

Foreword to: *Discover Your Destiny* *The Soul, The Self, and The Search*

This expedition begins in St. Augustine, the nation's oldest city and the birthplace of Christianity in the New World. St. Augustine was founded over 400 years ago on September 8, 1565. It was named after this early church father because it was on the feast day of St. Augustine that the debarkation took place. Pedro Menendez de Aviles was commissioned by King Phillip II to plant the dual flags of Spain and the Roman Catholic Church, and to expand both Kingdoms, the empires of the temporal and the eternal.ⁱ

The voyage to the New World began in the Canary Islands off the coast of Morocco. During the expedition, the sailors faced perilous odds as they fought to fulfill their destiny. The flotilla of ships nearly sank as they encountered a hurricane on the high seas.

Up to Friday, the 20th (of July), we had very fine weather, but at ten o'clock that day a violent wind rose, which by two in the afternoon had become the most frightful hurricane one could imagine. The sea, which rose to the very clouds, seemed about to swallow us up alive, and such was the fear and apprehension of the pilot and other sailors that I exerted myself to exhort my brethren and companions to repentance. I represented to them the passion of our Lord Jesus Christ, His justice and His mercy, and with so much success that I passed the night in confessing them.

Very often the sea washed completely over the deck where we were gathered, one hundred and twenty men having no other place to go, as there was only one between-decks, and that was full of biscuit, wine, and other provisions. We were in such great danger that it was found necessary to lighten the vessel, and we threw a great many barrels of water into the sea, as well as our cooking apparatus and seven millstones which we were taking with us. Most of the reserve rigging and the great ship's cable were cast overboard, and still the waves continued to break over us. The admiral then resolved to throw all the chests of the men into the sea, but the distress of the soldiers was so great that I felt constrained to throw myself at his feet and beg him not to do it. I reminded him that we ought to trust to the great mercy of our Lord, and, like a true Christian, he showed confidence in God, and spared the luggage. When Jesus Christ permitted the return of day, we looked at each other as if men raised from the dead, and, though our suspense during Saturday was no less than that of the preceding night, light itself was a consolation to us; but when night, however, found us again still in the same dangerous situation, we thought we must surely perish, and during this whole night I preached to the crew, and exhorted them to put their trust in God. Sunday morning came, and your Lordship can fancy how we rejoiced to see daylight once more, although the storm continued unabated all day, and until noon of the following Monday, when our Lord deigned to have compassion and mercy on us, and calmed the fury of the winds and waves.ⁱⁱ

Docked in the safety of the harbor and preparing to embark on their expedition from the Canary Islands, did they lay awake wondering what was waiting beyond their known horizon? Did these sailors feel a pull to remain in the safety of their sameness or were they compelled to journey into the mysterious and the unknown? Their apprehension captures our imagination: the tension that exists between risk and safety. The sojourner is driven to discover his or her destiny when the expedition means risking the instinctual need for safety and willfully navigating uncharted waters.

With crude maps, sun and moon, sextant and stars, the early explorers faced perilous odds and encountered the unexpected as they charted and followed the course to a new land. To pause, to reflect, and to imagine, allows us to experience the tension and the terror the journeymen must have felt. What was it like to be one of those sailors on board as they prayed in fear for their lives? What was it like to be knocked down by waves and to cleave for their own survival? What was it like to throw everything essential for future survival overboard in hopes of keeping the ship afloat and staying alive for the next five minutes?

We are the descendents of those who stood watch at the helm and navigated uncharted waters.

Just like them, each one of us is on a search; we are all on a journey. Every person on the planet is a pilgrim. Just as those sailors who left the Canary Islands and founded St. Augustine, we live our lives in the tension between risk and safety.

This book is about your journey, *your* quest. Your quest begins when your search for meaning takes precedent over your need for safety. The quest begins with questions. Why am I here? What am I supposed to be doing with my life? Is there something I am missing? When do I set sail? How can I board this ship?

Our contemporary dilemma for a new adventure is that sailing ships and space ships have already circumnavigated the earth. Our planet no longer provides us with new lands to pioneer, divide, and conquer. In our place and time in history, *we can no longer expand as explorers of old*. We can only divide, conquer and re-conquer what already exists. The expansion we so desperately seek today can only be found in an *expansion of consciousness*.

The very survival of the planet may depend upon whether we *make an inward journey*. Ralph Waldo Emerson once wrote, “What lies behind us and what lies ahead of us are tiny matters *compared to what lies within us*.” What did Emerson mean? What lies within us? Does he allude to the soft whispering of the soul?

