

One Man's Quest for God

PREFACE

Monday, August 3rd, 1953

Born around 02:00, I have always loved the early morning hours. I seem to feel closer to God early in the morning. If you are reading this book, I presume you are searching for a deeper relationship with this “person” we call God. I like to think of God as a person. The Old Testament says we were created in his image. Think about that for a moment and let it sink in. You are the reflection of God.

As an artist, God fashioned man in his own image; according to the creation stories of three major religions. We were patterned after God and in his image. Amazing stuff.

It is no wonder we have created religions in a never ending quest for God. Religion is just that, “man’s search for god.” Spirituality on the other hand, is “God’s search for man.”

What happens when God goes looking for mankind? What does he find?

Have you ever pondered what God did on the Eighth Day?

God went looking for mankind, just for a chat and a cup of coffee.

Forward

Everybody has a right to a God of their own understanding. This is what I have been taught and learned over the last Twenty Years. In 1984 I was at a personal bottom and reached out to the Twelve Step Programs. I found, thru other people, a personal relationship with a God of my own understanding. This is my Quest, not yours. I am not an evangelist and do not wish to convert anyone. This is just my experience, strength and my hope. In my writing I refer to God as He or Him. That is because My God is My Father. I am one man with a personal God who is masculine in gender.

Respect

I am a fairly well traveled individual. I am fortunate to have lived all over the United States, traveled to many states and cities. My exposure to other cultures and ethnicities is not limited to just the United States. Pacific cultures and Colonial influence in the South Pacific were probably one of the most fascinating experiences to date. The Caribbean and Bahamas were equally interesting. Canada and Mexico are good fun as was Australia. My next trip in the works is Europe, Spain to be exact. I love to see how other people live.

Having said that, my point is this; Respect. I think the world's problems boil down to a lack of respect for others. If I have no respect for your personal experiences, how can I really begin to learn from you? Let us live to learn and learn to truly live.

James W. Hudgens

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The Eighth Day

It is said that “a day with the lord is a thousand years and a thousand years is like a day”. This sums up my mystical look at what has happened in the last 5000 years of recorded earth history. Timelessness. It is my understanding that we are in the 5000th year since Noah or the “Flood Story” referred to in ancient Hebrew manuscripts. If you add a thousand years to cover the Creation Story we have entered the 6th millennium.

If I had to label myself, it would be a Christian Mystic. I was born into a Christian home and 10 years of domestication as a child will always mark me as a Christian. I have changed faith several times and always come back to the faith of my father and his father. I have studied all the major religions and several paths that could easily be considered cults. I almost joined a cult in 1971 but some friends helped me to stick with what I knew.

My fathers' father was a 33' Mason. At some point in my quest I came upon a book on Free Masonry, “The Rites and Practices of the Scottish Rite Church”. I like to think it was passed on to me somehow from my Grand Dad, Luther Hudgens. But I do not think that was the case. I probably purchased it in a garage sale some where. I collect all sorts of hard bound books. I never throw one away. He was also an avid, active Baptist. My other Grand Father was a pipe smoking barber who loved to watch boxing. I remember watching the smoke from his pipe and being hypnotized by the smoke. It was probably my Indian Blood coming out, the eyes of a child. His father was a doctor and married a part American Indian woman named Buckholtz.

The Hudgens and Barnes come from the East Coast as do most Americans. Our parents, parents, parents are not indigenous; we are visitors, transplants from the old country. All of these generations are but a second on the Clock of God.

God as I understand him is not bound by time. He is not watching the clock, we are. He has no bus to catch or schedule to keep. He is not counting the time to the end of the world, we are. Why? Most of us are afraid of death. All of the history of mankind,

the thousands of years of man as we know him today is but one day to the Timelessness of God. The “mitote” as the Toltecs called it, has obscured our vision of reality. During the late twentieth century some called it “The Matrix” and many are really trapped in it; trapped with blind eyes or blurry vision. I like to think of it as the “Foggy Mirror”. The Apostle Paul said “we see through a glass darkly, one day we shall see face to face”. I notice it when I shave and am reminded that I do not see my own face clearly then there is steam on the looking glass. Steam takes time to form and more time to clear. Hence, we are locked in time.

The prophet Joel called it the valley of decision, the day of the lord. The question is not when the world will end. That has no point of reference. The earth is as shadow of heavenly things. An earth of twisted shadows is the valley of decision we live in. The question is; when “your world” will end? What day will you pass through the door we call death? When will you see God again? Have you been a good steward? These are the real questions we can ask ourselves each day.

