

OUT IN THE OPEN

Overview

(Featuring works written from 1963-2011)

(77 Pages)

By

Francis William Bessler

**Featuring a Compilation
of
The Complete Written Works
of
Francis William Bessler
From 1963-2011**

Compiled in April - June, 2011

**Featuring
Original essays, stories & songs
In
Chronological order.**

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Laramie, Wyoming
- 2011 -**

OUT IN THE OPEN

By Francis William Bessler

Written 4/8/2011

Refrain 1:

Out in the open – it's the best way to find God.

Out in the open – truth does not depend upon applause.

Out in the open – no devil can exist.

Out in the open – there's no room for sin.

Well, my friends, I'm no guru,
but I don't think I need to be.
When I simply look at life,
it's all I need to be free.
Let others read lots of books
if they believe that will help;
but I think that if that's all they know,
what they know will be more like Hell. **Refrain 1.**

I'm told I should fear Satan
and I say, why should I?
It's clear Satan can't exist
when I'm standing beneath a sky.
Just look out as far as you can see
and all devils disappear.
So just keep looking outward
and you'll never need to fear. **Refrain 1.**

I learned long time ago,
back when I was a child,
That the only truth anyone needs
is found in the wild.
To the degree, I can be
one with the deer and antelope
is the same degree I can find peace
and that wonderful thing called hope. **Refrain 1.**

I think it's good to know
that we're all the same.
I don't need you and you don't need me
to share a common fate.
The truth we both need
is out there in the universe.
Just become one with the All –
and let that be what we rehearse. **Refrain 1.**

And when I die what will happen
to this thing I call my soul?
It will just continue on
on the merry path I know.
Wherever my souls goes,
it will stay among the stars.
Freedom's only belonging to All
whether that All is near or far. **Refrain 1.**

Refrain 2 (several times):

Out in the open – it's my favorite phrase.
Out in the open – it lets my nights look to day.
Out in the open – it's the way I want to go.
Out in the open – it's the best way to know.

INTRODUCTION

Hello! Welcome to this **OVERVIEW** of a series of 8 pc (personal computer) volumes of all my writings – a series I am calling **OUT IN THE OPEN**. On June 17th, I finished compiling the 8 volumes of the series – separating my written works in chronological epochs, as it were, or periods of time – dating from my earliest recorded work in 1963 to my final essays and songs up to mid June of 2011. This work summarizes those 8 volumes. I will provide the **Introduction**, **Index**, and **Epilog** of each of those 8 volumes in this work. My intent in doing this is to provide a bit of an **Overview** of the entire series.

I called my series by the general title of **OUT IN THE OPEN** because I believe that is the ideal approach to take in life – being as open as possible about it. I think censorship of ideas is the biggest impediment to finding the truth; and the truth is what my writings are all about. I do not expect agreement with my ideas, but I do believe I should expect allowance of my ideas. People should be free to make up their own minds about all the issues I cover in my writings; but there should be no censorship of those writings. Disagree – Yes; but don't censor just because you disagree. I am not going to offer any further details on that issue in this basic Introduction; but suffice it to say, my works will have plenty to say about it.

If I were to pick one idea that could be considered to be a favorite, it would have to be the notion of **“infinity”**. I will be offering various articles about that very liberating idea in many of my works. I say that the notion of **“infinity”** is **liberating** because with it, **various division is impossible**. If existence has no borders, then it cannot be divided. It is almost as simple as that. How, then, could life – or existence – be “divided” into “good” and “evil” regions? **How can something that is “indivisible” - as “Infinity” or “All Existence” must be – be divided?** It is just that notion that Infinity cannot be divided that assures me that the traditional notion of life being comprised of “good” and “evil” must be wrong. **If there can be no division, there can be only one quality – either all good or all evil. I cannot envision life being “all evil”. Therefore, it must be “all good”.** My works will continue the discussion.

If I were to pick one person I would consider to be a favorite, it would be **Jesus** – but not according to a traditional sense of him as “lord” over others. Not at all! My Jesus was not a “**lord**” over others – but a “**master**” of himself – encouraging others to imitate him as a master. You can find this Jesus in his parables as offered in the canon gospels of the **BIBLE**, but you will find him more, I think, in the “**un-canonized**” **gospels of Thomas & Mary Magdalene**. Who are Thomas & Mary? I guess you could say that I deal with them quite a bit in my works; but all I will say here is **Thank God for Thomas & Mary!** At least for ones like me, they offer a much “wiser” Jesus than heretofore I had known through the canon gospels of Mathew, Mark, Luke, & John. My works will deal considerably with that “**new Jesus**”.

So, welcome to my **OUT IN THE OPEN** discussion of life. I hope you find one or more of the volumes of some interest. If so, I will be glad to share that of interest in any way I can. Without a sponsor, I can’t do much, but I will do as much as I can – be it via a printing of a work or a CD one can review with a pc – or whatever.

With that, let me get on with offering a little about each of my 8 volumes of my **OUT IN THE OPEN** writings series. Distributed throughout will be mostly essays and songs, but also a few philosophical novel stories – several long and several short. The last volume – Volume 8 – will feature all of my songs – some 140 – in alphabetical order; but Volumes 1 through 7 will feature all works in the order in which they were written. Here is a general view:

Volume 1: 1963 – 1984	(184 pages)
Volume 2: 1985 – 1994	(246 pages)
Volume 3: 1995 – 2004	(202 pages)
Volume 4: 2005	(214 pages)
Volume 5: 2006	(108 pages)
Volume 6: 2007 – 2008	(102 pages)
Volume 7: 2009 – 2011	(188 pages)
Volume 8: Songs	(168 pages)
TOTAL	1,112 pages

Onward! I will feature now a brief glimpse of each of my 8 volumes. It is **Father’s Day, 2011**, as I do this. Given that such is so, I would like to dedicate my entire **OUT IN THE OPEN** series to my own father – **my Dad, Leo Bessler**, who passed at the age of 59 in July of 1966. Dad & I had lots

of discussions about life when I was a kid; and even though I lost him at the age of 24, he has always been “**riding in the back seat**” of my mind.

1973 was somewhat of a pivotal year for me. It was the year I formally left a previously lifelong religion – Catholicism – and it was a year that supplied me with a dream about Dad. I was married to my first wife, Dee, at the time – though we would divorce in 1977 – mostly because Dee remained a Catholic and I had “moved on”.

In my dream of the time, though, I dreamt that Dee and I and our young daughter of 3, Anita, were on our way to have dinner with some friends. We passed a gas station and I looked over and thought I saw my Dad standing beside one of those semi-trailer trucks, but with only a cab. I drove into the gas station for a closer look. Approaching the figure standing beside the cab of his trailer-less truck, I found it was my Dad. Dad had died in 1966 – seven years previous. I exclaimed to the man: ***Dad, it is you! I thought you were dead!*** Dad said in reply: ***Do I look dead?*** And then he got into the cab of his truck and rolled down the window. Looking at me, he said: ***Keep going the way you are going, Son.*** Then he drove away.

Well, I have kept going the way I was going – in my thoughts, that is. Dad would not agree with all of those thoughts, but he would agree with my thinking them. Thus, on this Father’s Day, 2011 – as I finish this ***OUT IN THE OPEN*** effort with this ***Overview***, I suspect that Dad is “standing by”. Personally, I don’t put much stock in dreams, but as long as they are “kept personal” and not imposed on everyone else, I think they are just fine.

I suspect, however, that in my dream, Dad was not visiting me as much as I was visiting him. It was me who put Dad in the truck without a trailer hitched to it because I think I was “***telling myself***” that I believed Dad to be “free” – and I simply used the image of a truck cab without anything hitched to it as an expression of that freedom. But I do believe Dad would agree with my dream. Would he have really told me to ***keep going the way you are going?*** I think so; but I think it is important to be aware that we use dreams to tell us what we believe; and what we believe may not be so. No one should use a dream as if it came from outside themselves. As long as we realize that, dreams can indeed be quite useful – and satisfying. At least, I think so – ***speculator that I am.***

That is a worthwhile note, I think, too – that is, ***I am a speculator.*** I pride myself on being the same. I think we are all “speculators” in life, but some of us believe and act otherwise. Some of us are absolutely sure that what we have is the absolute truth. So let no one defy us by challenging us in some way. Feel welcome to defy me, though. I do not claim to be one

with “absolute truth”. *I love to think; but let no one believe my thinking is intended to command others. Not so!!!!*

Be that as it may, let me dedicate my entire ***OUT IN THE OPEN*** effort to my Dad – and all the fathers in the world – and even to all the mothers in the world. In brief, let me dedicate to **all parents** – and that would definitely include most especially the **Grand Parent of All – GOD!**

Gently,

A Son of God –

*and a son of Leo Peter Bessler (1/31/1907-7/7/1966) &
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June 19th, 2011

VOLUME 1:

1963 - 1984

(184 Pages)

Introduction

Hello! Welcome to an evolution – an evolution of me. There will be some error along the way because I think true evolutionists inevitably encounter error in their search for the truth. If I am anything, I'd say I am a **true evolutionist** in terms of searching for the truth. I guess you could say that for me the truth has evolved or developed in my mind via experience of life; and it is quite likely that the truth will continue to evolve for me until the day I die – and beyond. I don't suppose I will ever stop **evolving** in terms of seeing something tomorrow that I do not know today.

So, if you would, if you choose to review any of my volumes of written works, please keep that in mind. My writing is mostly speculation about what I write – and speculation may or may not reflect the truth about a matter. In a way, I have taken great pride in chancing error by speculating as I have done about this or that. I may still be in error with some thought or other, however in most of my writing, **I do not believe I am in error. I may be, though, because I am a speculator – and know I am one.**

I do not think I am alone in being a speculator, however. I think everyone – bar none – is a speculator. No one has the absolute truth about anything that is not definitely factual. I think many think they are absolutely right, but I don't think anyone is – least of whom – me.

I call my compilation of my written works from 1963 to present time ***OUT IN THE OPEN*** because I believe that has been my way in life. I may not be right about some idea, but I try to be open about it – even while investigating it. **I have tried not to fear being wrong.** I think many do fear being wrong and think that being wrong is the worst thing in the world. Thus, they keep behind closed doors in deciding anything and often present a different reason for doing something than a real reason. The fear of being wrong is a terrible fear that drives a lot of people, but I have tried to not let it be a fear for me.

So what that I am wrong about something? **If I am honest in trying to be right, there should be no shame in being wrong.** The only shame I should have is imposing my ways or my thoughts on another. In that light, ***imposition is the greatest shame.***

Some one once wrote: **the beginning of wisdom is fear of God.** That may be if we all know for sure who or what God is; but no one knows who or what God is for sure. Anyone who thinks about God can only speculate about God. No one can know for sure what God is in my opinion because by definition, ***God is indefinable.*** How can you define something that is **indefinable**?

Why then should I fear God when I do not even know what God is? In truth, that statement that says that **the beginning of wisdom is fear of God** is only a ploy used by some who think they have a right to dominate others. Who am I supposed to fear in reality? **He or she or them.** It is “their God” I am supposed to fear, but the truth is they do not have a God. **They are only using God as an excuse to try to control others.** But then, I am even speculating about that. I may be wrong, but it's not likely I am. Is it?

In Step With A Speculator

In 1963, when I wrote the first work to be found below, I was studying for the Catholic priesthood. At the time, I was “**convinced**” that God is a being outside of us. I did not know it then, but it turns out I was speculating about that. I did not know it for sure, even though I thought I did. I thought I did because I had not yet grown to challenge what I had been taught. I had been taught that God is a being outside of me. I had no reason in my youth to doubt it, but only because I had not thought about it. I just assumed that my parents and parish priest were right about God. **It took living for me to realize that they were no more sure about God than I have come to be uncertain.**

Anyway, I will begin my works below with a **prayer** of the time. It is an example of a life in progress. I include it as I include everything in this compilation because it reflects one stage of an *evolving me*. I am as much in love with that prayer now as I was then in regards to loving the state of mind that was me. I am no longer of that state of mind because I see that whatever God is, God must be Infinite. Again, I am speculating; but I think that **infinite** means in a way – **everywhere**. If God, whatever God is, can have no bounds, then it follows that God must be everywhere. That means God can’t be a person outside of me to whom I must appeal. In my prayer that begins my works below, I thought of God as a being outside of me to whom I had to appeal; **but my speculation has changed to see God as Presence inside of everything.**

So I was wrong when I thought God was a person! So what? I wanted to be right; and, to my credit, I never compelled anyone to believe as I did. I never imposed my belief on another. If I had, I would not have only been wrong in imposing my belief on another, I would have been wrong in my belief. That should show anyone who wants to see the truth that no one has the right to impose their belief on another.

