conflict and war, and has done so through world history. Some would rather die than give up a social value or norm that has become reality. So when a social or scientific paradigm changes, it is usually several generations before the total conversion is complete. Sociologists say that old paradigms do not die because people actually change, but because the old adherents die off. Seeing God As Animator would create for us a shift in belief that many could never achieve.

Were this a mathematical thesis or a paper on a specific engineering principle, it might be more satisfying to the reader because the contents of the paper would actually lead to an answer or a set of rigid answers without questions hanging out here and there. In fact, if this were a thesis on a question of physics or biology, the contents of the paper would attempt to dispel questions leading to a sound and airtight conclusion. This however, is a thesis project dealing with theology. The paper may leave us with only more questions. Like many projects in theology, this paper is filled with theories and speculations from a bunch of dead men whose opinions support thesis and whom I am comfortable with as author. The God As Animator concept was widely accepted and had “believers” long before Jesus walked the earth. It was sewn into the Jesus story in the early years of Christianity through the Epistles of Paul, who wrote, “Christ lives within you.” The God As Animator line of thought was not accepted as part of the official Biblical Canon, and was labeled as a heretical thought in the fourth century forward. Today the idea of God As Animator is practiced in a variety of ways across the globe, and is seen as an exercise in theological academics. God As Animator will likely never become a significant part of the Christian paradigm, or even a part of any social paradigm. However, it is a fascinating idea that should be considered. The impressive body of written material from Greek antiquity, to the Bible, and to today’s internet frames the concept, and the Bible tells us very literally and explicitly that God lives within each of us.

To know God as He is indwelling us and to work with God to create a better world is to begin knowing oneself and having confidence in the guidance God provides. As human bodies with God giving us life, each human is an outlet for God’s Divine love and the means by which God’s

Divine ideas flow into the world. Here again we see the awesome responsibility with which God has endowed us.

God created a great world and then created vessels in which He could live and enjoy all His creation. We are the vessels. Within each of us burns the energy and essence of the Almighty God as we move and think throughout the day. God sent His only begotten son the earth as Jesus Christ, who modeled the life God wants for us and died for us as the ultimate sacrifice. We follow Christ, God and the Holy Spirit as we go through the days. If we strive to make the world a better place, we can begin by assessing our attitude toward our selves and our attitudes toward others. The Spirit that animates others also animates us. It brings us together whether we admit it or not.

Go to God. Go within and begin to understand how God and Jesus are communicating with you. Try to understand...ask to understand... how your life can become a constructive force. Try to understand that the force within our fellow humans is the common link we all share. Relate with them where possible, and look for compassion and communication in all your endeavors. This is the key way to honor God for all we have been given. Live a constructive life with the Golden Rule in mind always.

“I am” is the name of God. God is none other than the self. – Ramana Maharshi



References and Further Reading

- 1, 2) Wikipedia, 2012, *Self-Actualization*, Kurt Goldstein and Carl Rogers, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Self-actualization>
 - 3) William H. Danforth , 1973, *I Dare You* ,publisher, pg.44
 - 4) Michael Talbot , 1991, *Holographic Universe*, Harper Collins, pg. 189
 - 5) George A. Maloney, 2003, *The Undreamed Has Happened: God Lives Within Us*, University of Scranton Press, pg. 19
 - 6) Andrew Murray, 1897, *The Kingdom of God is Within You*, addressing the Mowbry Convention, publisher
 - 7) Wikipedia, 2012, *Ensoulement*, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ensoulement>
 - 8) George A. Maloney, 2003, *The Undreamed Has Happened: God Lives Within Us*, University of Scranton Press, pg. 65
 - 9) *Blackwell Companion To Consciousness*, editors Max Valens and Susan Schneider, 2007, Blackwell Publishers, pg. 104
 - 10) Scholarpedia, 2012, Neural Corollates of Consciousness, Crick and Christof Koch, http://www.scholarpedia.org/article/Neural_correlates_of_consciousness
 - 11) Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2012, Consciousness: Section c. Other Cognitive Theories website, <http://www.iep.utm.edu/consciou/>
 - 12) Spirit of Now website, Peter Russell, Opening Speech given at First International Conference on Science and Consciousness, Albuquerque, April 1999, <http://www.peterrussell.com/Speaker/Talks/SoC99.php>
 - 13) George A. Maloney, 2003, *The Undreamed Has Happened: God Lives Within Us*, University of Scranton Press, pg. 101
 - 14) George A. Maloney, 2003, *The Undreamed Has Happened: God Lives Within Us*, University of Scranton Press, pg. 18
 - 15) Bart D. Erhman, 2003, *Lost Scriptures - Gospel of Thomas, Verse 3*, Oxford University Press, pg. 9
-

