

6 marks of progressive Christian worship music

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1. praise, justice, and the full range of human experience
2. inclusive language
3. progressive Christian theology
4. both the individual and community
5. emotional authenticity
6. fresh images, ideas, and language

6 marks of progressive Christian worship
music

... in the Trump era

This election has been “apocalyptic” -
It has unveiled realities that were long here, but
unrecognized.

Donald Trump isn't the problem - he's the
symptom of undiagnosed and untreated
conditions in the American (and Christian) soul.

The ultimate problem isn't simply political; it's
theological.

1. praise, justice, and the full range of human experience

Traditionally, we have specialized in 3 themes.

sin & forgiveness

God loves me, us

God is great like a King or Father

There are several reasons for this specialization. Here is one of them. (disturbance alert!)



In 1492, Columbus sailed the ocean blue.

1495

2nd Voyage Return Cargo:
1600 male and female Taino
slaves for Spain

“It is possible, with the
name of the Holy Trinity, to
sell all the slaves which it
is possible to sell ... Here
there are so many of these
slaves ... although they are
living things they are as
good as gold.”



In 1492, Columbus sailed the ocean blue.

In 1495, Columbus shipped 1600 slaves alive.

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In 1452, Pope Nicolas told the conquistadors what to
do.

“...invade, search out, capture, vanquish, and subdue all Saracens and pagans whatsoever, and other enemies of Christ wheresoever placed, and the kingdoms, dukedoms, principalities, dominions, possessions, and all movable and immovable goods whatsoever held and possessed by them and to reduce their persons to perpetual slavery, and to apply and appropriate to himself and his successors the kingdoms, dukedoms, counties, principalities, dominions, possessions, and goods, and to convert them to his and their use and profit.” - Pope Nicolas V, Romanus Pontifex, Doctrine of Discovery



In 1492, Columbus sailed the ocean blue.

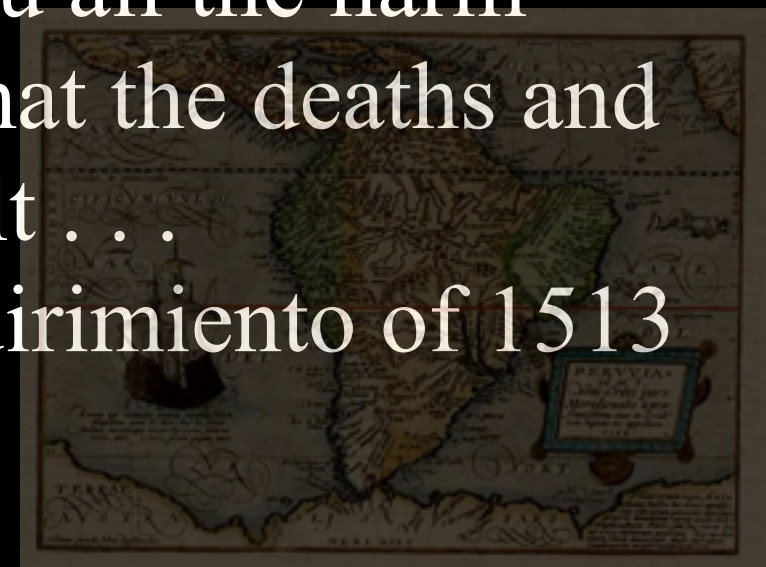
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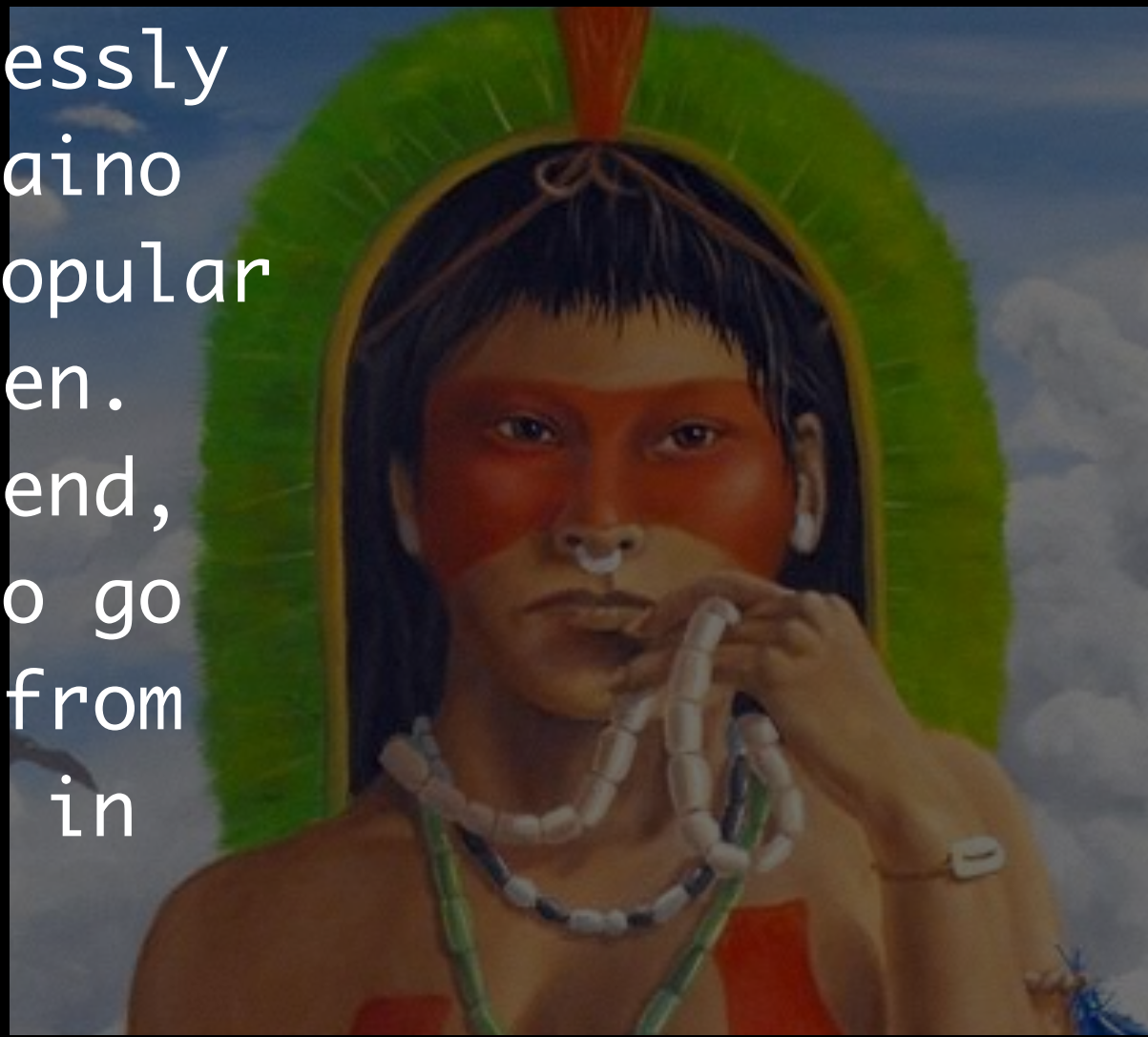
In 1513, the Christians doubled down on being mean.