The advantage of being a speculator – and knowing you are so – is tremendous. I am talking now, however, as one who knows now I have always been a speculator. In some of my works, I may not have been of that mind. I may present myself as being more sure than I was. If it seems that way, I ask that you pardon me. Let me make it perfectly clear. ***I am now and always have been a speculator.*** Again, I think everyone is like me – a speculator – but it is very good to know it beforehand.

About My Songs

I have written a lot of songs since 1963 when I wrote the first item included in this compilation of my written works, but consider all of them for this work as more poetry than song. Almost all of them were written with a tune in mind when I wrote them, but to date, none of them have been scored. Their tunes are mostly in my head – though almost all of them have been featured as sung – mostly a cappella - in a home spun camcorder DVD program series I did in 2009. That series is called **LOVING EVERYTHING** and is comprised of 5 DVD programs that feature my songs in alphabetical order to the point of that production – the fall of 2009. Since 2009, I have

written a few new songs – all of which are included in another camcorder DVD program I did in 2010 called **GOING OUT WITH SONG**. That is a final **friends & family** program I did, ending a whole string of **friends & family** oriented programs dating back to my first in 1987. I call them **friends & family** oriented programs because they feature the same without me going naturally in them.

As a naturalist, I am very comfortable with going without clothes, but not wanting to impose my ways on others, I have produced quite a few non-naturalist camcorder productions. I have also produced quite a few naturalist camcorder productions too – including the **LOVING EVERYTHING** series of mention. So, even though my songs have not been scored with melodies on paper, most of them have been recorded mostly a cappella in aforementioned DVD programs. Songs that I have written since the completion of **GOING OUT WITH SONG** are only a few – including the lead song of this series – *Out In The Open*. Suffice it to say, if desired, tunes are available for almost all my songs, though in this series, they should be considered more as poetry or lyrics without tunes. Review them for their thought, if you will, and not their respective tunes. If, however, melodies or tunes are desired, I can supply them via the mentioned DVD programs – or one can write a melody of choice to fit them.

Also, I did produce two audio cassette albums in the 1980s that feature some of my songs – sung by professional artists with accompanying instrumentals. One was called **FEELING FREE** and the other was called **MASTER OF YOUR OWN FATE**. I won't further define either of those programs, but suffice it to say, they were produced by some professional friends of mine in Georgia – where I lived at the time – but have not been publicly promoted. Much of the songs of these audio cassettes have been dubbed to some natural footage in the **LOVING EVERYTHING** series. None of these featured songs were scored, however, thus confirming my earlier statement that none of my songs have been scored to date. In the productions below, when a song was featured in either **FEELING FREE** or **MASTER OF YOUR OWN FATE**, a note will be added up front offering that little detail.

The Order Of My Works

My intent is to feature my works in the order of their original writing – though in typing them into pc files from earlier typewritten works, I may have altered some of them somewhat and even offered new introductions. Each work will be found in this series in the order in which they were originally written – not the order in which I may have converted them from typed format to pc format.

For instance, I wrote a philosophical novel that's included in this volume called **DAVID & BELINDA** in 1975, but converted it to pc file in 2009. When converting it to pc file in 2009, I may have altered it a little, but for the most part, I tried to leave it as it was originally written – even though in this case, I even changed a title. In 1975 I called it **NEVER BE ASHAMED TO LOVE**, but when converting it to pc file in 2009, I changed the title to **DAVID & BELINDA**. That is just to say that various works may have been revised a little when converting them to pc file, but they are being featured in this series in the order in which they were originally written; however, I may list a copyright of a work according to a date of conversion to pc file. My intent is to feature

all my works as they are found in a pc file – as if each is an individual work simply reprinted in a different space.

With that, let us begin. This first volume will present all the works I have written in chronological order – that is, in the order in which they were written – from 1963 through 1984. Volume 2 – 7 will proceed from 1984; and Volume 8 will feature all the songs I have written in alphabetical order – not chronological order. Volumes 1 – 7 will feature most of my songs, but chronologically, not alphabetically.

Enjoy as you will, then, the works of a proud speculator. If you are looking for doctrine or dogma, look elsewhere. You will not find it here; although in my opinion, you shouldn't find it anywhere. Doctrine and/or dogma implies access to infallible truth; and no one has that. Doctrine and/or dogma implies direction by an outside God, but if God is not outside of anyone, no one can be some sole recipient of direction from an outside God. Can they? So no one should dare to dictate either doctrine or dogma to another. Or so, I believe!

Gently,

Francis William Bessler

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April 14th, 2011

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EPILOG: *MAYBE*

That concludes my speculations about quite a few items – notions, as it were – that were included in this first of eight volumes of my trying to live life ***OUT IN THE OPEN***. I think there is tremendous advantage to being open in life and considering alternatives – as opposed to deciding various issues of life in a beginning and never straying with your thoughts throughout life.

As a writer who has dared to speculate with my writings – from 1963 through 1984 in this volume – I can see a person changing right before my eyes. I had some very strong beliefs in 1963, beliefs that I penned in the poem ***Prayer Of A Priest***. Remember that first entry of this volume? But what a difference 21 years made – simply because I was willing to consider alternatives and ended up changing my beliefs to see God in a considerably different way by the time I had penned the final entry of this volume in 1984 – ***Master Of Your Own Fate***.

Was I right in how I thought of God in 1984? **Maybe**. One of the great wonders of change is that you might be wrong in a current belief. I think I was wrong in how I saw God in 1963. That should tell me that my thoughts as of 1984 could be wrong too. ***Having changed as I did in that period, however, I do not see anything but strength in being willing to admit you were wrong.*** So what if I was wrong at the completion of this volume in 1984? Or maybe I was right in 1963 and should not have changed to adopt a rather different view of life. And maybe I will live on to return to my beliefs of 1963. **Who knows?**

The important point I want to make with all my writings is that ***maybe I am right and maybe I am wrong***. That is how I think a true speculator should consider things; and if I am nothing else, I pride myself on being a speculator within life and about life. I like to review the thoughts of others and sometimes consider another person's thoughts in making up my own mind about an issue, but I also like to think for myself. ***I do not have to be right to think for myself.*** Yes, thinking for yourself could end in error; but it could also lead to some worthwhile speculation too.

Should I have dared to think about arthritis without any previous indoctrination about it? Some would say I was way out of line in pondering an issue I knew nothing about. Well, it is true. I did not know anything about it before I attempted to ponder it. In pondering it, I speculated about it. After speculating for myself, then I opened books about it and compared the opinions of “**experts**” with my own; but if I had not speculated first on my own, I would have had no way to compare anything. Would I have?

Should I have dared to think about cancer without any previous indoctrination about it? Some would say I was crazy to do such a thing. Most would have piled through lots of scholarly books on the subject and then maybe would have tried to find some new light about it. But as it happened, I dared to think about it without knowing what so called “**experts**” thought about it first. After coming up with my own idea about it, then I studied other opinion. Am I right about my ideas about cancer? **Maybe**. Am I wrong because I happen to disagree with almost all the “**experts**” who have studied it? ***Maybe; and maybe not too.***

Should I have dared to think about Jesus in a different way than the way of tradition? All of those who have decided long ago that the traditional ideas about Jesus have to be right may well disagree with my thoughts about Jesus; and I might be wrong too; but I also might be right. **Then again, no one may have Jesus right.**

Remember David & Belinda? They spent an entire weekend pondering the meaning of life – including Jesus. At the end of my story, they did not know anything for sure. Of course, they are really me. I do not know anything for sure either – about arthritis or cancer or Jesus; but I think I am way ahead of many who think they know about all these things and refuse to consider alternatives.

Remember Priscilla & Lance in another of my philosophical stories? Priscilla was very strong in her beliefs – and, of course, Priscilla is really me. But Priscilla believed first and foremost in the right of each individual to think for him or herself; and that is how I think. When we forefoot – is that the word? – our right to think for ourselves, then that is when life can not only become much duller than it should, but it is also when we stop in our tracks and fail to grow.

Maybe David & Belinda and Priscilla are wrong – or were wrong – **but maybe they are right too.** It is a wonderful thing, I think, to think. It is oh so wonderful to be wrong and take delight in that possibility; but what is not wonderful is to be wrong and impose that error on everyone else. As I see it, since I can be wrong about anything and everything speculative, I have no right to assume I am right about anything speculative and impose my “**rightful standards**” on anyone else. **Respect for another to think for him or herself should be our greatest respect we hold for one another. Or so I believe!**

With that in mind, join me, if you will for the next volume of my **OUT IN THE OPEN** series. I may stumble – and I can almost assure you that I will somewhat; but I am looking forward to the adventure. It will be rather fun to watch me grow – or otherwise – in my writings. The span of time is shorter than that of this first volume. This first volume covered from 1963 through 1984. That’s 21 years. The second volume will range from 1985 through 1994. That’s 10 years. I guess that’s to say that in my first “**epoch**” of writing, I was a bit less prolific than I would be in the next period.

No matter. **Whatever I have written is all speculation.** There is not an ounce of absolute truth in any of it – well maybe an ounce, but at least 15 ounces of a possible 16 in a pound are totally speculative. **No doctrines will be forthcoming; even though a way of life should be evident.** It’s my way of life – and it does not have to be that of anyone else – but I do take a lot of pride in sharing it.

See you then if you choose to join me. Bye for now!

Gently,

Francis William Bessler

Laramie, Wyoming U.S.A.

April 19th, 2011

VOLUME 2:

1985 - 1994

(246 Pages)

Introduction

Hello Again! Welcome to my continuing evolution of me in written terms. Of what worth is that evolution to anyone else? I do not know; but I do not mind sharing some things I wrote down through the years – as it were, trying to find my way. Is my way useful for anyone else? Again, I do not know that it is; however, I do strongly suspect it is. I strongly suspect some of my thoughts are valid for others because, in the final analysis, we are of the same ilk – so to speak. That which one of us observes to be true is quite likely the truth for others too. Thus, ***what you have written may appeal to me and what I have written may appeal to you.***

I would like to repeat, though, that I do not consider myself infallible as I do not consider anyone infallible. **There is no such thing as infallible guidance** – as some would like to believe. ***In the end, we are all guessing to some extent.*** I think we can arrive at ***probable truth***, but not ***infallible truth***. As long as I am caught within life and existence in general, I cannot assume that my judgments about life and existence are without question, true. ***Complete objectivity, I think, requires separation from what is viewed.*** Since I cannot be separated from life, neither then can I be completely sure about it; but that should not stop me from thinking about life and having thoughts about it.

It is not my aim to impose my thoughts, however, but simply to share them. I am very glad I can do that; but take my ideas with that proverbial ***grain of salt*** if you will. I hope you are open to listening to them, but I also hope you are open to judging them for yourself.

And you will have a good deal to judge too. I start out offering a bit of an intended naturalist lyrical screen play of 60 pages or so about what I see as the ideal town. I call it ***SUMMER TOWN***. It's not exactly ***Typical Town***, but you may find the residents offering some worthwhile tidbits and observations about life. I will let the folks in ***SUMMER TOWN*** offer their own story soon. I wrote that story initially in 1986.

Conjecturing about morality is part of the agenda too. The result is a 22 page essay series I call simply, ***MORALITY***, which I wrote originally in 1989. In that same year, 1989, I decided to write an essay series on the soul too. ***It was (and is) a speculative work; but then all of my agenda is speculative.*** Who do you know, though, who has sat down and analyzed various thoughts about the soul? Amazingly, though I think most of us believe in the soul in general, almost none of us have sat down to analyze various perceptions of it. We just accept what our folks told us – which isn't much because they never sat down to analyze it either. So look for an entry called ***UNMASKING THE SOUL*** – about 34 pages long. For what it's worth, I throw in a personal theory about the soul too.

And who hasn't thought about sex? I will offer a bit of a discussion on that one as well – including what I think is the ***natural design*** that should ideally govern sexual conduct. I wrote ***NATURAL DESIGN & SEX*** in 1992 – 28 pages long. Being a naturalist and believing as I do that ***Nature*** is actually ***Divine***, I also offer a ***NATURAL MANIFESTO FOR HUMAN REFORM*** – a much shorter work of only 12 pages that I wrote in 1994.