References and Further Reading continued

- 16) J. M. Robinson, *Sethians and Johannine Thought: The Trimorphic Protennoia and the Prolog to the Gospel of John*, Rediscovery of Gnosticism, vol 2, pg. 662
 - 17) John Owen on Gnostics, <http://msamudio.wordpress.com/2008/08/10/lords-day-quote-john-owen-9/>
 - 18) Bart D. Erhman, 2003, *Lost Scriptures - Gospel of Thomas, Verse 3*, Oxford University Press, pg. 20
 - 19) Bart D Erhman , 2003, *Lost Scriptures - Clement 12:2*, Oxford University Press pg. 189
 - 20) Alister Hardy, *The Spiritual Nature of Man: A Study of Contemporary Religious Experience*, 1979, Oxford: Clarendon Press, pg. 29
 - 21) Chandogya Upishand, 2012, Yahoo Answers, <http://answers.yahoo.com/question/index?qid=20110316202314AABL5Ug>
 - 22) National Faith Survey, Cambridge University, 2005
 - 23) Timothy Freke and Peter Grandy, *The Jesus Mysteries: Was the "Original Jesus" a Pagan God*, 1999, Three Rivers Press, pg. 15
 - 24) Philo, DeProfugis, logos defined, P. Valentine, pg. 114-115, 1912
 - 25) Frank Staggs , *New Testament Theology*, Broadman, 1962
 - 26) Willard Young, 2006, *God and the Laws of Thermodynamics: A Mechanical Engineer's Perspective*, Apologetics Press, <http://www.apologeticspress.org/apcontent.aspx?category=9&article=2106>
 - 27) Jeff Miller, PhD, 2006, *God and the Laws of Thermodynamics: A Mechanical Engineer's Perspective*, Apologetics Press, <http://www.apologeticspress.org/apcontent.aspx?category=9&article=2106>
 - 28) Lord Kelvin as quoted in Smith, 1981, pg 307-308
 - 29) Walter Bauer, *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Early Christianity*, 1934. Publish, pgs
 - 30) Ervin Laszlo, 2012, *Primacy of Consciousness*, www.peterrussell.com/SP/PrimeConsc.php
-

References and Further Reading continued

- 31) George A. Maloney, 2003, *The Undreamed Has Happened: God Lives Within Us*, University of Scranton Press
- 32) Wikipedia, 2012, Immanuel Kant, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Immanuel_Kant
- 33) Cliff's Notes, Essays of Ralph Waldo Emerson, http://www.cliffsnotes.com/study_guide/literature/emerson-essays/ralph-waldo-emerson-biography.html
- 34) ARN, Cliff's Notes, Ralph Waldo Emerson, <http://www.arnnet.com.au/books/product/cliffsnotes-thoreau-emerson-and-transcendentalism/076458619X/>
- 35) Emma Curtis Hopkins, excerpted from a lesson given by Emma Curtis Hopkins on November 18th 1894, *Bible Interpretations Manuscript 2*, published by The Ministry of Truth International, Chicag
- 36) Ernest Holmes, "The Science of Mind: What I Believe," Ernest Holmes, 1927, <http://revbates.com/principles.htm>
- 37) Native Americans Spiritual Beliefs, 2012, <http://impurplehawk.com/naspirit.html>
- 38) John C. Carlile, 1905, *The Story of the English Baptists*, London, publisher
- 39) Contender Ministries, Hindu Beliefs, 2012, *Nirvana*, <http://www.contenderministries.org/hinduism/hindubeliefs.php>

