

What Is God?

by Erwin Braker, *Fellowshipian*



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Erwin Braker

Last year, in an article entitled “Is God Dead?” I challenged my readers to examine their beliefs by considering new names for God which better represent our beliefs. This may have been a case of getting the cart too far ahead of the horse. Before naming God, we need to clarify our beliefs about what God is.

Most people believe in a higher power. Most of these same people believe there are things they need to do to placate this higher power. This is why people are drawn toward religion. It lays down the rules that must be followed to keep God happy and it spells out rewards and punishments that can be expected for noncompliance. In my view this is a rather primitive or even juvenile view which equates God to a Super Parent in the sky.

In my belief system there is no room for mother, father, or even Santa Claus images of God. In their place, I envision enigmatic concepts like divine principles, infinite intelligence and energy fields. Statements which make sense to me are: God is Love. God is life. God is Truth. The nebulousness of such concepts is important to me because my God is too big to be understood or explained. God can only be experienced. This is why the *Course* includes the wise sentence: We say “God is,” and then we cease to speak. To learn more on what *A Course in Miracles* has to say about God read my very short “Condensation of the Abstract.”

We need to do more than give our newly evolving God a new name. We need to learn to explain and articulate our new beliefs. We need to be willing to express our new beliefs in thoughts, words and actions. This all has to be done in a way that does not leave those holding the old beliefs feeling threatened or thinking our new beliefs will lead to chaos and a more cruel and dangerous world.

First, we must pause and take time to examine our inner core beliefs. We can’t teach, use or fully benefit from our

beliefs until we know what they are. I thought I knew my beliefs until I started to write this article. In the middle, I stopped and assembled a condensation of what the *Course* has to say and compared it to what I believe. My conclusion was: *not only is God not dead but God is all there is.*

God is definitely not anthropomorphic. God is nothing like us, yet God is us. This seeming paradox can only start making sense when we explore the vision of current leading-edge physicists and cosmologists who predict science will soon prove there are eleven dimensions, not four, and very likely parallel universes. This science helps us acknowledge the possibilities of levels of reality.

Kenneth Wapnick’s writings on the theory of the *Course* were my first introduction to spiritual levels. His explanation left me helped but confused. Deepak Chopra’s book *How to Know God* made levels clear for me. His book describes three levels of reality, which he further redefines into three domains. They make room for an important belief of his, which I share: that the sacred isn’t a feeling it is a place.

The “material domain” is where our world, bodies, and time exist. The “virtual domain” is where God exists. The “quantum domain” is the transition zone where all can meet. Put these three levels together and you get what Chopra named a reality sandwich. Could these three places be three separate parallel universes? Maybe and maybe not. The important thing to my belief system is the idea there must be levels to reality. At the lowest level of reality, where my body exists, I can experience God for moments — and, for even longer periods, in one of the six higher levels of response which may have evolved in my consciousness.

The seven levels of response to God exist only in the material domain and are covered in detail in *How to Know God*. For purposes of this discussion, it is enough

to say most people reading this article are at least at response level three, the Restful Awareness Response, where you experience God by fulfilling your life through peace, centeredness, self-acceptance, and inner silence. We all experience God by living life. The quality of that experience depends on what response level you choose to live your life. For example, do you usually choose to be right or to be at peace?

We can't change the response level for anyone but ourselves by the choices we make, but we can influence others by our actions.

We hope, as we achieve higher levels of response to life, our actions will cause some of those around us to think they'd like to have more of what we have, and thus cause them to initiate their own changes and growth. In turn, others may inspire us. The point is, we are all in this together. We are all one.

In addition to the response level where we are, the quality of our God experiences are also dependent on the forgiveness work we have done. The more blaming we have indulged in during our lives, the more forgiveness we will have to do to experience the Peace, Love and Joy which is our natural inheritance from God.

The very heavy emphasis the *Course* places on forgiveness is why so many of its serious students conclude the *Course* may be simple, but it isn't easy. Forgiveness is so difficult because we haven't done it deeply enough and with everything in our life which requires it. Just when we think we have nothing left to forgive, something happens to trigger long suppressed subconscious hurts which need to be

faced and forgiven. The kind of forgiveness most often overlooked is self forgiveness. If you still carry heavy loads of guilt and shame your forgiveness work is not complete.

We know we need to do more than pardon — but completely let go of whatever we are forgiving as though it never happened—still, our forgiveness work is not done. The difficult process of forgiveness never ends until we experience God at the seventh and highest level of response, where we fulfill our life through wholeness and unity with the divine.

This is not to say all our work along the way does not have immediate value. Every effort at true forgiveness gets us further away from the “poor me” mind set and opens our awareness to our inner guide, the Holy Spirit, who will lead us to a mind set of peace, love, kindness and compassion. Holding faith in this process will not only have benefits along the way, but will eventually provide us with short glimpses of our oneness and finally, the full experience of God. At this point forgiveness will no longer be needed.

I've examined my beliefs in what God is and found them to be close, but not in perfect agreement, with the God of the *Course*. This impersonal God has provided us with an inner guide to help us through the difficult work of forgiveness which eventually leads to experiencing our true self's oneness with God and all his creations. We are all children of God. Meanwhile, be wary of further attempts to use too many words to describe “What Is God.” ♦

Condensation of the Abstract from A Course in Miracles:

God is Love.

T-9.I.9:1

Teach only love, for that is what you are.

T-6.I.13:2

There is no difference between love and joy.

T-5.in.2:3

Peace is an attribute in you.

T-2.I.5:8

[God] is All in all.

T-8.IV.1:4

God is All in all in a very literal sense.

T-7.IV.7:4

[Everyone] is part of you, as you are part of God. T-7.VII.10:6

...you could recognize that your only problem is separation...

W-79.6:2

Truth is.

T-14.VII.2:2

Truth can only be experienced.

T-8.VI.9:8

It is this experience toward which the course is directed

C-int.2:6

To forgive is to overlook.

T-9.IV.1:2

No one who learns to forgive can fail to remember God.

P-2.II.3:1

As forgiveness allows love to return to my awareness,

W-55.3(23):4

Learning is all that causes change.

T-31.III.4:8

For mind can learn, and there is all change made. T-31.III.4:10

Change but your mind on what you want to see, and all the world must change accordingly.

W-pI.132.5:2

Christ calls to you and gently says, My brother, choose again.

T-31.VIII.3:2

[Holy Spirit] is your Guide.

T-5.II.8:1

You will be told all you need to know.

T-1.I.4:3

T=Text; W=Workbook; M=Manual for Teachers

To read more of A COURSE IN MIRACLES, find an abridged easy to read Mini-Abstract, as well as the entire text, available from the FFT bookstore.