Concluding this volume will be two brief *speculative* biographies – one a 39 page work on **William Penn** after whom the American state of **Pennsylvania** is named – and one 41 page work on one of my favorite saints – **Francis of Assisi**. I call them speculative biographies because of speculating about the wisdom of some of the conduct of these two favorite people of mine. Both of these works were originally written in 1994. I call one **IMPRESSIONS OF WILLIAM PENN** and the other **IMPRESSIONS OF FRANCIS OF ASSISI**.

Thinking is a lot of fun for me. I have often wondered why more people do not take pride in thinking for themselves. Perhaps many do not think they have a right to think for themselves, believing as they do that it has all been thought out before and that they must attend to ***what has been written***. How many times have you heard someone argue that they know what they know because ***it has been written***. It is like we all have to put our own minds away because someone else has already preceded us with the truth.

It should come as no surprise, but I do not take that approach. ***I love to read what has been written by others, but I think it is pure folly to assume that all that has been written is true simply because some writer has claimed it is.*** How do you know what you know? So many will answer – ***because it has been written*** – as if what has been written is somehow *scriptural* or of God.

Well, I can assure you that my writings are not of God – in terms of being inspired by God in a way different that any of life is inspired. I do believe that all life is inspired of God, but I do not believe that any one thing about life is more inspired of God than anything else. ***Special inspiration, for me, is nonsense because you cannot be more than 100% inspired.*** Special inspiration implies that before that inspiration I was not 100% inspired – or of God.

Writing, for me, is no more important or inspired than eating a meal or taking a bath. It is all the same thing for me because I see God as equally in all and in everything. But what a view that is – to be 100% inspired all the time – just as everyone else is 100% inspired all the time. If only we all believed that, huh? ***If only we all believed that we are all equally inspired of God and that no one is more inspired of God than another.*** I'd say that would be a **Recipe for Peace**. Wouldn't you?

With that, let us continue with my 100% inspired writings of the past. I am not claiming that my thinking is 100% right. I am only claiming that my thinking is 100% thinking. ***I may be right. I may be wrong; but whatever I am, because I am 100% of God, I am 100% inspired. You too!***

Thanks for letting me share with you - some of my thoughts. I appreciate it.

Gently,

Francis William Bessler

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May 4th, 2011

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EPILOG: *FRIEND OF ALL*

That will complete Volume 2 of 8 of my writings series. You may have noticed that in between features, I may have lacked some consistency regarding format, but hopefully I have been consistent where it counts – ***respect and gratitude for life***. Personally, I think those two character traits – if you want to call them that – allow for the greatest security in life as well as for the greatest happiness in life.

We all want security – both in this life and in any life that may follow. I think that most of us are driven by that idea in life – though, of course, we tend to differ in what we think may attain and maintain security.

It should be obvious from my writings that I find security of soul by embracing the great gift of life in as wholesome a manner as I can. I believe strongly that all life is equally sacred and that no life should be dismissed as less sacred than another life. That tends to make me a ***pacifist*** as opposed to a ***warrior***. I strongly believe that ***Jesus Christ*** was a ***pacifist*** in the same light that I am a ***pacifist***. ***His security and mine, I think, are based on the same idea – that life – all life – is sacred. If you really believe another is as sacred as you are, you cannot treat him or her as an enemy – even if he or she treats you as one.***

It is said that Jesus offered that when someone strikes us on the left cheek, we should turn to him our right cheek. I think that is only to say that our response to violence should not be returned violence – or we will be adopting violent behavior for ourselves in the process of defending ourselves. In essence, to strike at another – especially in some planned and intended way – is to become like that other, given that the other we attack has attacked us first. **In other words, by assaulting an enemy for having assaulted us, we become the assaulter. We become the enemy we despise.**

Be that as it may, this ***friend of all*** and ***enemy of none*** thanks you for joining me for this volume of my writings – and I invite you to come along for the rest as well.

See you next time!

Gently,

Francis William Bessler

May 4th, 2011

VOLUME 3:

1995 - 2004

(202 Pages)

Introduction

Onward! I continue with this compilation of my written works from 1963 to present – 2011. This volume covers works written from 1995 – 2004. Actually the two years of 1995-1996 are empty, so to speak. For some reason, I did not write anything in those two years. Not sure why. Maybe I was taking a writing siesta or something.

Beginning with 1997, however, I resumed writing to a fairly big extent. In that year, I tried to develop a concept or approach to learning about and living life that I defined as **Spiritual-Logical**.

Every now and then through my years of writing, I have tried to assign a label to a way of thinking. In the early 1980s, I came up with a label called *Divine Naturism* to apply, in general, to my evolved belief in life that **Nature must be Divine** because **God must be In it**. My thinking there is that if God is Infinite, then logically, that must mean that God is “without bounds”. That simply translates as “**everywhere**”. I was not aware – and am still not aware – of a better name to call my belief. I am a *Divine Naturist*. I do not think I am alone in that belief, but others are not aware of the name *Divine Naturism* because I coined it for myself. I do believe there are millions – if not billions – of *Divine Naturists* in the world because I think many have concluded to the same idea as I have. They just have not attached a label to their belief. Maybe, in time, others will hear about my label – *Divine Naturism* – and realize that the idea is also their own.

Anyway, I tried again in 1997 to coin a label that reflects an idea. The idea I wanted a label for this time reflects an approach to life that considers that the soul and body are equal and the soul only uses the physical it can see and feel and sense to express itself. It is strictly a positive approach, recognizing that if God is truly within everything that exists, then it is unlikely that God can be a person that can even deal with individual creations within It. That means that, in a way, God must be out of the picture in terms of each of us created things being able to find favor with God. If it is impossible that God can favor one thing over another – being in All equally – then our meaning should be decided – not in relation to God, but in relation to each other.

But if God is inside of us and has no need to dictate to us, how can we know how to act? That is where my term **spiritual-logical** comes in. We can know how to act by virtue of paying attention to our conduct and taking note of its consequences. If it hurts, don’t do it. If it is pleasing, then it is probably just fine. It is a “to each, his or her own,” of course, but spiritual-logical only means we can decide our own spiritual or soulful fates by taking responsibility for our own choices. Whatever seems “logical” to our minds, then, becomes the ideal course for our souls. We just have to take responsibility for caring for our souls and stop using either favor of God or threat from God as guide of conduct.

Accordingly, I devised a label to define that approach to learning about the so called “spiritual world”. That label is **Spiritual-Logical**. Perhaps someone can devise a better label for the process; but **Spiritual-Logical** only means **determining spiritual truths through logical means**. Look at the world about you. Observe conduct within it. Notice how that conduct plays out in the life we can see – and you can be reasonably sure

that it is the same in the so called, **spiritual world – or the world of the soul**. The assumption is that souls are equal to bodies and that souls only inform or dwell within bodies to express themselves. **We can find the answers we seek about the unseen – the spiritual - by looking at that which we can see – the physical. We can know the spiritual by dealing with the material because the spiritual is only an invisible manifestation of the material. That is what I mean by “spiritual-logical”.**

Anyway, in 1997, I wrote a series of essays commenting on looking at life in a **Spiritual-Logical** way. I wrote the essays for *Reader’s Digest*, but Reader’s Digest did not respond. I submitted 6 articles in 6 different months, hoping for some kind of response, but none was forthcoming. This volume, however, will begin with those 6 articles: 3 dealing with my “**spiritual-logical**” idea and the last 3 offering comments about **CRIME & CORRECTION** (16 Pages), **PARADISE ON EARTH** (9 Pages), and finally **THE SOLITARY WAY** (12 Pages).

Personally, I believe that Jesus was “spiritual-logical” in his approach to knowing about life too. In my essays, I offer my reason for believing that. So, I need not pursue the argument in this Introduction. For what it’s worth, though, the last “spiritual-logical” essay I wrote and am including in this volume is called **THE SPIRITUAL-LOGICAL CHRIST** (14 Pages).

This volume also features additional Jesus based articles – one that reviews what I think amounts to the terrible misuse of the crucifixion of Jesus and one which offers what the crucifixion of Jesus means to me. The one I called **THE AWFUL MISUSE OF THE CRUCIFIXION** (6 Pages) and the other I called **THE MEANING OF THE CRUCIFIXION FOR ME** (9 Pages). I wrote both of these in February of 2004.

Another prime idea I cover in this volume is the idea of “**Peace**” – and how “**Power**” relates to it. One can turn that around too. How does “Power” relate to “Peace”. **Personally, I believe the two are opposites and are mutually exclusive.** You can’t have Peace with Power; and you can’t have Power with Peace. Might sound a little strange, but I try to make the argument in this volume. Toward the end of this volume, I will comment on my ideas about Peace and Power through a couple of essays I wrote in 2004. One I called **CONFLICT IN THE WORLD** (3 Pages). Another was named **CHRISTIANITY AS I KNOW IT** (6 Pages); and the final one was called **PEACE WITHOUT POWER** (8 Pages).

I did not write any stories in this period, but I did write quite a few songs. So song will be scattered here and there. There is also an essay I call **A LITTLE ABOUT GOD** (5 Pages) that I wrote in 2001 and another about a mysterious spiral stairwell in the Loretto Chapel in Sante Fe, New Mexico – built by a mysterious anonymous artist in the 1870s. I call that essay **THE SPIRAL STAIRWAY OF SANTE FE** (11 Pages) – which I wrote in 2002.

During this period, my oldest sister, Dorothy, passed on January 9th, 2003 at the age of 74 and my Mom passed on May 16th, 2004 at the age of 96. I wrote a bit of a memorial to each on the day each of them passed – and those brief memorials are included in this volume.

The last feature I will mention in this Introduction is an essay I wrote in latter September of 2001 – shortly after the infamous destruction of the Twin Towers in New York – which happened on September 11th, 2001. I was shocked like everyone I know was shocked, but in suspecting that the Palestinian/Israeli issue was likely a big factor in

terms of being an issue on the part of the terrorists who executed the destruction, I decided to do a brief research of the Palestinian/Israeli conflict. The result was an essay I called **MODERN ISRAEL – REASONS FOR CONFLICT** (12 pages). You might be surprised what I found out. I know I was.

That ought to give you a mini look at some of the contents of this volume. I think it would be safe to say, there is a good bit of variety. In summary, numbers wise, this volume features 24 essays – ranging from 1 page to 16 pages – and also 24 songs – as it turns out. Is any of it food for thought? I will let you decide that. I do not pretend to know it all, but I think it is a safe assumption that no one does. Maybe my ideas are crazy – and maybe not; but whatever they are, I am willing to share them.

Enjoy the ride, Everyone!

Gently,

Your *Spiritual-Logical* Guide,

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May 16th, 2011

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EPILOG: *SPIRITUAL-LOGICALLY SPEAKING*

So, what do you think? Is a “spiritual-logical” approach to learning about and living life worth anything? In the **Gospel of Thomas**, Jesus said: ***Know what is in your sight; and what is hidden will be revealed to you.*** The emphasis is on “know” – not “believe” what another has told you – even one like Jesus. I do not think Jesus was one to have me believe something just because he said it – or offered it. If I read the **Gospel of Thomas** right, Jesus was into encouraging people to use their minds to know things for themselves; and it is in such a way one becomes a master in life.

I realize other gospel writers present a different Jesus – a “lord & savior” Jesus to whom we should look for his truth. I think it is good to keep in mind that is certainly one view of Jesus that should be appraised. Maybe that was the Jesus that really lived; but, on the other hand, maybe it was the **Jesus of Thomas & Mary** that really lived too. Did the powers of government and church have a right to ban views of Jesus they did not like in the 4th Century? Did those powers have a right to dictate only one view of Jesus – a Jesus of power and authority – and disallow any other view?

Personally, I am so grateful that a couple of wonderful friends told me about the **Gospel of Thomas** in 1979 when I was first introduced to that gospel. Before then, I had no idea such a gospel even existed. Only a few were aware of it in 1979 – and strangely only a few are still aware of it.

In my view, the importance of the **Gospel of Thomas** is humongous – not so much for what it might say, but far more for the tale it tells of what may have happened in the 4th Century to suppress people from being able to think for themselves. That is huge! Even if the **Gospel of Thomas** is totally fiction, it is not right that any authority has a right to ban it as if it is definitely fiction. And if it is not fiction, what then? By allowing any authority to ban it, you have allowed a banning of the truth.

