

## The Faith Dimension

by Bill Volkman

Most of us get so involved with the three-dimensional world of space—length, breadth and height—and the fourth dimension of time, that we are slow in coming to see the greater reality of the fifth dimensional world of spirit, which is beyond both space and time.

Four dimensions are okay for plants and animals, but humans tend to feel cramped there. When we live in four dimensions, we have only our limited, natural faculties to go by. Human intellect, emotional feelings and external appearances are our only bases of judgment and decisions. But something in us feels trapped. We yearn for some kind of release.

Of course, the “something” that longs for freedom is our human spirit, that “image of God” which distinguishes us from other animals and which belongs to the eternal, fifth-dimension realm.

We have our first, exhilarating experience of spiritual freedom when we are born-again in Christ. But the Christian life often becomes little more than a frustrating effort to pray more, read the Bible more, witness more, etc.—not very different from the world’s rat-race we were saved from.

The Bible constantly speaks of a dimension beyond externals and appearances. Jesus called it “*the kingdom of God.*” In 2 Corinthians 5 Paul called it the *faith* dimension, in contrast to the *sight* dimension. In that chapter and the two preceding ones, Paul used at least eleven pairs of contrasting terms to distinguish the two:

<b>Sight Dimension</b>	<b>Faith Dimension</b>
letter	spirit (3:6)
ministry of death	ministry of the Spirit
ministry of condemnation	ministry of righteousness (3:8,9)
that which fades away	that which remains (3:11)
darkness	light (4:6)
outer man	inner man (4:16)
seen	unseen (4:18)
temporal	eternal (4:18)
mortality	life (5:4)
appearance	heart (5:12)
man in flesh	man in Christ (5:16,17)

Only when we get frustrated enough are we ready to admit the utter inadequacy of our human faculties to deal with the fifth, or spirit dimension. Then we will be ready to put aside our limited human minds and accept the *mystery* of the Gospel, which is the union of our spirit with the Spirit of Christ.

Now we can experience true fulfillment, for our spirits are released and have found expression in Christ. This is the dimension which we were created for. We are each to know the spirit reality of a personal incarnation—Christ living in us, as us. This does not negate our humanity, or the temporal reality of the four dimensions, but brings us to a level of awareness which enables us to realize our full humanity, which includes our human spirit.

It was my friend Dan Stone’s frequent use of the simple words *outer* and *inner* that opened up my eyes to spirit reality and the faith dimension. I suddenly saw that for years I had mistakenly focused on my outer vessel, and had given scant attention to the inner me, the

real me, the Christ-in-me who had replaced the Satan-in-me at the time of my rebirth as a young boy.

My slowness in coming to see who I really was as an *inner* person probably stemmed from my religious training, as well as from my personality and interests. Because I had been warned in my youth by both my mother and my Sunday School teachers to stay away from anything mystical or metaphysical—lest I be sidetracked into religious error—I purposely avoided all philosophical questioning and reading. Then, as a rational Christian lawyer-/accountant/businessman I was too busy serving God and making money, and I really had neither the time nor the interest to delve into those areas.

But my four near-death experiences in the Sixties had caused me to slow down and ask some questions I had not considered earlier. In my quest, I had been thrust into certain charismatic experiences and given certain gifts, which in turn forced me to face into the areas we call *mysticism* and *metaphysics*.

I then realized that I had thrown out the baby with the bath water. Just because certain groups who also deny the atonement emphasize mysticism and metaphysics does not mean that these subjects are taboo or should be ignored.

The truth is that all men are mystics, whether they realize it or not. *Mysticism* is simply man's inner knowing of Divinity—man's intuitive realization of union with God. Because the True Light enlightens every man (John 1:9), all men have in their hearts a spark of this inner knowing of what their destiny is meant to be. Believers have responded positively to this inner illumination, and have come to know and honor Christ as Savior and Lord. On the other hand, unbelievers damn themselves and they are without excuse, "*For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God, or give thanks*" (Rom. 1:21).

It is equally absurd to deny the area of metaphysics, in spite of the bad publicity it gets in evangelical circles. *Metaphysics* simply means "beyond physics." It is the branch of philosophy that speculates as to the nature of *being* in areas beyond the physical and material. Any Christian who acknowledges the Virgin Birth, the Incarnation, the Resurrection, the Atonement and the indwelt Holy Spirit, and then says he rejects metaphysics—as I did for years— doesn't know what he's talking about, because all those are in the metaphysical realm.

