



The Dance of Life

Follow the Voice of Your Spirit
Remember to Dream
Listen to the Wisdom of Your Soul
Dance to the Music in Your Heart

A Namaste Church Publication

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The Dance of Life is a publication to help individuals live life fully, love wastefully, and be all they can be.

Mystical Experiences on Our Journey



This summer provided an opportunity for us to visit Grand Teton National Park and Yellowstone National Park. We consciously connected with all the people grateful this land had been set aside in its pristine beauty by forward thinking public servants and philanthropists so that we could enjoy it as they had. Words cannot express the depth of life and beauty we saw, so we simply call it mystical, beyond measure, sacred; and raise it up in thanksgiving.

All along the roads in Wyoming, the hills were so green, skies pure deep blue, and wildflowers standing tall outstretched to the sunshine, proudly displaying rich colorful variety. Every turn in the road would bring breathtaking vistas of purple, yellow, pink and green. Every creek was full and splashing downward on its own new journey. As we entered the canyons of the Snake River, the mountain sides steepen dramatically and we twisted along this mighty river, all white with glacial silt and full of uprooted trees that could not stand up to its mighty current. Only a few rafters would risk the rapids in this part of the river's descent.

Closer to the Snake river's source at Jackson Lake, Wyoming, we beheld the Grand Tetons, majestically watching the eagles soaring over grassy meadows and wide, flat valleys, glistening with much snow and glaciers still melting in late July. On the wide reaches of this slower, meandering, ever changing Snake we enjoyed a mid-day float trip. We couldn't help but see the presence of the mystical in the grandeur around us. How joyful we felt to be one with the fullness of life, to witness earth responding to warm sunshine, animals and birds with food aplenty, and to know that we as human beings, members of the animal kingdom, but empowered to know and celebrate in feeling and song the giftedness of this earth, sun and universe. We alone could be conscious of what we are all a part of, and give thanks to the divinity in it all.

Once again in the magical beauty of our National Parks, we were deeply aware that everything that we are, touch, and see came from the unconditional love of stars that bestowed the elements and compounds of Earth during hundreds of millions of years of evolutionary preparation to make the unique beauty of the earth and even more uniquely the one-of-a-kind person we are. [Comments?](#)

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN BELIEFS AND FACTS?

You might be thinking "Duh! Who doesn't know that?" Nevertheless, because Christians recite and read the beliefs of their faith a good part of their lives, it's easy to perceive them as facts. Following are a few beliefs and facts contrasted in an attempt to demonstrate the difference:

Belief: Jesus died for our sins.

Fact: Jesus was crucified under the rule of Pontius Pilate.

Belief: Jesus is the Son of God.

Fact: Jesus gave his followers a God-like experience.

Belief: The Bible is the Word of God.

Fact: The Bible is filled with wisdom and the writers could have been inspired by God.

Belief: We will one day be with God in heaven.

Fact: We will one day die.

Some individuals would find these comparisons offensive, perhaps even sacrilegious. We might know the difference between beliefs and facts but when it is blatantly illustrated, there is a tendency to become offended, perhaps even angry. This is precisely the point... when we perceive our beliefs as if they are facts and defend them as such, there is the potential for conflict, disharmony, and even war *in the name of Lord*. Wouldn't it be much more beneficial to put into perspective those things we cannot know and, instead, channel our passion toward constructive issues in the here and now, such as peace and justice, just as Jesus modeled for us? [Comments?](#)

Spare the Rod or Spare the Child?

*"We need to decide now –
person by person, family by family, church by church,
community by community, state by state, nation by nation –
to embrace non-violent methods of discipline
which can begin to reshape our lives, our consciousness, and our world,
and to alter the course of our future
and the future of generations yet to come."*

-Philip Greven, 'Spare the Child' Knopf, 1991

In doing some research related to corporal punishment, it turns out that this is quite a controversial issue. There have been studies to show that hitting children for disciplinary purposes does little or no harm and others that reflect permanent damage. However, even though there may not be a clear-cut conclusion, perhaps the bottom line question is why would anyone be so adamant about having the right to hit children? Do they really think that spanking is a necessary form of discipline? Or could it be that it is simply the swiftest.



Alternative methods of punishment, such as time-out or grounding, may be more time-consuming but it seems much more life-giving to calmly explain why a behavior is unacceptable and administer a punishment as a consequence of the action, rather than hitting a child possibly in a fit of anger.

Whether or not there is conclusive proof that corporal punishment is harmful, why risk the possibility of damaging our children and teaching them that physical aggression is the way to take care of unacceptable actions? As Greven suggests in the opening quotation, let us *embrace non-violent methods of discipline* for the sake of our children and future generations yet to come. [Comments?](#)

Reading Scripture Western World Style

Are you under the impression that words and actions of Jesus contained in the New Testament are an accurate account of his life and death? Typically, clergy and lay persons alike refer to the New Testament as if it were documented. Yet, in spite of this common assumption, it is highly unlikely that the writers could have had access to the actual dialogue and events related to Jesus' life. Think about it... No one was walking around with Jesus recording his every comment he uttered and move he made. Furthermore, the writers of the New Testament were not actually the apostles, Mathew, Mark, Luke and John, they were not eye witnesses, and the Gospels were not written until several decades after the time of Jesus.

The writers were actually evangelists and their intent was not to give an accurate account of events, but rather, to interpret the Jesus story based on what they considered to be meaningful. As a result, each of the books has a theme which is based on the evangelist's particular focus. For instance, the Gospel According to Mark calls itself majestically 'The Gospel (good news) of Jesus Christ (the Son of God).' Matthew focuses on Jesus as the one who abides with his people until the end of time. Luke highlights Jesus as the one whose words and deeds liberate those who are oppressed in any way. John portrays Jesus as the one who reveals what God is truly like.

Some Christians today may be outraged when reading this theory but the early Christians found this method of writing to be perfectly acceptable. In the Jewish tradition, the writers of scripture did not even attempt to document their stories; rather, their objective was to capture a God experience in sacred events. Since the writers of the Gospels were of the Jewish tradition, it would only stand to reason that they would reflect upon the life and death of Jesus using this same approach. Those who were rooted in the Jewish tradition understood that Scripture contained interpretations and stories to make a theological point. It was only later that non-Jewish, Western readers, who had no idea of how the scriptures were written, began to literalize the texts. [Comments?](#)