I wonder where I would be today without the **Gospel of Thomas**. I was one who was so committed to Jesus that if I had not been introduced to “another Jesus,” I would have lost so much in life. Of course, I would not have lost everything; but being so dedicated as I was to the wonderful person of Jesus, I would not have been able to find what I think of as a **spiritual-logical** Jesus – as opposed to the only view I was allowed of Jesus before my introduction to a “new” Jesus: a **lord & savior** Jesus.

Would I have ever developed my idea of *Divine Naturism* without knowing about the **Gospel of Thomas**? I do not know. I may have; but I can tell you that with the **Gospel of Thomas**, I was able to go from a “thinker” to a “believer”. Lots of us can “think” about some issue, but it often takes hearing the same thing from another source to turn us into a “believer”.

In verse 113 of the **Gospel of Thomas**, Jesus was asked about when the great kingdom would come about. He answered: ***The Kingdom of the Father is spread upon the earth and men do not see it.*** I suspected that before being introduced to the **Gospel**

of Thomas, but hearing it put forth by another source helped me to see that maybe my suspicions about Heaven being everywhere and every time just might be true – and to hear it from the mouth of my favorite person in all the world – Jesus. Wow!

But that ought to tell you why the **Gospel of Thomas** was banned in the 4th Century by Emperor Constantine and agreeing bishops. Who in authority would want people to think they are already where they are supposed to be? Who in authority would want people to be satisfied with what they have? Who in authority would want even the suggestion that Heaven is already here? If Heaven is already here, then no one needs to do anything to “earn” Heaven elsewhere. If what we want for the future is already at hand, of what good is that idea to one who wants power?

In the **Gospel of Thomas**, Jesus said: *let him who has power renounce it!* How do you think that would go over to an emperor who depends on power to keep his kingdom in tact? And yet to one like me, it makes all the sense in the world. All I have to do is observe my fellow human beings and see what power does for any of them. Who among the powerful are free? Who among the powerful are as free as I am without any power at all? None! It makes sense then. I can see it played out on a constant basis when observing humanity. Those with power are strangely without freedom. Little do they know why they are not free; but the truth is they are not free.

Each of us must decide for him or herself if he or she wants to be free, though. Some, I guess do not want freedom and feel so much more secure if they can hide within the coattails of another who has power. But oh how revealing the **Gospel of Thomas** is in regard to suggesting that one who many are counting on for his “coattails” may have never promised any such thing in his life. *Not thinking for yourself can be a very dangerous thing!*

Well, Friends, that will do it for the 3rd volume of my 8 volume set of **OUT IN THE OPEN**. It is a wonderful life we have – not that I have, but “we” have. When I think of my heart beating, I am overwhelmed with joy. I was telling a friend at a coffee chat this morning that I am so amazed that for 69 years my heart has been beating so wonderfully well. What a miracle! Unbelievable Miracle! That’s Life! And how many take a moment of their day to think about it? How many are much more concerned about some power they do not have and think they deserve?

Me? I realize like Jesus offered so long ago – **any who want true freedom better renounce power**. Power is like a millstone around one’s neck. It constrains. It does not free. So when you dream about having some great power with Jesus or whomever at some future time, you better be careful about what you dream. **You may get your wish.**

See you next time – for Volume 4 of my **OUT IN THE OPEN** series. I hope you will choose to join me. It will only be for a single year, though – 2005. Like this volume spanned about 10 years, the next volume will contain only a single year. Guess I wrote quite a bit – volume wise – in 2005.

I must admit I had a great time writing in that year. I began the year writing a bit of a story that I called **ALL’S WELL WITH THE WORLD**. I can’t wait to read that one again – and while reading it, passing it along in this series. Also, I am mindful of a series of essays I wrote about life – including my favorite person, Jesus.

In 2004, I stumbled upon another of those gospels that were banned in the 4th Century – this time one called the **Gospel of Mary (Magdalene)**. Again, the likes of a

Constantine would not like it because it does not appeal to the powerful; but how appealing it is to us non-power ones. Sorry, Constantine! You should have never banned this one because by banning it, you only became even more entrenched in power and became so much less free. Of course, the **Gospel of Mary** may really lack any true authenticity. Maybe Mary did not really write it and maybe it is all nonsense; but **spiritual-logically**, it seems really right to me – at least one verse of it does.

The **Gospel of Mary** is really brief. It contains only 6 verses and 5 of those deal with “visions” that Mary had of Jesus after “Jesus left” them. I am not much of one for what someone sees in a vision. I am much more interested in what one may have said in life. Only one verse of the **Gospel of Mary** deals with what Jesus supposedly offered in life. So it is only one verse of that one in which I am interested.

In that gospel, Jesus offers that we should *look for the child of humanity within us*. Given that phrase, **child of humanity**, I named that series of essays I wrote in 2005 by that name – **child of humanity**. If you choose to join me, you can look forward to something I called (and call, of course) my **CHILD OF HUMANITY** series.

See you then!

Gently,

Francis William Bessler,
Powerless & Free!
May 16th, 2011

VOLUME 4:

2005

(214 Pages)

Introduction

ALL'S WELL WITH THE WORLD! That was one of the works I wrote in 2005 – which is the span of time this volume covers. Like the previous volume (Volume 3) included several years of written works (1995-2004), this volume features works for only one year – 2005. The next volume – Volume 5 – will also feature works for only one year – 2006. 2005 was a very active year for me – writing wise, though. That is why it requires one volume all by itself.

Actually, it could be said that it took me 30 years to write the entry I call ***ALL'S WELL WITH THE WORLD***. I wrote Part 1 of it in the mid 1970s – and even printed a thousand copies of it. I called that one ***NEVER BE ASHAMED TO LOVE***. It was about a young married couple, David & Belinda, who decided to set aside an entire weekend to speculate about life and try to make intellectual sense of it – that is, without any so called, scriptural, input. They did OK, but I left them somewhat in a lurch, not certain of where they should go from their weekend. I was a bit unhappy with my ending of that story for leaving my characters in a lurch. So I never did anything with it, even after printing a thousand copies of it.

In 2005, I rewrote ***NEVER BE ASHAMED TO LOVE*** as Part 1 of a new story, however, – ***ALL'S WELL WITH THE WORLD*** - changing the characters of David & Belinda to Tom & Molly – and having them go forward in life to exercise the virtues that were decided upon in ***NEVER BE ASHAMED TO LOVE***. Part 2 of ***ALL'S WELL WITH THE WORLD*** features Tom & Molly dealing with friends and neighbors, exercising the prime virtue they decided upon in Part 1 – a shameless acceptance and embrace of life because in all likelihood, it is Divine. It, Life, is likely Divine because it is likely that God, being Infinite, must be *IN* it, not outside of it as so much of religion dictates. The ideal world in which Tom & Molly live may only appeal to a few, but I am one of the number; and you might be too. If so, I'm glad I can share the story.

Tom & Molly, David & Belinda – that's what this volume is all about, I guess. Essentially, they – like me, of course – believe that seeing evil is the basis of doing evil. For Tom & Molly and David & Belinda – there is no evil in life – except that we see evil in others and then go forward dealing with them as evil – or unwanted or abusive or imprisoning or whatever. **The key to the good life is to look at life for what it is – essentially good – and pay little attention to what people do with their lives.** It is life itself that is the wonder of our lives – and that is what we should attend – not get sidetracked by always reacting to what others are doing. Well, that's a way of putting it; but I will let Tom & Molly tell their own story below.

One person that Tom & Molly love is Jesus; but they are intent on explaining Jesus philosophically – not relying totally on stories told about him. Most of those who told stories about Jesus in the regular gospels of the **BIBLE** were guilty of “**seeing evil**” in the world and needing a messiah to resolve that evil – and thus, they could not but relate to Jesus within that narrow scope of vision. **I think the key to understanding Jesus is to remove him from the quagmire of history and listen to him through his parables – or his teachings – thus removing consideration of him from those who saw life as**

evil. Peter and Paul and all the gospel writers of the **BIBLE** were likely blinded by their vision of evil or seeing evil – thus almost completely missing the beauty of life itself; but as Peter and Paul and their cohorts started the traditional sense of Jesus, **which I believe is wrong**, almost all of tradition has followed their blind-sided view of life – and, of course, Jesus.

In several works, this volume will be taking a **hard look** at Jesus – both from my point of view of seeing no evil and from others viewpoint of seeing evil. Two works of note in that regard are one I call **CHILD OF HUMANITY SERIES** and another I call **KNOWING CHRIST**. Needless to say, if you choose to review the issue of Jesus as I discuss it in these works and a few others, you are in for a whole new look at Jesus.

Did Jesus “see evil” in the world? I do not think so. In fact, I think that his main message was that we should look for something else in life other than some imagined or real evil. Evil does exist, yes, but evil does not. There is no “**realm of evil**” headed by the fictitious commander some call “**Satan**” because there is only a “**realm of good**” – given that whatever exists is filled with God.

In one of my favorite non-traditional gospels, **THE GOSPEL OF MARY MAGDALENE**, Jesus counsels us to **look for the Child of Humanity within us** to find and know peace. Don’t be distracted by looking for the negative. Be virtuous by looking for the positive – in this case, the **Child of Humanity within us**. It is because of that counsel of Mary’s work that we should look for the **Child of Humanity within us** that one of my series in this volume was called **CHILD OF HUMANITY SERIES**. If you are unaware of my **Child of Humanity** source – **THE GOSPEL OF MARY MAGDALENE** – I will offer some clarification within my series of essays by the title: **CHILD OF HUMANITY SERIES**.

Well, Folks, that does not tell you a lot about the contents of this volume; but it should give you a bit of a glimpse. Enjoy it as you can and will, keeping in mind that there are always two sides to every story. Also, please keep in mind that I am basically a “**speculator**” in life. My opinions are my own, but my opinions are opinions – not fact. Please regard them as such. OK?

Again, Enjoy the ride, Everyone!

Gently,

Your non-traditional Jesus guide,

Francis William Bessler

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May 28th, 2011

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EPILOG:

KNOWING LIFE

May 27th, 2011

When I was a kid, I was under the tutelage or supervision of others. Those others saw life much different than I see it today. For the most part, my “instructors” believed that life as it is on this Earth is much less than what it should be. There is another existence someplace else, however, where life is the way it should be. They called this other place “**Heaven**”. I was instructed that to get to this Heaven, I had to prove obedience to the caretakers of this Heaven. I could get to this wonderful place, but only if I were to “obey” the commands of the leaders of this place.

I must admit that I believed that others knew of some other place they call Heaven for a long time in life, but that was before I opened my eyes and saw no proof that Life is not great on this Earth. ***If my instructors were wrong that life is lacking here on Earth, then it is likely they are wrong about there being a better place elsewhere.*** Call it a **matter of credibility**. Indeed, there may be other expressions of life elsewhere that are as good as the expression of life here on Earth, but I doubt that life is any better than it is here. At least, there is no evidence of it that I can see.

There is plenty of evidence, however, that people tend to want what they do not have. I know I am guilty of it; and I know of no one who is not “guilty” of it. **We all want what we do not have.** Realistically, that is the basis of the predictions of a better life someplace else. Some have simply become convinced that what they want is true – even if it is in another life. **In wanting something to be true, they have merely crossed the line and “predicted” that what they want will come true.**

It is a way to go alright – to live your life based on wanting something you do not have; but I don’t think it is the wisest way to live life. ***I think the wiser course is to be grateful for what you do have and consider life itself a fantastic gift.*** I know I am much happier when I’m aware of my blessings than when I am looking forward to some blessings I might have – and I do not think I am any different than anyone else.

Some were led to believe that May 21st, 2011 – just a few days ago as I write this – was going to be the last day of life on this Earth. The Earth was to be consumed in some conflagration, but those living who would qualify for this Heaven someplace else were to be “raptured” and taken off to this Heaven without having to perish with the others. A preacher of the age of 89 predicted it, based on his reading of some scripture; but why did this guy predict such a thing? I think it is because he first “**wanted**” such a thing. He turned out to be wrong, but how much of his life has he wasted prior to May 21st wanting something that was not in store to happen? ***I think it just goes to show that living your life wanting something and not being grateful for what you have is a very unwise way to go.***

There should be a lesson in that for all of us, though. Never mind offering that this preacher of 89 was goofy. Mind instead that we should not follow his lead. Look at the real evidence before us. ***Look at the life we have and be amazed.*** Don’t pine about what we think we may be missing, but embrace that which we are. Doesn’t that seem to be the

better way? Otherwise, like the 89 year old preacher wanting & expecting a rapture in the future, we may prance through Paradise, thinking it is Hell, and miss many of the wonders of a true *Heaven at hand*.