Since we who are born-again of the Spirit have acknowledged the God of the fifth dimension in our conversion experience, why do we find it so hard to recognize the truth of the fifth dimension in the Eternal Now of our day-to-day life? In Galatians 3:3, Paul asks, "*Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now perfected by the flesh?*" Using phraseology comparable to what I've been using, Paul might have said, "Having begun by the inner, fifth-dimension Spirit, are you now waiting to see yourself perfected by the outer, four-dimension flesh?"

Most of us have learned from bitter experience that this dimension (remember that "time" is the fourth dimension) is powerless to perfect us, but God has arranged a workable solution. As born-again new beings in Christ, we are meant to live and operate in the consciousness of a new dimension— I he inner, fifth dimension of Spirit reality. We do not have to work toward perfection. We are *perfect* in Christ. We do not have to overcome or become anything. We only need to stand in our awareness of who we really are in the Spirit dimension—one with Christ. Then, as this acknowledged awareness takes us, we can say with Paul, "*We walk by faith, not by sight,*" irrespective of feelings and appearances to the contrary.

The key to a walk of faith that is not constantly defiled by day-to-day events is a fixed, settled consciousness of our union with Christ. We need to be firmly convinced of our

incarnation by the Spirit of Christ. We must finally and forever see ourselves as perfect expressions of God. Though such terminology sounds a bit heretical at first, upon examination we find that it is quite biblical.

It was Jesus Himself who asked the Pharisees this question: "*Is it not written in your law that 'I say you are gods'?*" (John 10:34, as quoted from Psalm 82:6). These words were spoken to unbelieving Jews who were about to stone Him for blasphemy—because "*You, being a man, make Yourself out to be God*" (v. 33). Those men were denying the Incarnation, the truth that God was in the man Jesus. In response, Jesus asserted His union: "*The Father is in me, and I in the Father*" (v. 38).

But why did Jesus say that they were gods? Because all of us are gods. *All humans are incarnations of deity.* Webster defines incarnation as "any person serving as the embodiment of a god or spirit." Each of us individually is a unique bodily person, a container of deity. The Bible calls us vessels—a vessel of honor or a vessel of dishonor. Before conversion we were in union with the spirit of error; now we are in union with the Spirit of Truth. This is the *replacement* that takes place at conversion.

The Pharisees were of their father the devil; Jesus was indwelt by the Spirit of His heavenly Father. Both the Pharisees and Jesus were containers, and they manifested in their lives the spirit they contained. Sins flowed from the Pharisees because they were in union with Satan, who is sin. The fruit of the Spirit flowed as rivers of living water from Jesus because He was in union with His Father, who is love.

The glory is that "*As He is, so are we in this world*" (1 John 4:17). Just as Jesus experienced the mystery of the Incarnation, we too can know the mystery of a personal incarnation—Christ in us and we in Christ. Because we are indwelt by the Spirit of Truth, we too are love expressions of God.

But what if someone accuses you of Satan's sin, of wanting to make yourself "*like the Most High*" (Isa. 14:14)? Knowing that you are a unique expression of God because of the indwelling Christ is not the same as wanting to independently be *like* God, as Satan wanted. His sin was independence—he did not want to acknowledge his union with His Creator. He did not want to be a servant; he wanted to be the boss. But we delight in being unique expressions of Him. We don't assert independence; we are happy to acknowledge the truth of the mystery of the gospel—that Christ lives in us, as us. Satan said, "*I will make myself like the Most High;*" we say, "*Christ lives in me, as me.*"

We cannot expect to experience the fifth-dimensional world of God with our four-dimensional, human faculties. No amount of human effort will take us to the fifth dimension; rather we must acknowledge our personal incarnation by the Spirit of Truth. When we fail to focus on fifth-dimensional spirit reality, we end up with all kinds of confusion, especially in our understanding of apparently conflicting biblical truths. The Bible is replete with paradoxes—statements that are seemingly contradictory, yet true.

How can we explain the patently contradictory statements in Philippians 3:12,15, where Paul says, "*Not that I . . . have already become perfect . . . Let us therefore, as many as are perfect . . .*" On the appearance level, as long as we are "*looking at things as they are outwardly*" (2 Cor. 10:7), this is a baffling paradox. But from the faith perspective, the fifth dimension, we have no trouble in understanding how Paul could write of *becoming* perfect in one verse, and then stress *being* perfect a few verses later.

On the fifth-dimensional faith level Christians are already perfect and complete in Christ, even though they are decidedly imperfect and immature on the level of appearance, experience and feelings. But because of who we are in Christ, we emphasize and focus on our life in the *faith* dimension.