Is what lies within us more important than past or future? How can we move beyond a false identity based on distorted images of the self? How do we discover a deeper sense of identity that transcends family, tribe, or nation? We must make way for the inward journey *to discover our destiny*: “Out there” holds false promise. It is not “out there” but it is “in here.” It is not without but within. To *live in the mystery* is to Discover our Destiny *within* the Soul, the Self, and the Search. Wherever you are at this very moment, you are standing on the gangplank that will launch you and your life into a brave new world! Are you ready?

My pilgrimage drew me to St. Augustine in August of 1993. As a local church pastor for fifteen years, my profession took an unexpected turn in a new direction. Just as the initial pilgrims found their way to St. Augustine by tacking and zigzagging to catch the wind, our journeys follow similar patterns. Moses *tacked* for 40 years across the wilderness. Spiritual journeys rarely follow a straight path. In spiritual discovery, we tend to zigzag, sometimes pushed and other times pulled, until we finally reach the destination, the target, X marks the spot.

In 1993, I accepted a position as the Director of Operations in a not-for-profit organization. During the previous year, I earned a doctorate in pastoral counseling. I never dreamed I would ever leave my work as a local church pastor, but here was my new reality, staring me in the face. The organization ran two small nursing homes, an emergency assistance program for people in need of food, clothing, and medical attention, and a counseling center. My job was to provide supervision and oversight for all three operations.

During my first year, I would take my lunch and drive my truck to the *Shrine of Our Lady of la Leche*.¹ From there I would walk to the towering 20 story cross, a cross that commemorates the landing of Menendez in 1565, and sit in the shadows. I would eat my sandwich and thirst for that same milk; I would weep and pray. I asked God the agonizing question: “Why am I here?” I felt enormously conflicted when I accepted the new position. I remained that way for some time. I rarely, if ever, felt more than 70% *certain* this vocational shift was the direction I needed to follow.² I recall packing my study in preparation for the move; I grieved as I stored away 15 years of sermons in a box. At my core, I knew if I did not take the new position I would always wonder if I turned my back on an opportunity I

¹ This shrine is the first in our nation dedicated to Mary and to the breasts that fed Jesus.

² Faith journeys do require faith. Beware of those who are 100% certain of their certainty, for they may lead you to Jonestown, Guyana. . .

would later regret. Over the course of this first year I began to reflect on my work as a local church pastor as a time when I was a servant of the *institutional* church. As a new purpose came into focus, I began to understand my vocation as a laborer in the *servant* church, caring for the needs of the elderly, the poor, and the broken hearted. My service in this position was a different manifestation of the same church, the Church Universal, the body of Christ. In the evolution of my own understanding, I learned to trust that I was where I needed to be.

I spent the next six years acquiring valuable experience in organization, management, and administration. During this time, Flagler College invited me to teach *Death and Dying* as an adjunct faculty member. More important, as my workload increased as a trained and licensed psychotherapist and pastoral counselor, I noticed some consistent themes with persons who came from both sacred and secular backgrounds. In 1998, I moved out of the not-for-profit position and transitioned to full time work as a pastoral counselor. In my heart, I see my work as a pastoral counselor as doing the work of an evangelist. Matters of the heart always lead us to the soul.

M. Scott Peck came to a realization about spiritual values while writing his best seller *The Road Less Traveled* in 1980. This is where I begin. I have attempted to integrate the work of spirituality and psychotherapy in a way that will be clear and concise to the reader, although the movement from psychotherapy to spirituality is intentionally gradual. This work promotes a lifestyle of non-violence and moves us away from conquest into cooperation and connection.

This book emerged from my work as a psychotherapist and pastoral counselor for over a decade. As Eckhart Tolle states, “*both the teacher and the taught become the teaching.*”ⁱⁱⁱ I have been both teacher and student in this process. My experiences through this began to set a new direction in my work, which I see like points on a compass. Sojourners who I traveled with in my practice began to recognize their own personal latitude and longitude markers and compass points. They began to use these compass points to map their own quest to move out of their mazes of meaninglessness and emerge from chaos into coherence and thus into a completely new world. I have briefly outlined each theme below and these will function as compass points to establish direction for our expedition as well as serving as the nautical chart for this book. These compass points are *safety, meaning, justice, competence, connection, healing, and transcendence.*

Safety is the first compass point. It is our number one need. Simply put, if we do not feel safe, *nothing else matters.* We react *instinctually* to threat in this way. Anger and anxiety are reactive emotions we experience to a real or imagined threat to our safety.