This is my quest. These are the questions I ask myself. Some days the answer is “well done” my son. Other days the steak is medium or rare. But always I try, most days I try with all of my heart. That is what we all do, we do our best. It is a good “agreement” to have with yourself, “always do your best”. But for most of us, it is not enough.

My experience has been I get tired of “missing the mark”. I get tired of constantly having to go back and say, “I’m sorry”, or “forgive me”. So I stopped doing that. I made a decision that I would walk and talk with God in this “Eighth Day”. I am not wrong any longer. I just make errors in judgment and have “momentary lapses of reason”.

It is my personal belief that God is not looking for perfection half as much as he is interested in communion. He is more interested in “walking in the cool of the day” with his creation than the argument I just had with Eve. Sure he is interested in me working things out with Eve and her working out things with me, Adam. But he wants to help us with that. All we have to do is walk in the grass, feel each blade; walk on the beach and feel each grain of sand and ask him to help. “He gives His wisdom to all men equally and makes no distinction”. He is a prudent, fair and just person. God is a person. We were created in His image. We are more like God than most think.

Do not take me wrong here. I am not trying to humanize God, which has been done. What I am trying to express is the “personal nature” of Our God. And he is personal to each of us. He, in the words of Jesus, is “Our Father”.

“Father, I want today to be a part of Your Eight Day, let me walk with you.”

Mankind Searches for God

Millions of people seek the Face of God daily, millions. Think of all of the faiths as one faith for a moment. Over one third of the planet professes one form of Christianity or another. There are more Muslims than Catholics. Adding the Buddhists and the Hindus brings the total even higher. Thinking of all faiths seeking one God allows me to personally see the whole of mankind in a massive “search for God”.

What I mean by searching for God is the daily “improving of our conscious contact with Him.” I do not know about your experience but for me personally I am tired of the constant infighting among religions that professes their way is better than another way. This never ending war of the spirit is not productive or healthy. It is like a child fighting over who gets the attention of the father.

The struggle began thousands of years ago with the sons of Abraham. Three major faiths claim their roots from this family tree. Judaism, Islam and Christianity all point to the story of Abraham and his two sons in their scriptures. Judaism is the oldest, dating back to the times of Moses who is attributed with writing it all down for the first time. The Christians, of course, date from the life of Jesus some 2000 years ago and our calendar reflects the influence of Christians over the ages. The Muslim faith is the youngest of the three, Mohammad living in the 700th year after Christ.

In my personal study I have been confused by the many faiths and wondered why there are so many different paths. As I have aged it seems to make more sense to have all of these different paths. People are different and we seem to gravitate to various streams of thought. What troubles me is the dogma that is professed and sought after by each in their quest.

My observation is the Christians seem to be most adamant about their faith being the only faith. I do not know if it stems from the history of the Crusades or from my experiences with the Christianizing of Polynesia. Maybe it goes back to my evangelical childhood or my days in the ministry in the seventies. Somewhere I picked

up the thought, "Christians are pushy". There seems to be a "get saved today" mentality to drive men and women out of the valley of decision into the fold of God.

What if we are all in the arms of God already? I propose that there is no urgency whatsoever to the situation at hand. The only command of value is this simple statement, "Seek first the Kingdom of God and all these things shall be added unto you."

Jesus himself "prayed down" the kingdom of God when he said "thy kingdom come, on earth as it is in heaven". What if this is the kingdom of God already? I know this is heresy to many, hearsay to others but I must ask myself, what if? You can make the bible say anything you want it to say. What is important is what it says to me. When I ponder and think on things spiritual, parts and pieces of scripture fill in the gaps of my thinking. I have been looking at the bible for 50 years and what I am talking about is what it says to me.

You do not have to believe like I believe to accomplish any spiritual revelation or goal. I have no quota of souls to gather. All I have is personal experience and what I am writing here is how it meshes to my spirit.

Let me explain a quandary I found myself in during the mid nineteen eighties. I was working for an oil company doing field seminars with geologists. These were learned people. These were thinking people, well studied. During the seminars I was introduced for the first time to really thinking about a 7 day creation story. The thought had come up before but I dismissed it as unimportant and besides I was brought up in a certain fashion.

During this time I fell in love with a fossil we found over and over in the rock record, the ammonite or cephalopod. I was told that this ancient creature once ruled the seas and had a family tree dating from 600 million years ago to present times. Its modern day counter part is the nautilus. I learned how to identify them in the field, find the rocks they prospered in and set about collecting them for myself.