Well, that will do it for Volume 4 of my *OUT IN THE OPEN* writings series. I hope you are enjoying the ride somewhat, keeping in mind that everything I write is opinion. I enjoy thinking, but my thinking does not have to be that of another. You think – and share what you think; and I will do the same. But it is oh so wrong for me to think and then demand that you obey what I think. *Let us respect one another for our thoughts, but never use thought to keep another from thinking for him or herself.*

Join me for Volume 5 if you like. Like Volume 4 contained only one year – 2005 – Volume 5 will also contain one year – 2006. I wrote a lot in that year – and so I will limit another volume to just one year. Volume wise, however, I did not write near as much in 2006 that I did in 2005. Expect about half as much. OK?

As we all know now, life on this wonderful planet of ours did not end on May 21st – as one distracted human predicted. It is likely to continue for a long time to come; and as long as it does for me, if I am wise, I will say thank you for the grand gift. I am not making my life. It is not for me to judge it or discredit it in any way. It is only for me to be aware of my wonderful life – and to say *THANK YOU* for my blessings.

Bye for now!

Your rather untraditional Jesus guide,

Francis William Bessler

May 27th, 2011

VOLUME 5:

2006

(108 Pages)

Introduction

Welcome to my 5th volume (of 8) of my *OUT IN THE OPEN* writings series. I will be presenting works that I wrote in 2006 in this volume. It was quite a year for me – writings wise. I hope you enjoy at least some of it; though I would not expect anyone will enjoy all of it.

It's OK to pick and choose. I certainly do it – and have done it most of my life. Be a **discerning reader** – one that loves to disagree with some that seems implausible and loves to agree with that which seems more in tune with one's own thinking. If I had not been of the discerning type, I could never have paved the path I have in life. Being willing to disagree is absolutely essential, I think, to search for the truth.

And I do continue my own “**search for the truth**” in this volume. Again, **Jesus** is a principal focus. One of the main features of this volume is one I call **THE NON-JUDAIC JESUS**. Some may appreciate that effort; and some of you may not; but I will let each of you decide who is who. My main sources for my “non-Judaic” Jesus are two gospels banned by the Christianity of the times in the 4th Century. Those two gospels are *THE GOSPEL OF THOMAS* and *THE GOSPEL OF MARY (MAGDALENE)*. Many of you will agree with the Church of the 4th Century that those gospels deserved to be banned; and some of you will probably enjoy an alternate version of Jesus. Just be prepared for a different kind of ride.

In brief, that which I consider to be a “non-Judaic” Jesus is a Jesus that did not live to complete Judaism in particular, but to offer humanity in general a “new vision”. In my works in this volume, I will discuss that “new vision” Jesus – offering verses of banned gospels to define him. I think it is really good to keep in mind that just because an idea has been banned in the past does not mean it had – and has – no validity.

One of my favorite topics in life is the **Infinity of God**. Personally, more than any notion, that notion of the Infinity of God has set me free in this life. I consider it of the utmost importance. Look for me to offer my reasons for that in a couple of brief essays: one called **PONDERING THE INFINITE** and another called **IN THE MIDDLE OF DIVINITY**. Hopefully, both little discussions will offer some food for thought.

Also, be prepared for a new look at the first book of the **BIBLE: Genesis**. In the final essay of this volume, I examine the Adam & Eve of that work – from a standpoint of reason, not from a standpoint of tradition. I call that one **STATE OF GRACE** and in it, I even offer a song about a “new Adam & Eve”. Just leave out the “new” – and you have the title of my song – **Adam & Eve**. Again, some of you may like my Adam & Eve; and some of you may find my vision quite unacceptable. Hooray for everyone! **Remember – I applaud disagreement. It is the very foundation of true research.**

And finally, in the aforementioned **STATE OF GRACE**, not only do I offer a “new **Adam & Eve**,” but I offer a discussion about “**theists**” too.

As you may have noticed if you have reviewed the previous volumes, on occasion, I have devised a new name for perhaps an old idea. The idea that God is **IN** Nature is not new, for instance, but my name – *Divine Naturist* - for one who believes in that idea is new. Likewise, the idea that we can know the spiritual by the physical is not new, but my

name for that approach - *Spiritual-Logical* - is new. New names for old ideas, I think, can be quite useful if they clarify the ideas they represent. Whether my names clarify the ideas they represent remains to be seen; but you can't say I have not tried. Can you?

Along the same line, in my essay I call **STATE OF GRACE**, I decided that a distinction among "**theists**" is really in order. Traditionally, one is either a "**theist**" or an "**atheist**," but I know of no one who has offered to distinguish between the main types of **theists**. An "**atheist**" is one who does not believe in God and a "**theist**" is one who does believe in God; however, I think there are really two kinds of "**believers in God**". One believes that God is "**outside**" of Creation – and us; and one believes that God is "**inside**" of Creation – and us. I think that distinction is really critical in dealing with life. How we see God is extremely important. One who sees God as "**only external**" is bound to have a different perception of life than one who sees God as truly "**omnipresent**" or "**in**" all things.

Thus, in **STATE OF GRACE**, I discuss the issue and name the "**theist**" that believes that God is "**outside**" of us as an "**otheist**" and the one – like me – who believes that God is "**inside**" of us as an "**intheist**". An "**atheist**," of course, remains as he or she was – one who does not believe in God at all. I find the distinction quite useful. Perhaps you will too. If you are a **theist**, which are you – **otheist** or *intheist*?

That's good for a glimpse of this volume. See the Index for a full list of contents. Enjoy my various "**little discussions**" as you wish. I am delighted to share them. Lots of song in this volume too, but I did not write any stories in this period, however, the next volume will contain one of those. Join me then for that, if you wish; and keep in mind, I pride myself on being a *speculator*. My ideas are only personal opinion. Please make nothing more of them than that. OK? I will begin with an offering of **MY WORLD**.

As Usual, Enjoy the ride, Everyone!

Gently,

Your "**Intheist**" "**non-Judaic Jesus**" guide,

Francis William Bessler

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June 4th, 2011

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EPILOG: GENESIS NOW!

Well, Folks, how did you like my “redefinition” of **Genesis**? What do you think of “my” **Adam & Eve**? It is extremely important, however, that I not impose my Adam & Eve on you anymore than you should be allowed to impose your Adam & Eve on me. Essentially, however, it should be up to me to define my own **Genesis** – and it should be up to you to define your **Genesis**. Neither of us should allow another to do that for us.

It took me a good long time in life to realize that “**Genesis**” only stands for “**Beginning**”. That really means that any chosen “**beginning**” can be considered a “**genesis**”. Every day can represent a “**new genesis**” if we wish it so. Life has taught me that I can choose to retain old values or I can let old values slip by; but I should be free to make whatever choice I make. I may very well want to retain old standards – and then again, I may choose to see old standards as irrelevant and lacking in ideal.

In my case, I have come to see the overall vision offered in the **Genesis** of the **BIBLE** as impossible. What vision is that? **It is the overall vision that offers that God can expel anything from His or Her or Its Presence.** That vision that allows expulsion by God is not my vision of life. My vision is that God is Infinite – and therefore everywhere, making everything Divine. How can something that is everywhere expel anything from its presence?

The original author of the **Genesis** of the **BIBLE**, however, did not have a view of an “**infinite God**”. His God was one that can be located in one place and not another. His God was one that could invite into his presence and expel from his presence at will. His God was one that could declare that an Eden cannot exist everywhere. His God was one who could choose one over another. When his **Adam & Eve** were created, they were established in some kind of **LIMITED “home of God”** he called “**Eden**” and when his Adam & Eve earned banishment from that home, they were expelled from Eden.

That is an easy vision to have if your God is not infinite. You can devise a God who can expel you from his presence because that God is not everywhere, but if your vision of God is that God must be everywhere and in everything, there can be no room for expulsion.

The original author of the **Genesis** of the **BIBLE** had a right, though, to offer an idea of one he considered to be God. I think his ignorance of the idea of infinity doomed his thinking to failure, but I do think he had a right to think within the limits of his own capacity of the time. Likewise, each of us has a right to think within the limits of our own capacity. **Where we have gone so wrong in the human race is that we have allowed one steeped in relative ignorance to define life for all of us.**

In all fairness to the original author of **Genesis**, however, he may not have intended his tale to be used to create dogma. The original author may have written a few pages offering a bit of a tale of creation – though erroneous – and did not expect that tale to go beyond a certain limited circle. Who knows about that? None of us know how the book we now know as **Genesis** evolved. None of us know who added his own story to an original story.

But let me get back on track. A story – be it an original complete one or an evolved one over time – should never be allowed to dictate a common vision. No writer has that right – or group of writers. Each of us should take the responsibility in life to think for ourselves. In that, each of us has a right to decide our own **Genesis**. Why? Because **Genesis** only represents a “beginning”. Every day can be a new beginning. Thus, every day can represent a “new genesis”.

Think of yourself as Adam – if you are a man. Put yourself in his place and ask yourself what you would do if you were he. ***Then go out and do it.*** I think I have long realized that such is the case. ***I am really Adam*** – and I have the same right that some so called original Adam may have had. ***I have a right to choose*** – just like the original Adam; but that says in itself that I do not have to choose as the original Adam did. ***I can choose anew!***

Think of yourself as Eve – if you are a lady. Put yourself in her place and ask yourself what you would do if you were she. ***Then go out and do it.*** ***You are really Eve*** and you have the same right that some original Eve may have had. ***You have a right to choose*** – just like the original Eve; but again, that says in itself that you do not have to choose as the original Eve did. ***You can choose anew!***

Well, Friends, that will do it for another volume of my ***OUT IN THE OPEN*** writings series. As I so often say, I write to learn – not to dictate. In that, when I read something I have written, I am like my own student. I am “relearning” in some cases, but also “realizing” error in other cases. I must admit, though, that if some writing is really bad upon review, it goes in the waste basket. I used to fill a lot of waste baskets, but not so much anymore. Still, the right to fill a waste basket is a very precious right indeed – while I find my way as ***my own Adam***, maybe looking for a ***new Eve***, but knowing that it is all ***Eden*** – from here in Laramie, Wyoming to out there among the stars! ***Wherever I am, Eden is – because my God cannot expel me!***

See you next time!

Francis William Bessler
June 3rd, 2011

VOLUME 6:

2007 - 2008

(102 Pages)

Introduction

Welcome to my 6th volume (of 8) of my *OUT IN THE OPEN* writings series. I will be presenting works that I wrote in 2007 & 2008 in this volume. Volume 7 will feature writings from 2009 – 2011. Volume 8 will feature all of my songs in alphabetical order. Currently as of June 10th, 2011, that is 139 songs; however I do intend on writing one more that will complete Volume 7. I plan on calling my 140th song: *Life Is A Gift*.

One of my personal favorite topics of this volume is a short story that I call *PEACE ON EARTH*. It is a very quiet story about a grandfather, age of 60, and a granddaughter, age of 17, who discuss the issue of peace in the world on Grandpa's front porch. After the little story – only 16 pages long – I include a song I wrote by the same name – *Peace On Earth*. I do love the idea of peace so much that I decided to write a little story that would feature characters discussing it. Of course, if you know me, you know that I believe the real Jesus to be a true champion of peace. So you can bet that my grandfather and granddaughter will include Jesus in their discussion. I chose a grandfather and his granddaughter, but it could have been between any two – or three or four or more – who are interested in talking about it. It's mostly talk and very little action. If you can't handle that, you may want to skip it. Grandpa and his granddaughter are Naturalists like their author, however. So that might add a little to the tale. I will leave it at that.

Actually, I wrote 2 short stories in 2007 and planned to include both of them in Volume 6; but upon reviewing the first short story - *LARAMIE MOUNTAIN* - I was not pleased. Then I recalled that I had not been pleased with it in 2007 either. In fact, it was because I was displeased with *LARAMIE MOUNTAIN* after writing it 2007 that I decided I better try again.

