

Chapter 2

My Theology in a Nutshell

Over the past 10 years or so my theology has undergone a huge metamorphosis. I re-explored the Christian Scriptures with an open mind and a fresh set of eyes. In addition, I have read extensively on the subjects of theology, life after death, the nature of reality, quantum physics, near death experiences, mysticism, out-of-body experiences, and the like. I searched for truth wherever it might be found. I began my search with the premise that truth is truth, and all truth must be God's truth, no matter where one finds it. When I began my search I regarded myself to be an evangelical Christian, neither fundamentalist, nor liberal, but somewhere in between. I subscribed to the orthodox tenets of the Christian faith, but had serious reservations about many doctrines which seemed contradictory or paradoxical in nature, especially doctrines relating to salvation and eternal hell.

During this process, my concepts of God and the nature of reality have changed, as well as my beliefs regarding the atonement, the nature and purpose of God's judgments, the nature of the afterlife, and the purpose of our earthly existence. I now believe that we are eternally existing spiritual beings temporarily residing in quasi-physical bodies. I believe that the Christian and Hebrew Scriptures are a historical record of mankind's evolving and improving ideas about the nature of God and how He relates to us. I believe they are inspired by God and full of God's truth, but they are definitely not infallible and inerrant. I believe that recent discoveries in science, parapsychology, the nature of reality, and life after death are supported by the Scriptures, especially the teachings of Jesus Christ and the Apostle Paul. I now consider myself to be a "progressive" Christian, as opposed to a conservative or evangelical Christian. I no longer believe that Christian salvation is mostly about who goes to Heaven or Hell when they die. Instead, I believe it refers to an ages-long process of becoming like Christ. We are all on that path.

I believe that God is love and God loves us all unconditionally. I believe that we are all children of God, made in God's spiritual likeness, and we all share the divine nature. I believe that we all reap what we sow, both Christians and non-Christians alike, the purpose of which is to teach us important life lessons and help us to grow spiritually. I believe the purpose of our existence here on earth, and also in the heavenly realms, is to enjoy life, help others to do the same, and in the process become more like Christ. I believe that Heaven and Hell are not places, but states of being. I believe that the separation we feel from God and others is an illusion. God is always with us, and we are all connected with each other and with God, more intimately than most of us realize. I believe that theological correctness has nothing at all to do with our standing with God, and that not having all the answers is part of God's plan for us and serves a very useful purpose. I believe that "getting saved" is not an instantaneous event. It is an ages-long process of becoming consciously aware of God's presence in our lives and acting it out with deeds of kindness and generosity. Loving our neighbors as ourselves is exactly the same as loving God.

My purpose in writing this book is to offer help to those of you who have unanswered questions about your faith and are looking for answers that line up solidly not only with the spirit and intent of the Christian Scriptures but also with the findings of science and other non-Biblical sources of truth. This book is for the person who is looking for theological truth that conforms squarely with sound reason and logic. It is for the person who is hungry for spiritual truth that can be believed and lived wholeheartedly, without the doubts and reservations that often accompany traditional belief systems.

A lot of what you read in this book will surprise you. I will be sharing some concepts that may be entirely new to you, especially if you have not ventured outside of evangelical Christian circles. There are millions of people out there who largely share my views. Many of these people you will find in progressive Christian churches. A lot of them will never set foot inside a church for a variety of good and not-so-good reasons. Some of them will be found among adherents to non-Christian religions.

Many of you will be shocked by what you find in the Scriptures that you never noticed before. Important truths in Scripture are sometimes completely missed because people tend to read into the Scriptures what they have heard from the pulpits and in Sunday school classes. When you take off your “theologically tinted” glasses and seek honest and unbiased ways of looking at and interpreting the Bible, many passages will take on completely different meanings. Some of them will take on meanings that are exactly opposite of what you previously believed them to mean.

The result of my personal quest for truth was better than I could ever have imagined. My faith is now rock-solid, and I am more excited than ever about where I am headed in this life and the next. If you are honestly seeking answers to life’s toughest questions and aren’t afraid of the truth, wherever it leads, get ready for the ride of your life.