It was during the early eighties I was struggling with my addiction to drugs that I converted to the Episcopal Church. There I was introduced to a scripture Ephesians 3.21 and it reads as follows:

²¹ Unto him *is* glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

“World without end, Amen” or “Oh Yes” as the modern version “The Message” states. It all began to make sense for me personally. This is not a 7000 year old planet; this universe has an amazing history. There is no conflict in this and the scripture for me. It all boils down to perspective. When you look at the Strong’s study of the word “world”, the word eternal pops up in several places. I am not at all surprised. Ask five people to draw a picture of a train and what do you think you will see? Five identical pictures? I doubt it. You can even photograph a train a five different hours during the day and it may appear to be a different train. Perspective.

I like and enjoy logic. I dislike illogical thinking or could I say unreasonable thought?

It was God himself who said to the prophet in the Old Testament, “Come now, and let us reason together”. We are created in his image, creatures of reason and logic. To say that God does not persuade us with logic is unreasonable. To put forth dogma without logic is illogical and unreasonable. If God does not make sense, what does?

It is illogical to think that God could not manifest himself to a thousand people in a thousand different manners. God is God or he is nothing and we are all just dust.

What if the “faith” problem is just that, a problem with perspective? I am sure this is not new thinking, it is just my thinking. Like the title of the book says, it is One Man’s Quest for God.

God's Search for Man

God, on the other hand does not have the problem we have. We may have forgotten where we put God or feel we have misplaced our affection for Him, but He has never forgotten where He left off with us.

According to the Creation Story in Genesis, one morning God set out to "find" Adam and he was hiding from God. For thousands of years we have all been hiding from God, just like our earthly parents. You can be as literal or figurative with this as you want but the bottom line is, the Creator has your number and he has placed a call.

I am not trying to take an evangelical stand here. I am being practical. The Creator is calling to see what is up with the kids. How is it going? Do you need anything? Free Will, we all have it and use it everyday. This is what it all boils down to, freedom of choice. He created us in His Image, Free! And He wants us to remain free.

I get very tired of this line of thought. "Well, if there was a God why does he allow..." God does not allow anything, He created us and we allow. If I gave you a million dollars and you spent it, could you blame me for allowing you to spend it? It seems like the same logic to me.

God has created a free system. There are physical and spiritual laws in place that govern the movement of mass and spirit but the process is entirely free to move. It is in this free system that an apple is tossed into the air and according to the law of gravity; it is free to fall down again. We are free to accept the laws that exist or ignore them and face the consequences. If you step out of the third story window of a building, you will fall to the ground, freely. Such is life, actions and reactions.

I mentioned earlier the three religions, Judaism, Christianity and Islam. During the 1500 years before Christ (BC) two other major religions emerged in SE Asia. Hinduism (1500bc) and Buddhism (500bc) both developed and prospered centering on the thoughts of karma. This cause and effect faith is central in their teachings and is very much focused in this vein of freedom. What you sow, you reap. If to live well,

your karma brings you to a better place. Life is full of choices and the choices you make today have a profound effect on your tomorrows, all of them.

This basic thought process is also taught in Judaism, Christianity and Islam which makes me wonder several things. One, does this process reflect some need in mankind and two, does it reflect the personality of God? I like to think of it from both angles, since mankind is created in the image of God and God has a genuine interest in His creation.

I think God looks for humanity every day of our existence and those who are looking for Him find Him. In the Old Testament it is said, "In the day you seek Me with your whole heart, you will find Me". For me there has never been any question about the nature of God and seeing Him as a creator who desires communion with His Creation.

One thing I do not understand is the anger towards God. Also confusing to me is the anger between fellow humans in regards to God and our personal belief systems. I may be just simplistic and naive.

It seems to me that we're born into this plane by a choice. I believe it is our choice. It is my thought that we are on the outside looking in and we ask to be put in. Once we are in we have no memory of the before life but we asked specifically to enter the human race at that point in time.

The reason is that eternity is bigger than life itself. It is bigger than ego, pride, and hate and self-seeking. We asked to be put in to better our core spirit. Those of us that are here are here for a reason. It is also about freedom of choice. We freely choose to participate in life. At some point in life we all say inside, "so that is why I'm here." At that point we have met God and He has met us. Our higher purpose is realized and we are ready to make the next step in our growth process.

It may only be a moment of clarity but it will be an eternal moment. It may be a simple sense of oneness but it will last our spirit for an eternity. God has perfected something of himself inside of our spirit; we see it and are totally open to it. Actually

we were created for just this interaction. It is true oneness and communion for us and an expansion of the essence of God outward into the universe. "Thy kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven". "The kingdom of God is not meat and drink but righteousness, peace and joy". In these moments and instances we rightfully and willfully expand the kingdom of heaven. We perpetuate the very essence of God through our existence, we share the love.