Upon reviewing my earlier *LARAMIE MOUNTAIN*, I did not like it because it was too much of an essay and not enough of a story – too much of one man “commenting” on the beauty of life while on a little mountain range outside of Laramie, Wyoming – and almost no story at all. My youngest daughter, Melissa, would have called it boring. **Boring, Dad, Boring!** I could hear her saying that because I was saying that. So I decided to change the scene and take a character I had called **Donald** from *LARAMIE MOUNTAIN* and replace him as *Grampa* on a front porch. Then I added a *granddaughter* to converse with *Grampa*. The result may not be scintillating because it is still very philosophical in mode, but I sure like my subsequent *PEACE ON EARTH* a whole lot better than the original. In retrospect, I am so glad I did not stay with *LARAMIE MOUNTAIN*. I am glad I wrote it, though, because if I had not written it, I would have never decided I could do better; and *PEACE ON EARTH* - which does please me - would have never been written. Thank you, *LARAMIE MOUNTAIN*!

Though I do not mind being called a *nudist* – like Grampa and his granddaughter – I do not think of myself as one. I do not see the naked as being without clothes as much as I see it being or going **with Nature**. I offer a little commentary about that idea in a brief essay I call *THE NAKED & THE NATURAL*. That one is also concluded with a song, namely one called: *Dancing Among The Stars*.

Then there is a brief essay I call **MY GALAXY GOD** – comparing God with a Galaxy in terms of both of them being Immense. In my mind, a galaxy is “almost infinite” and God is infinite. You might enjoy the comparison. I conclude this one with a song too – one I call *Galaxy View of Life*.

Another entry I might recommend in this volume is an essay called **THIS ACCIDENT CALLED SOCIETY**. Maybe I should have called it **THIS ACCIDENT CALLED CIVILIZATION**, but regardless of name, it offers that any society and all societies are really arbitrary in nature. Good or bad, they are arbitrary – meaning there is nothing essential about them. What’s the point of such an argument? It’s only that people can change their societies or civilizations if they choose to do so. Since they are basically “accidental,” there is nothing permanent about them. I guess I am only trying to put change in a positive light. Realizing that any given society – or civilization – is only “accidental,” it should make changing course – should a society choose to do so – a bit easier – even if any chosen society is comprised of only a few. It seems most of my essays of this period concluded with a song. The song I wrote for this one I call *This Accident Called Sin Society*.

One of my favorite contributions from the regular gospels of the **BIBLE** is *The Lord’s Prayer*. One of the offerings of this volume is a little essay on why I love *The Lord’s Prayer* so much. I admit to being more of a *Thomas & Mary Christian* than a “**BIBLE “ Christian**, so to speak, but I like wisdom where I find it; and I find tremendous wisdom in *The Lord’s Prayer* found in one of the gospels of the **BIBLE**. Thus I offer comment about that in an essay I call **A MASTER’S PRAYER**. After my comments, I offer a personal rendition of *The Lord’s Prayer* in a little prayer I call by the same name as that of my essay – *A Master’s Prayer*.

I have long been amazed at what I see as our sticking with outmoded doctrine. By that I mean doctrine that was declared based on assumptions that have been demonstrated in time as untrue – like the Earth being flat. Don’t look now, but almost all of the ancient Judaic doctrine can be traced to an assumption that the Earth is flat; and much traditional doctrine in general retains doctrines based on false assumptions. Well, anyway, that is how I see it and discuss it a little in a 9 page essay I called – and call – **FLAT WORLD DOCTRINES IN A ROUND WORLD**. I sum up my thoughts on the issue, however, in a song I wrote called *Living In A Round World*. Food for thought? Maybe!

Finally, in terms of personal preferences, there is a little essay I call **BELLA VITA**. Like my essay will tell you, it is only Italian for “*Beautiful Life*” or “*Life is Beautiful*”. I like the idea so much that I attached little “*Bella Vita*” decals on my car. Every now and then someone will catch my attention and smile at me or give me a thumbs up when they see one of decals. I must say that such reaction pleases me. I attached the decals to remind me of the beauty of life; and it pretty much works. I am constantly reminded of how I feel about life and its wonderful bounty every time I get into my car – or even approach it. There it is to remind me of what I believe so strongly – **BELLA VITA! LIFE IS BEAUTIFUL BECAUSE GOD IS IN IT!** That’s what my decals say – and that is what this little essay says too. It’s only 5 pages long and it ends with a song by the same title – *Bella Vita*. I hope it pleases somewhat.

Speaking of song, there is quite a bit of that in this volume. Guess I was in a song writing mood in 2007 and 2008 because I wrote 26 songs in this period. Some are

serious minded; and others are of lighter character; but all of them try to address what I think is the truth.

Those are a few of the highlights, as it were. See the following Index for a complete summary of what is in this volume.

So from the first entry – a song called *The Mystery of God* – to the last entry before a final Epilog – a song called *It's A Lovely Day Today*, I hope you enjoy this volume somewhat. Like always, I'd like to remind you that it is **all speculation and personal opinion**. Like you, I am just trying to do the best I can with this wonderful gift of life. **Enjoy my offering as you can – and wish. OK!**

Gently,

Your Bella Vita Guide,

Francis William Bessler

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June 10th, 2011

Note: My short story LARAMIE MOUNTAIN (40 pages) is available by itself if desired. I am just not including it in this volume because I do believe my subsequent story PEACE ON EARTH (16 pages) is better written – and it covers much the same philosophical/spiritual territory as does the longer LARAMIE MOUNTAIN.

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EPILOG:

HISTORICAL DISADVANTAGE

I am back to my grandfather and his granddaughter sitting on Grampa's front porch – naked in the eyes of the world, but natural in their own eyes. Perspective is so important in any of our lives – and I think it is essential to follow your own heart and define yourself as you wish. Ignore tradition to do that – that is if you are Grampa or his granddaughter – or me.

I can see Grampa sitting on his porch with nothing but a glass of water in his hand. Can't you? Who would you say is richer than he? Who would you think is more secure than he? Who do you think has more real advantage in life?

That idea was brought home to me this last Sunday when the **60 MINUTES CBS** television program was reporting how Jews are trying to move into a sector of Jerusalem that has heretofore been more populated by Palestinians. Jews (or at least some of them) believe that all of Jerusalem belongs to them because of ancient spiritual heritage. The Palestinians – who have been in Israel for hundreds of years – resent that “their” home is being marked for possession by someone else.

And what is the foundation of all this bitter feuding? An “**historical disadvantage**” – to say the least. Both Jews and Palestinians are captive of a tremendous “historical disadvantage”. They have belonged to various traditions and have considered those traditions to be even superior to each of them as individuals. **What would they think of Grampa sitting naked on his front porch and having no ties that bind – and “possessing” all of the world?**

It works that way, you know. The less one owns outside of himself – or herself, if you are a lady – the more spiritually one does own. That is, if you are aware of your poverty in real estate and aware of your spiritual truth. **Tradition can be owned like anything else; and it can enslave one just like anything that one owns can enslave them.**

Who am I? I am a **Jew**. Who am I? I am a **Palestinian**. Who am I? I am a **Christian**. Who am I? I am a **Moslem**. Who am I? I am an **American**. Who defines himself – or herself – like Grampa defines himself? Who am I? **I am a Son of God & Nature and a Child of the Light.**

Don't get me wrong. I am proud to be an **American**, but I am far more proud of being an **Earthling**. I am proud to be a **Bessler**, but I am far more proud of simply being **Human**. It is not smart of me to either let my **Bessler family ties** or my **American national ties** distract me from just being me. I love my family, but they know that I won't let that love keep me from being me.

To each, his or her own, though. It is not for me to tell a **Jew** to love himself more than his heritage. It is not for me to tell a **Palestinian** to love himself more than his home. It is not for me to tell an **American** to lay down his arms. ***It is only for me to tell myself to do what I think is proper for a gentleman of the Natural Order.***

Well, Friends, that will do it for another volume of my ***OUT IN THE OPEN*** writings series. I have been learning a lot, but I suppose that is mostly because I learned

most of this stuff earlier in life – back when I was writing it. In this case, that wasn't very long ago. It is not like 2007 was ages ago, but in some ways it seems so. I think that is because 1941 is more like the time I was actually writing it than 2007. It was in 1941 that I was born – and in looking back I have not changed much. I guess I have always regarded tradition to be far less important than just being human. **It's just that it has taken a lifetime to tell me what I knew as a child.**

I think that just goes to show how tradition can hamper more than help. I suppose we are all born free of restraint on our souls, but for some of us the minute we break lose of our Mama's womb, we are greeted by those intent on making us one of their own; ***and then it can be a fight for the rest of life to get back to the womb.***

Speaking of "getting back," in my final main volume, I will be getting back to the love of my life – **Jesus** – in a big way. It might come across as arrogant, but I have long believed that Jesus was not understood in his time and that misunderstanding was passed along for a lack of understanding. I think the reason for that is because of that damned thing that hampers so many – tradition. ***People love their tradition so much that they often neglect to see a real person by insisting on fitting that person within their treasured tradition.*** I have no doubt that Peter loved Jesus – but in his way, not in the way of his friend, Jesus.

If we did not have alternate gospels about Jesus, I could not have imagined that Jesus may have been reported wrongly by some of his friends who ended as writers in the **BIBLE**. Thanks to some kind of good fortune, though, we do have access to some alternate gospels – alleged to have been written by the **Apostles, Thomas and Mary Magdalene**.

Thus, in my final main volume, I will be taking a **HUGE look at Jesus** via the eyes of **Thomas & Mary**. One More Time! More song is coming too. I wrote a lot of song in this last period of writings to be included in my **OUT IN THE OPEN** series; and as mentioned in the Introduction, I am planning on one more – ***Life Is A Gift – and Not a loan.*** I may write an accompanying essay on that theme too. I have not decided about that just yet, but expect a song for sure because I know a song is coming. I wrote it today. Here is a glimpse at the **REFRAIN** of my "last" song:

***Life is a gift, My Friend.
There's no need to moan.
At least in my opinion, that is so.
I like to treat my wonderful body
that my soul does own
like it's a gift from God & Love –
and not a loan.***

Join me if you will; and Thanks for the time we've spent so far!

Gently,

Francis William Bessler

Laramie, Wyoming, U.S.A.

June 9th, 2011

VOLUME 7:

2009 - 2011

(188 Pages)

Introduction

Welcome to my 7th volume (of 8) of my *OUT IN THE OPEN* writings series. I will be presenting works that I wrote from 2009 through June of 2011 in this volume. Previous volumes featured works from varying spans of time – starting with Volume 1 which featured works from 1963 – 1984. Volume 2 covered the span of time from 1985 – 1994. Volume 3 featured works from 1995 – 2004. Volume 4 featured works from 2005. Volume 5 featured works from 2006. Volume 6 featured a two year span of 2007 & 2008. Now, this volume will complete the “**main**” series of volumes which feature all works written in a given period – including song, essay, and story. Again, the span of time for this volume is 2009 – 2011. One more volume will remain after this one – Volume 8 – which will feature only all of my songs (140 in number) in alphabetical order. So far, songs have been presented in the order in which they have been written – like all of the works in the previous volumes. This final “**main**” volume will do the same – present works in the order in which they were written.

This final “**main**” volume will be featuring quite a few works centering on the person of **Jesus - but without Satan**. You heard right – **without Satan** – or without a consideration of Satan. Let me explain.

It is perhaps a bit of a strange journey that I have taken in life, but I started out with a **faith of Satan** – not a **faith in Satan** – but a **faith of Satan**. That is to say that I believed that Satan exists – just as my traditional faith (Catholicism) taught me. In that light, I fit Jesus into a picture that saw him in battle with Satan. Again, I did that because that is what I was taught. There was this **foe of God** named **Satan** who basically opposed God. Part of that opposition ended in Satan “stealing” humankind from God. Jesus came into the picture as one from God who came to Earth to restore humankind to God – of course from the terrible hands of this one called Satan.

In time, however, I would come to believe that God can have no opposition because it is impossible that Infinity – which God is – could lose anything. If God cannot lose anything, then nothing can steal from God. If nothing can be stolen from God, then presto, **it is pure myth that one called Satan could even exist**.