The economic tsunami caused from the bursting housing and credit bubbles has sent us on a cycle from boom to bust not seen since the great depression. The automotive industry has been the bell weather economic indicator for the stability of capitalism for decades. Do you remember, “How General Motors goes, so goes the nation?” Revelations of corporate greed have sent shock waves from Wall Street to Main Street. The current digital photo of western capitalism captures an astonishing and staggering image of one huge Ponzi scheme.

As for our individual health, we await the coming of each new pandemic from bird flu to swine flu with dread. As for the health of our planet, our carbon footprint has created the fungus of global warming that promises to make our planet as inhabitable as a soiled and smelly tennis shoe.

Our foundations for safety have been forever destabilized. Prior to 9-11-2001, the United States could depend on its geographical boundaries to insure a modicum of safety. Terrorism always happened “over there.” We now know that our safety is no longer an inalienable guaranteed constitutional right. We now know what the rest of the world knows: safety can no longer be taken for granted. We now know that 9-11 is a dividing line in history, marking time “before” and “after.” The “new normal” continues to raise anxiety to new levels. Our collective consensus is not *if* there will be another terrorist

strike but *when and where*. Fighting a war on terror without boundaries and borders may well mean that our nation and the world will now be in a state of war *in perpetuity*. We have notched up both anxiety and anger through isolated and prolonged acts of “holy violence.”^{iv}

We cannot live purposefully, creatively, and with passion if we are stuck in a protective mode. Our *psychological* safety needs trigger anger and anxiety when there are real or imagined threats to issues of justice or competence.

Meaning is our next compass point. Meaning involves our attempts to find “purpose” through career, companionship, and vocation as we wrestle with life choices. Meaning involves the facts of our lives and how we *interpret* these facts. “Our baby died,” might be a fact: but what does this mean? We strive to make our meaning making *conscious* and to develop our own theory, philosophy, theology, or ideology about how to make sense out of our experience. It may be as simple as the Golden Rule or as complex as Aristotle or Augustine.

Justice involves our attempts to achieve balance in relationships. We each carry our own internalized compass that points toward what we believe to be just or fair. We want to get *out* of our relationships what we put *into* them: to get what we give! The basis of many relationships frequently involves unconscious bartering, “If I do *this* for you, you are supposed to do *this* for me.” When these expectations are not met, resentment eventually builds to implosions or explosions. Reactivity frequently follows real or imagined threats to interpersonal or social injustice.

Competence is our need, drive, and desire to be competent with who we are and in what we do. From the time we are born until we die, we strive to achieve and maintain competence. Reactivity frequently follows real or imagined attacks on our competence. In this controversial chapter, the reader will witness the dismantling of a popular cultural and psychological myth: *there is no such thing as self-esteem*. Self-esteem describes *symptoms*: what is the cause?

Connection is our need to be in relationships where we experience unconditional love, acceptance, and approval. The old television show “Cheers” began with, “I want to go to a place where everybody knows my name.” We are all creatures of community. We are born into families and we journey our way through many places of belonging, where we receive nurture, challenge, and identity. Are our sources of connection life giving or life denying?”

Healing is our bodies’ homeostasis of health. This is why we have an immune system. Research will continue to establish a direct link between emotional, spiritual, physical health, and well-being. In this chapter, I present my work with sojourners who experience healing in relationships. I also present some of my own findings, which add to the research of other professionals establishing a link between emotional illness and disease, how emotional healing may facilitate physical healing, and documented incidences of spontaneous healings. Forgiveness and healing are intricately connected.

Transcendence is our search for God. Transcendence is not about finding orthodoxy but orthopraxy. It is not about “talking the talk” but “walking the walk.” God is not so much interested in right belief as in right relationship. When we get into an aligned relationship, the right belief seems to take care of itself. (Jeremiah 31:31-34) Discovering our destiny is about *recovering* the divine image hidden below the self and *discovering* our adoption that connects the soul to the divine. (Romans 8:12-17) An encounter with transcendence is an invitation to experience transformation.

Although I have seen these compass points repeatedly in my work, let me clearly state there are no formulas or set maps to faith and thus to transcendence. This is not about discovering seven “how to’s” or seven steps to salvation or seven blueprints for the soul. More than anything else, I believe ***abundant life is hard work***. (Philippians 2:12-13) Your point of encounter with God is precisely where you may struggle with any or all of these compass points. It is a fundamental affirmation of a fundamental truth that *God meets us where we are in our sojourn*. This book will challenge the reader to

say “yes” to the miracle of transformation, pull anchor, and chart a new course as you begin mapping your own quest. The more intense the struggle, the more you will be pushed into discovering who you are in God. What holds your ship together is learning how to hold the tension of your two natures, human beings made in the divine image, and to become whole persons. The ongoing work of transformation is to transform the individual and connect us into the global consciousness of God.