No wonder God looks for us. No wonder we look for God. This total communion is our base design and basic calling. How do you get to this place? You look for God.

Remember, He is looking for you and you will find one another.

History of Seeking

We, the creation of God, have a rich history of seeking the creator. It is our destiny. We and the myriad of creations before us and the millions that will follow all have one thing in common, our Creator. It is in our blood. It was in the "blood" of those before us and will follow long after we have passed on to a higher plane.

It is said that the "life of the flesh is in the blood" and I would like to propose that the "life of the spirit is in the breath".

I feel in my spirit that the creation is reaching a climax, an apex of spiritual knowledge.

The human experience as we understand it today is about to change. Each breath that we take brings us closer, collectively, to our Higher Power. As long as mankind is breathing we are involved in the Quest, the reaching out towards God. I think we understand this today in a manner that has never before been experienced.

We are bounded on all sides by knowledge and wisdom. Never before, in recorded history as we understand it today, has the whole of humanity ever had such access to data. We have millions of volumes at our fingertips. Many of us have hundreds and thousands of pages of data right on our hard drives. Computers have forever enlarged our horizons.

But it is in the individual, inner seeking that we each find God. The tools we have access to just make it easier to collate the data. This history of seeking is coming to a head. We are seeing further than ever before, spiritually.

TO BE CONTINUED

Various Notes and Ramblings

Mysticism, an immediate, direct, intuitive knowledge of God or of ultimate reality attained through personal religious experience. Wide variations are found in both the form and the intensity of mystical experience. The authenticity of any such experience, however, is not dependent on the form, but solely on the quality of life that follows the experience. The mystical life is characterized by enhanced vitality, productivity, serenity, and joy as the inner and outward aspects harmonize in union with God.

Belief in intuitive spiritual revelation: the belief that personal communication or union with the divine is achieved through intuition, faith, ecstasy, or sudden insight rather than through rational thought.

These definitions from Microsoft Encarta and Researcher are a very accurate explanation of precisely how I feel about God. Over 20 years on the program of Narcotics Anonymous and 35 years since my experiences at Calvary have brought me to this place. This project will, I hope, be an ongoing documentation of my quest; to know God, even as I am known by him.

I would like to acknowledge Bill Gates and his Encarta Team for the fine job they have done in compiling a great resource on religion and life in general. Also to Randy Beck and his Team at Word Search, my bible study tools. Finally to Jimmy K. and Bill W. for showing me that even addicts do recover and find God, really.

This book is dedicated to my Children; my Father, Hoyt Mitchell Hudgens and his wife and my Mother. And to my Grandparents, they always believed in me. Special thanks to Robert and Cynthia.
December 2005

It has been almost 2 years since my Fathers passing. This single event brought me to a real Crisis of Conscience. I used to pray, "Heavenly Father". Now anytime I write or pray that, I feel like I'm talking to my Dad.

It confused me at first, now it comforts me.

I never worried about eternity; death has always been a door to the next life. Deep in my spirit I always knew this and never really struggled with it at all. It was the lightning speed with which I approached it in my younger days that concerned me. I was not ready to die; I felt I had business to do here. After 50 years, I'm still not ready. Today I am loving life but even that can be a spiritual trap. If I put my life before the life giver it is a basic form of idolatry.

Here is some of my story just for Qualification purposes.

During the sixties I worshiped drugs. I attended high school high on drugs every day. I was kicked out or quit. I was kicked out of my parent's house for my conduct and was a street child by the time I was 16 years old. I was rebellious and I loved it. My favorite was LSD. I must have done it thousands of times. But I was afraid to die while living this life of drugs. By 1971 I knew the drugs were killing me and my friends were dying around me.

I was raised a Christian and Protestant at that. Southern Baptist by birth, in 1972 I was papered with the Assembly of God Church as an Exhorter. In 1978 I graduated Bible School at Rhema Bible Training Center located in Tulsa, Oklahoma. I spent almost the entire seventies seeking God through the church and school.

By the late seventies I was back on drugs and the early eighties found me divorced and searching, again. Crushed by my own devices, in 1984, I found my way into an AA Meeting at the direction of an EAP Counselor. Encouraged by the AA's I went to my first NA meeting and there I have remained every since. The program gives me what I need in many areas and what I can not find there, I find in Friends, Family and Fellowship.