Now what’s a guy to do with Jesus once he has “*thrown Satan out the door*”? Perhaps you can sense a bit of a predicament or dilemma that I faced earlier in life when I gave up a **faith of Satan**. **Did I have to throw Jesus out too?** It would seem so. If Jesus existed to **battle Satan**, but there is no Satan, **what does one do with Jesus?**

I must admit I found myself in quite a quandary. In 1973 – at the age of 31, I left the Church that taught that Satan is a real foe. I drifted without a religious home for a few years; and then in 1979, some friends turned me on to what I have come to believe is a **whole new Jesus** – one that may have found himself challenging the entire concept of Satan too. It was in 1979 that friends introduced me to an alternate gospel called **THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO THOMAS**. Now I had another story of Jesus that might aid me in **putting Christ in Perspective without a Satan**. Impossible, you say? Maybe! And then again, Maybe not too.

Without getting into much detail, before Emperor Constantine came to power in the 4th Century, there were quite a few different gospels about Jesus in the world. When Constantine made Christianity the state religion, he empowered the bishops of his “new church” to settle on a canon of books that would be included in what would become known as the **BIBLE**. Sadly, those books that were not chosen for the new **BIBLE** were supposed to be – not only banned – but destroyed. Many of the banned books were destroyed, but some survived too.

In 1945, a peasant stumbled on a big jar in a cave off the Nile River in Egypt. Out tumbled many ancient manuscripts – one of which was the aforementioned **THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO THOMAS**. It is speculated by experts that the “Thomas” of reference is none other than Thomas, one of the 12 Apostles of Jesus. It may or may not be so, but regardless of who the Thomas of reference is, at least one of the gospels banned by Constantine and his bishops has become known once again; and we can delight in taking a look – that is, those of us so inclined to do so.

In previous volumes, I have referred somewhat to the **Jesus without a Satan**, though I don’t think I have put it that way. Consider yourself in for a more in depth look at the issue of **Jesus without Satan** in this final main volume. I will begin my journey with a song I wrote in mid January of 2009 called **Sense of Belonging**. Then will come the first of a number of **Jesus without a Satan** essays. I wrote a 13 page essay called **THE MYSTERY OF JESUS** in later January of 2009. We will begin our search of a Jesus without a Satan in that one – though I do not define it as such.

Then it’s time to put the alleged foe – **Satan** – in true perspective. That is really needed if our **new Jesus** can no longer be defined in light of a Satan. Right? So I wrote a 3 page essay dealing with my old foe – **Satan** – who in 1973 I “cast out my door”. I call my essay: **SATAN**. For sure, I do believe “**Satans**” do exist in great numbers. It’s just that the traditional foe of one **Satan** in terms of the traditional definition of **one opposed to God** can’t exist because God, being necessarily Infinite, cannot have any opposition. I will go into it more in my little essay I call **SATAN**.

Following our **dethroning of Satan**, I offer an 18 page commentary about visions and dreams – especially in light of Jesus – new or old. I call that one **ON VISIONS & DREAMS**; and in that one I take a bit of a glance at one of the most famous visions of all time – the vision of John as offered in **The Book of Revelation** of the **BIBLE**.

Then I offer a more in depth look at one of the books that has helped put **Jesus without Satan** in perspective for me – **THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO THOMAS**. I offer a little of the history of that one, but only a little because I only know a little. Most importantly, however, I feature all 114 verses of **The Gospel of Thomas** – along with my interpretation of each of those verses. That is a long one, though. I call it **JESUS VIA THOMAS COMMENTARIES** – and it’s some 64 pages long.

Thomas is not alone, however, in offering a **Jesus without a Satan**. There also exists another gospel written by one called Mary – presumed to be **Mary Magdalene**. I first encountered **THE GOSPEL OF MARY** in December of 2004 – long after my first introduction to **THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO THOMAS** in 1979. Much of **The Gospel of Mary** is of no interest to me – for reasons I will offer in my interpretation of **The Gospel of Mary**; however the first verse practically confirms many of my own “**new beliefs**”. I call my interpretation of **The Gospel of Mary**: **JESUS VIA MARY COMMENTARIES** – and it is 28 pages long. This effort features the actual Gospel of

Mary – along with my interpretation of the first verse. I wrote both of my banned Gospel Commentaries in April of 2009.

Moving right along, I offer a bit of a discussion about the “real” and the “surreal” in a 19 page essay I call **THE REAL & THE SURREAL** – which I wrote in June of 2009. Most people do not know it, I think, but most people are not “realists” because their entire lives concentrate on the “surreal”. I am a realist; and I think Jesus was too in that both Jesus and I look at life itself as the prize – and do not attend much to what men think life should be. Well, anyway, that is the gist of this one. I conclude it with a song I wrote called – **Welcome To The Real World**.

That does it for the long essay type works, but there are a few short essays too. One I call **LIFE & DEATH** – that ponders life & death as response to news I received that a dear cousin of my youth had died and a niece was given 6 months to live. Before that, I feature a short essay I call **AN INVITATION TO JOY** – which I conclude with a song I wrote featured in Volume 6 – **It's A Lovely Day Today**.

That pretty much covers it for this final “main” volume – except for quite a few songs (21 in total) and a final essay & song. My intent was to write one more song to somewhat finish the whole series, a song I call **Life Is A Gift**. I was undecided as to whether to write an accompanying essay, but I decided I could not pass up the chance. The idea is much too appealing to me to let it go with just a song. So I wrote a small two page essay I call **LIFE IS A GIFT – NOT A LOAN**. Along with offering that life itself is mostly a gift, this essay talks about a love affair of my life – between my body and my soul. Ideally, I think, my love affair should be your own as we are all the same.

Like I have concluded all of my volumes of my **OUT IN THE OPEN** writings series with an Epilog, so also do I conclude this one with an Epilog. I call it **FORGIVE TO BE FORGIVEN**.

That's it for a brief glimpse at the contents of this volume. For a detailed review, check out the **INDEX** below. Once again, I'd like to repeat that all of my ideas are strictly personal opinion. If you would, keep that in mind when reviewing my thoughts. OK?

As Always, Thanks for letting me share a few of my ideas about Life!

Gently,

A Joyful Journeyman of Life,

Francis William Bessler

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June 14th, 2011

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EPILOG: *FORGIVE TO BE FORGIVEN*

I don't blame the Apostle of Jesus, Peter, for misunderstanding his friend, Jesus, but life has taught me that he probably did. I think Peter was of the impression that forgiveness of sin or fault is strictly a matter of authority. Thus, only those can really forgive who have been given authority to forgive. By whom? By God – and in the case of Peter – by Jesus.

In my opinion, Peter was wrong on both counts. First of all, forgiveness is not **“authority based;”** it is **“self based”**. I will explain. Secondly, however, I don't think Jesus had any authority – even if forgiveness is “authority based”.

Sadly, I think, Peter mistook Jesus for “authority” when I think that Jesus was almost “anti-authority”. I may be wrong on that, but given the alternate **Gospels of Thomas & Mary Magdalene** – which we previously examined in some detail - I have the impression that the last thing Jesus was about is authority. I don't think he wanted it or claimed it for himself – and if he did not claim it for himself, it is very unlikely that he would transfer what he did not have to another. Would he?

The problem is that Jesus probably appeared to have authority for his lack of needing authority. His Independence of Jewish Law – and maybe even Roman Law – may have given the impression that Jesus had some authority he did not actually have – that is, authority over others. One who is independent of others and seems to thrive on his or her own may well give the impression that he or she is a person of “great authority”. How else explain such independence and such magnificent self-esteem?

But why was Jesus so independent? Why did he seem to not need authority to make his way in life? I think it was because he realized that each is responsible for his or her own life. Regardless of why he believed that, I think it is likely he did believe it. Everything I know about Jesus points me in the direction that he taught that each of us must do for ourselves, not rely on others to do for us. Jesus taught that we must love ourselves and then love others as we love ourselves. That is emphasis on do yourself, not rely on someone else to do for you. You must love – not someone else.

Loving yourself and others is an expression of “personal responsibility”. When one takes responsibility for his or her life, then that one may seem to be independent of others in a way in which authority is implied. “Independence of” may come across as “Authority over”.

When Jesus told others to “love yourself as you love others,” I think he was really basing that on his own experience. He found that loving himself liberated him – and thus he was confident in “advising” others to do as he had done. Perhaps you have found likewise in your life. It is the same thing. As you may have found that the key to loving others is first to love yourself, you may well come off as “authoritarian” if you advise others to do the same. It “seems” like you have authority over others when, in truth, you are only claiming responsibility for yourself – and encouraging others to do the same.

Now, let's take that a step further. Part of loving others – as well as yourself – is to bypass finding fault. Finding fault becomes the great obstacle for anyone who really

wants to love life. I know I have found that to be so; and I suspect that Jesus did too. So, what do you “advise yourself” if you have taken personal responsibility for your own life and find yourself “finding fault”? The rather obvious course is to avoid that obstacle and not find fault. But how best to do that? Focus on the blessing of life, not some supposed fault. When that happens, presto, a thing called FORGIVENESS occurs; but in reality what happens is that you have not so much “forgiven” others of some fault you may find in them, but you have “forgiven yourself” for looking for fault in the first place by focusing on the blessing of life. Thus, it follows: To be forgiven (or to forgive yourself), you must forgive. You must bypass looking for fault by looking for something else. See how simple it is – if you are one to take responsibility for your own life. As Jesus might say it – don’t waste your time judging others when you should be attending to your own virtue; but by attending to your own virtue, you stop “finding fault;” and that, virtually speaking at least, is forgiveness.

Proceed on! I am with Jesus and he is trying to tell me about forgiveness. He says, Francis, forgive or you will not be forgiven. What sins you retain (because you have not released them), they will be retained and what sins you forgive (because you have released them), they will be forgiven. You see, that makes all the sense in the world if you understand forgiveness and realize that it is not near as “other related” as it is “self related”. I must forgive for the sake of myself – not for your sake or for another’s sake who may have offended me. When you take responsibility for your life, it is you who must do – not someone else.

But you see I understand that because I have chosen to take responsibility for my life without relating that to any command of or over anyone else. The problem with Peter is that he probably did not understand the notion of forgiveness – or even the command of loving others as you love yourself. Thus, when he heard the counsel of Jesus I would have heard, he heard something else.

Let’s backtrack. What did my speculative Jesus say to me? Francis, forgive or you will not be forgiven. In effect, my being forgiven is conditioned upon my forgiving. To that, I tell Jesus, Yes, I understand – because that has been my experience too. Now, what did Peter “probably” hear? **Peter, I am counting on you to share my message of love & forgiveness with others – and Remember, what sins you forgive, they will be forgiven and what sins you may retain, they will be retained.**

But Peter “probably” misunderstood. He thought that he was being given some authority to forgive another of his sins – in the name and place of Jesus. He did not realize – or probably did not realize – that Jesus was not talking about another. He was talking about Peter because he was talking to Peter. It was Peter’s sins that Jesus was addressing, not another’s. Peter, what sins of your own that you refuse to dismiss will be retained, but what sins of your own you choose to resolve will be resolved. That is what Jesus intended, but Peter heard that Jesus was giving him authority to judge others – in effect. Sad, but I think – true!

Fast forward to Ananias & Saphira in the tale told in the 5th Chapter of **The Acts Of The Apostles** in the **BIBLE**. Ananias & Saphira were a married couple who had some degree of property. In wanting to join “Peter’s new church,” they agreed to give Peter all their property; however, Saphira had some second thoughts and convinced her husband, Ananias, to give Peter and his church only half of their property. When Peter hears of this “betrayal” of a promise, he calls the couple to him and condemns them for “lying to

the Holy Spirit” and for doing so, they are going to be condemned. No second chance, no hint of forgiveness – just plain ole damnation. One after the other, they both fall dead at Peter’s feet – presumably from heart attacks or shock.

Where was the real Jesus in this little scene? Nowhere. Peter had even asked Jesus earlier how many times one must forgive. Seven times? He asked. Jesus told Peter – no, not seven times, but seven times seventy. That was only to express that forgiveness is a “state of mind,” not a numbers game; but even asking the question in terms of numbers, Peter suggested his own misunderstanding of the issue. Peter supposedly heard that forgiveness is a requirement of a wise or virtuous soul because he indicated he heard by asking Jesus how many times must I forgive; but apparently he did not hear what “Francis” heard when Jesus told him that to be forgiven one must forgive. All that Peter heard when Jesus asked him to share his counsel with others was that Jesus had given him authority to act in his stead. As a “man of authority” then, Peter could do what he wanted and Jesus would approve. Again, sad, I think – but probably true.