Albert Einstein once stated, “*No problem can be solved by the same level of consciousness that created it. We have to think with a new mind.*”^v Unless we enter into a new consciousness, the anger and anxiety that have now been unleashed create the possibilities of our own self-extinction. Unless there is a radical breakthrough of this consciousness, civilization, as we now know it, may be hanging by a thread.

This book is written for persons who are spiritual seekers. It is written for persons who are interested in taking the inward journey and are seeking to discover their identity as human and spiritual beings. It is written for persons who are interested in an authentic, integrated spirituality.

I envision this book being used in classrooms, churches, and synagogues as a tool for personal and spiritual growth. The potential applications are numerous and unlimited: When I presented portions of this material at the Candler School of Theology at Emory University in the fall of 2007, a delegation from the Bahamas expressed interest in this work as a method for helping to deal with the growing problems associated with gang violence in their country. In June of 2008, I presented portions of this material to the First Annual Conference of the Society for Spirituality, Theology & Health at Duke University. Emotional, physical, and spiritual health is intricately connected. My hope is that this work will make a contribution in the field of wholeness, health, and well-being.

No words can adequately express my gratitude and appreciation for the persons who have shaped my life and influenced this process. Dr. C. Fred Hall was my first Clinical Supervisor in Clinical Pastoral Education at the Candler School of Theology at Emory University and his timely presence many years later was the signal that sent me in a new direction in ministry. I want to thank Dr. Larry Lake, my working partner for six years in St. Augustine. His encouragement of me to enter the pastoral counseling training program at the Samaritan Center in Jacksonville, Florida in 1989 opened windows of opportunity that I never dreamed or imagined. I would also like to thank Dr. John Rutland-Wallis, my first clinical supervisor at the Samaritan Center who introduced me to the Psychology of the Self and the genius of Heinz Kohut. Dr. Jon Connelly revolutionized my practical skills with his insightful and dedicated work. Rev. Phil Roughton, Rev. Chris Akers, Rev. Bill Owens, and the staff of the First United Methodist Church of Ormond Beach have provided affirmation and confidence in my work and have kept me busy. Demcie Re, Dr. Harry Black, Rev. Melynne Rust, Dr. Jay Rust, Rev. Leslie Avchin, Nancy Edwards, Karen Iseman, Yvonne Newcomb-Doty, Ruth Westwood, Rebekah Krahe, Brenda McNeil, and Lisa Carboni have spent countless hours reading, proofing, and bouncing around ideas in helping me to improve the manuscript. Kathleen Andrews has been a benevolent supporter of this work. Sarah Gerace and Sean McNeil worked together in designing the cover. Brenda, my spouse, and my children, Sean and Rebekah, have been my greatest teachers of all. I am deeply appreciative of their love and support in this project.

Most important of all, I wish to thank the hundreds of fellow spiritual pilgrims who have allowed me the sacred privilege of joining them on their expedition. Those with whom I have been privileged to work have been my teachers. Mutually we have worked to establish the creation of new meanings as we have sought to *Discover our Destiny* in the great exploration of *The Soul, The Self, and The Search*.

ⁱ On Saturday, the 8th, the general landed with many banners spread, to the sound of trumpets and salutes of artillery. As I had gone ashore the evening before, I took a cross and went to meet him,

singing the hymn *Te Deum Laudamus*. The general marched up to the cross, followed by all who accompanied him, and there they kneeled and embraced the cross. A large number of Indians watched these proceedings and imitated all they saw done. The same day the general took formal possession of the country in the name of his Majesty, and all the captains took the oath of allegiance to him, as their general and governor of the country. When this ceremony was ended, he offered to do everything in his power for them, especially for Captain Patino, who during the whole voyage had ardently served the cause of God and of the King,

ⁱⁱ <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/1565staugustine.html>

ⁱⁱⁱ Eckhart Tolle, *The Power of Now* (Novato: New World Library, 1991), 103.

^{iv} Gil Bailie, *Violence Unveiled, Humanity at the Crossroads* (New York: Crossroad, 1995).

^v <http://www.cacradicalgrace.org/conferences/tension/post/powerpoints/TwoWaysofKnowing.pdf>