But it doesn’t happen that way. It never has and it never will. Peter may not have understood it, but Jesus was not about having authority over others; and he certainly would not have given to Peter what he did not have himself. He was about liberating others to have authority over themselves by taking responsibility for their own lives.

In truth, I think, Jesus was about taking responsibility for life. He was about do yourself, not expect others to do for you. You must love – not someone else. You must forgive – not someone else. It has nothing to do with authority. It is all about personal responsibility for the sake of self. At least, I think so.

Well, that will do it for another volume of my ***OUT IN THE OPEN*** writings series. **I want to Thank You for lending an ear.** My main mantra in life is – **ISN’T LIFE FANTASTIC!** Notice I did not end that little statement with a question mark. I may have seemed like I was asking a question because I “asked” for a response – but, in truth, I wasn’t asking a question. I was only stating an opinion. ***LIFE IS FANTASTIC!*** That is what I was really saying. Just goes to show expressions don’t always mean what they say – or seem to say. Do they?

One more volume remains – one entirely devoted to song. **I don’t write songs (or lyrics) to entertain others as much as to “teach myself”.** But that is no different than why I write essays and stories. I do that to “teach myself” too. Does any of this that I have “taught myself” mean much to anyone else? I do not know. Maybe, Maybe not! ***I can only judge what appeals to me; and that is where I choose to leave it.***

Join me – if you wish – for 140 songs – presented mostly in alphabetical order. For these past 7 volumes, songs have mostly been presented in chronological order – or in the order in which they were written – but for the final volume, it is A to Z.

Thanks so much for joining me so far. I hope you have enjoyed my thinking to and for myself somewhat. Again, Thanks for lending an ear!

See You Next Time!

Gently,

Trying to Live In A State of Forgiveness (and Focus on Blessings and not Faults),

Francis William Bessler

Laramie, Wyoming, U.S.A

June 13th, 2011

VOLUME 8:

1963 - 2011

**All My Songs
In
Alphabetical Order**

(168 Pages)

Introduction

Welcome to my final volume of my *OUT IN THE OPEN* writings series. The end has come. It is Volume 8 of 8. The previous 7 volumes have featured a mix of essay, song, and story that I wrote from 1963 to this time – June of 2011. Lots of songs were featured in those volumes – but in chronological order – or in the order in which they were written. Of course, those songs were scattered, as it were, among other type writings – namely essays and stories. Most of my non song features have been spiritually or philosophically oriented, but then most of my songs have been too.

Anyway, this final volume of my eight volume series will be featuring only song – or at least only poetry. Down through the years from 1963 to now, I have written 140 poetic type compositions. All of those will be featured in this volume – in alphabetical order – or at least in mostly alphabetical order.

I did not write a lot of poetry before 1963. My earliest “saved” poem is a thing called **Prayer Of A Priest** – which I wrote in 1963; but I did write some before that for which I have no record. I think my earliest poem, which was really a song, I wrote at about the age of 11 or so, written around 1953. It was a happy but sad song about a little boy who was run over by a truck. It was happy because the little boy died with his loving father by his side; and, of course, it was sad in that the little boy died at all. I called my little song: *Why, Daddy, Why?*

I can only remember some of the first part of it, but it went something like this:

**A little boy was playing with his ball in his yard one day,
when the ball slipped away and rolled onto a nearby highway.
The little boy didn't look and just ran after his ball.
Tripping over a curb, the little boy did fall.
A speeding truck was speeding down the highway
and hit the boy before he could stop on this unlucky day.
The little boy woke up in the hospital with his father by his side,
and all the little boy could think of was – *Why, Daddy, Why?***

Hey, it was my first song. What do you expect? I have forgotten the rest of the lyrics, such as it is, except that it might have been translated later in life as real life in a way to me. My Dad was killed by a truck – maybe not a speeding truck – but like the little boy, Dad was somewhat of a pedestrian. In my Dad's case, someone fell asleep at the wheel of a pickup truck and crossed over a highway, hitting and killing my Dad in the process. Dad was standing on the other side of the road. It was certainly a freak accident, but it does go to show that the story I wrote in song in 1953 could well have reflected life. My little boy was killed by a truck in my story; and in real life, my Dad was too. The day my Dad was killed by the truck of his story was July 7th, 1966. Dad was 59. I was 24.

In my first song, the little boy continues to question why things happen as they do – while dying in process. His last words to his father are: *Why, Daddy, Why?* And I suppose that lost song of my early years reflects my life in general – not that I have been caught up in tragedy, but in that I have always questioned things. I guess you can expect

a lot of *Why, Daddy, Why?* in all of the 140 songs of this volume – or at least in many of them.

So even at a very early age, I was asking questions; and in retrospect, that bit of conduct, as it were, has probably led me to lots of different ideas that many never encounter. Two of my great heroes in life – *Socrates & Jesus* – did the same thing, I think. *They asked lots of questions.* Socrates was supposed to have said that **the unexamined life** is no life at all – or something akin to that. I think Jesus would have agreed; but it can be dangerous too. I guess you could say that it was partly because Socrates and Jesus asked too many questions and did not accept traditional assumptions that led to their executions.

At least I can ask, why? – and not fear execution. That goes to show that we humans have made a lot of progress since the days of Socrates and Jesus. Of course, there will always be some who become upset when some favored way of tradition is challenged; but overall, I think we have become much more tolerant and do not consider a difference of opinion to be a matter for execution. *I'm sure glad for that!*

But let me get on with it. In this final *OUT IN THE OPEN* writings series, I will be featuring a pc file I call *ORIGINAL SONGS & POEMS* – with its own **Introduction (Preamble)** and **INDEX**. When I write a song, generally I write a tune or melody to go with it – even though some tunes are repeated among many of my songs. If a particular song interests you, I would recommend you assigning your own tune to it; but if you wish, you can contact me at the address I offer below and I can try to supply my tune. None of my songs have been scored as such, but if there is interest, I'm sure that such can be arranged.

Once again, I thank you for coming along for the ride. Please keep in mind that my songs are only my opinions expressed somewhat poetically.

When I look at life, I see nothing but equality. I see a lot of variety, but all that variety is equal. It is only those who thrive on inequality that need lords – or some who are better than others. I do not need to be better than anyone; but I do need to be as good as others. That comes easy, though, when you see all life as wonderfully filled with the same Divinity. It is that filling, as it were, that makes it all so nice and makes for **Paradise in Laramie** for me – since Laramie is where I live now. When we are done with the 140 songs, I will have a parting comment to say about that. For now, like I said, let's get on with the song. If only a few of the 140 appeal, that's not so bad. Is it? Just enjoy what you can – and what your heart and soul and mind allows. OK? And later, I will see you again in *PARADISE IN LARAMIE!*

*Gently,
With A Song In My Heart – and Soul,*

Francis William Bessler

4746 E. Skyline Drive, # 108

Laramie, Wyoming 82070

307-742-6868

June 17th, 2011

ORIGINAL POEMS & SONGS

(140 Compositions)

(159 Pages)

By
Francis William Bessler
Laramie, Wyoming
(From 1963-2011)

PREAMBLE

I have tried to assemble most of my poems and songs since the 1970s in this poetic collage. I may even feature a song or poem before that time as well, but most of them were written after the age of 30. I am now 69. Many of them were featured in a four cassette album of commentary and music I produced in the 1980s called **MASTER OF YOUR OWN FATE** and in a previous single album of commentary and music called **FEELING FREE**. Many of those that are specified as written in the 1980s were written for those programs.

FEELING FREE was produced in a few months for \$3,000 in 1983 and was pretty bad, partly for being only a first effort; but **MASTER OF YOUR OWN FATE** is another story entirely. That one cost me a fortune and took over eight years of writing and producing and rewriting and reproducing and recording a song and enhancing it later to get it done – starting in 1983 and ending in 1992. I started it in 1983, expecting it would take only a year and expecting it to cost less than \$10,000; but it took nearly a decade and cost me well over \$140,000 in the end. I have not been able to successfully share it, market wise, though I have tried a number of times. It features a lot of wonderful musical talent from the Atlanta, Georgia area – where I lived for twenty-one years. I am still very proud of that effort; and maybe someday, someone else will be too. Who knows?

Some of the songs are featured in an attempted opera (or operetta) I wrote in the 1980s featuring a Naturalist town. I called that effort **SUMMER TOWN**. I have not even attempted to do anything with that, expecting that if anything happened with that, it would have to happen after an introduction through **MASTER OF YOUR OWN FATE**; but maybe in time. Again, who knows?

I am what I consider a **Divine Naturalist** – or **Naturist** – in terms of believing that God is in everything, making everything **Divine**. Much of that philosophy was featured in the two albums of mention above and much of that philosophy is featured in many of my lyrics. To a great extent, this is a volume of poetry and song reflecting my love of Nature and my love of myself as part of Nature – seeing myself as **Divine**, along with everyone and everything. I am not special in my **Divinity**. I think everyone is **Divine**, but few realize it.

I will let my lyrics speak for themselves now. Not all of them reflect my **Divine Naturalism**, but many of them do. I hope you find them somewhat satisfying.

Though it may seem superfluous, I am attaching a *by Francis William Bessler, Laramie Wyoming* to each song in case one wants to print a selected song or songs. In the event one would like to make contact because of a particular song, if that song is printed out of context, then one would have a general location in which to find me. Of course, if I move away from Laramie, Wyoming, it won't be so easy to make contact, but as long as I remain in Laramie, contact should be easy.

That is not to say that contact will be desired by any; but I think any author who really believes in what he or she offers ought to make it easy for others to make contact. With all my works, I have tried to identify a work as my own; but if a selection of a work is printed in isolation of a general work of which it is a part, such identity could be lost.

To better assure that my identity is not lost for any given song of this production, I will attach my identity and current town residence to each song.

Thank you so much!

Gently,

Francis William Bessler

Country Meadows

4746 E. Skyline Drive, # 108

Laramie, Wyoming, U.S.A. 82070

June 9th, 2011

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(Mostly songs. Poems noted in parenthesis.)

Note: For those items found in the *FEELING FREE* program, I will indicate that with an FF in parenthesis in this Index. For those items found in the

MASTER OF YOUR OWN FATE program, I will indicate that with a MF in parenthesis; and for those items found in the *SUMMER TOWN* program, I will indicate that with a ST in parenthesis.

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EPILOG:
Paradise In Laramie
June 17th, 2011

As I walk along the street
there is Paradise at my feet – here in Laramie.
It is not Jerusalem or Rome,
but those places are not my home,
though they would be if I were there
because where I am is where I care – and find home.
Paradise is so easy to see
whether you are on land or on sea – or maybe in the air.
Because it's not the place, it's you
if what you are about is the truth –
and the truth is all so clear – everywhere.
Just open your eyes and take a look
whether your passing a lane or a brook
if God is all about – and It is – there is no doubt
well, smile - there's no need to wear a frown.
And If it is that way –
no matter what may have happened yesterday –
Today is a brand new day.

As I walk along the street
there is Paradise at my feet – here in Laramie.
But if I were somewhere else,
it would be just as easy to tell
that there would be my sea.
There is a sea everywhere
even if no fishes are found there
but if there is fish or there is not,
every place is Camelot – if you belong there.
What makes a place a home
is to know it's all Divine.
That's what makes it all so fine
and it's all yours and mine
if that we see.

God is oh so Great,
but it is such a big mistake
to think that God belongs to just a few.
Let us not fight among our selves
and realize there is no Hell;
and all we need is to know the truth.

As I walk along the street,
there is Paradise at my feet – here in Laramie.
As long as I know that I belong
then I can sing my song – and be so free.
There is nothing to it – you know -
just throw away your cares and blow –
like the wind -
and believe me, that's the way to go.
I have so long realized that everything's Divine
and because of that, everything's the same.
It doesn't matter who you are
or where you are or what's your name.
No, it does not matter where you are
whether it's here on Earth or with some star,
the same Divine is both near – and far.
So take off all your clothes.
Remove your worries and your woes
and embrace your flesh and bones
and realize you are home – and deserve to be.
Know that Paradise is true
whether it's here or there with you
as long we embrace the truth,
there will always be –
Paradise in Laramie.

Goodbye, Everyone!
Thanks for Listening!
Francis William Bessler
Laramie, Wyoming

OUT IN THE OPEN

Overview

(Featuring works written from 1963-2011)



THE END