[W]e ask and require that you . . . acknowledge the Church as the ruler and superior of the whole world and the high priest called Pope and in his name the king and queen . . . our lords, in his place, as superiors and lords and kings of these islands and this mainland . . . , and that you consent and permit that these religious fathers declare and preach to you [I]f you do not do this or if you maliciously delay in doing it, I certify to you that with the help of God we shall forcefully enter into your country and shall make war against you in all ways and manners that we can, and shall submit you to the yoke and obedience of the Church and of their highnesses . . . , and we shall take away your goods and shall do to you all the harm and damage that we can, . . . and we protest that the deaths and losses that shall accrue from this are your fault . . .

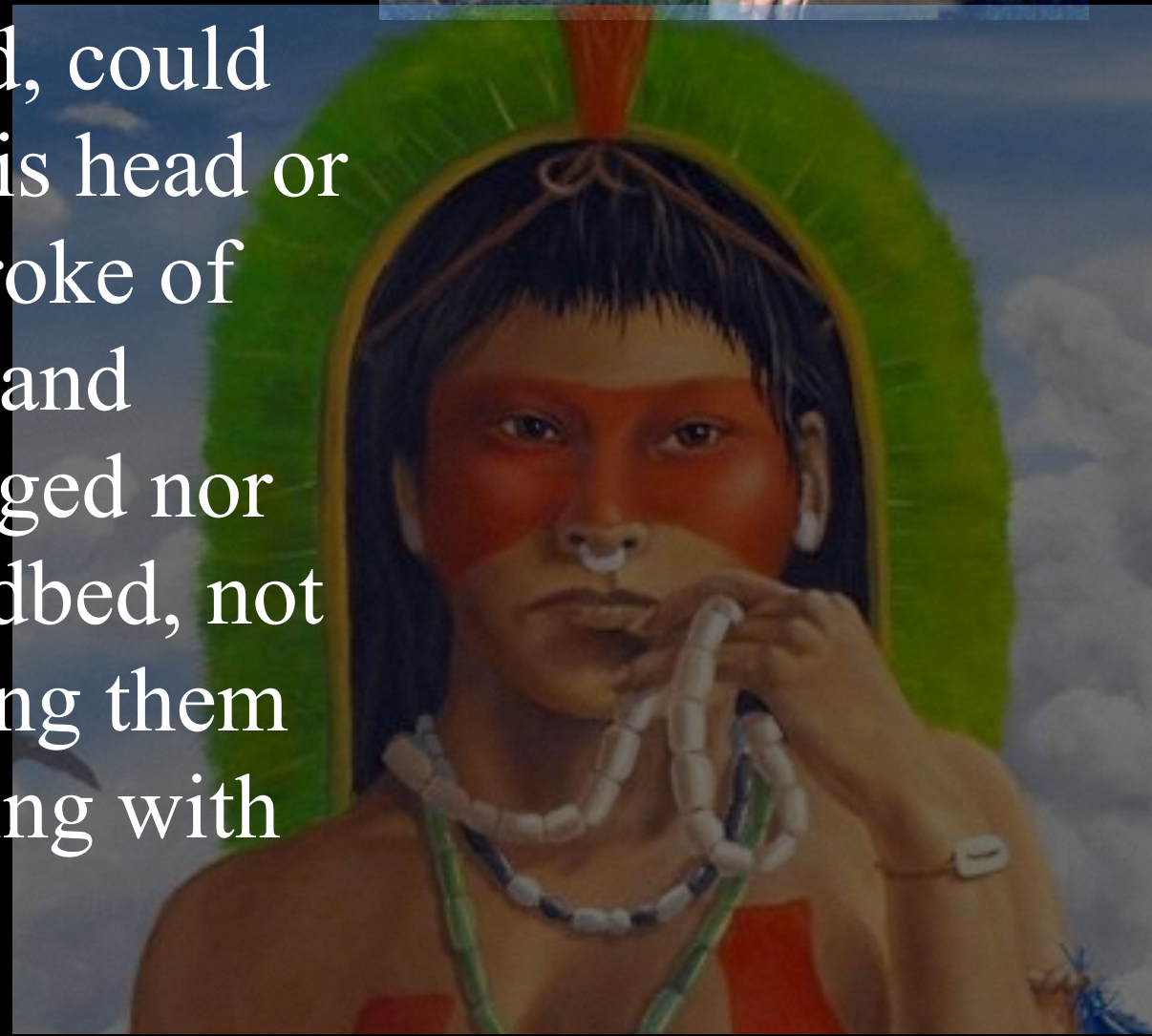
From the Spanish Requerimiento of 1513



The Spaniards who remained in Hispaniola were encouraged to take Taino slaves “in the amount desired.” Columbus himself gave a teenage girl to one of his crew, Miguel Cuneo, for his personal “use.” Cuneo wrote that she “resisted with all her strength” when he attempted to have sex with her, so he “thrashed her mercilessly and raped her.” Being given a Taino woman to rape was, in fact, a popular “company perk” for Columbus’s men. Columbus himself wrote to a friend, “There are plenty of dealers who go about looking for girls; those from nine to ten [years old] are now in demand.”



With my own eyes I saw Spaniards cut off the nose and ears of Indians, male and female, without provocation, merely because it pleased them to do it. ...Likewise, I saw how they summoned the caciques and the chief rulers to come, assuring them safety, and when they peacefully came, they were taken captive and burned.... They laid bets as to who, with one stroke of the sword, could split a man in two or could cut off his head or spill out his entrails with a single stroke of the pike.... They attacked the towns and spared neither the children nor the aged nor pregnant women nor women in childbed, not only stabbing them and dismembering them but cutting them to pieces as if dealing with sheep in the slaughter house.



They took infants from their mothers' breasts, snatching them by the legs and pitching them headfirst against the crags or snatched them by the arms and threw them into the rivers, roaring with laughter and saying as the babies fell into the water, "Boil there, you offspring of the devil! ... They made some low wide gallows on which the hanged victim's feet almost touched the ground, stringing up their victims in lots of thirteen, in memory of Our Redeemer and His twelve Apostles, then set burning wood at their feet and thus burned them alive.



Their reason for killing and destroying such an infinite number of souls is that the Christians have an ultimate aim, which is to acquire gold, and to swell themselves with riches in a very brief time and thus rise to a high estate disproportionate to their merits.





- Pedro de Cordoba, 1517* letter to King Ferdinand

As a result of the sufferings and hard labor they endured, the Indians choose and have chosen suicide. Occasionally a hundred have committed mass suicide. The women, exhausted by labor, have shunned conception and childbirth...

Many, when pregnant, have taken something to abort and have aborted. Others after delivery have killed their children with their own hands, so as not to leave them in such oppressive slavery.

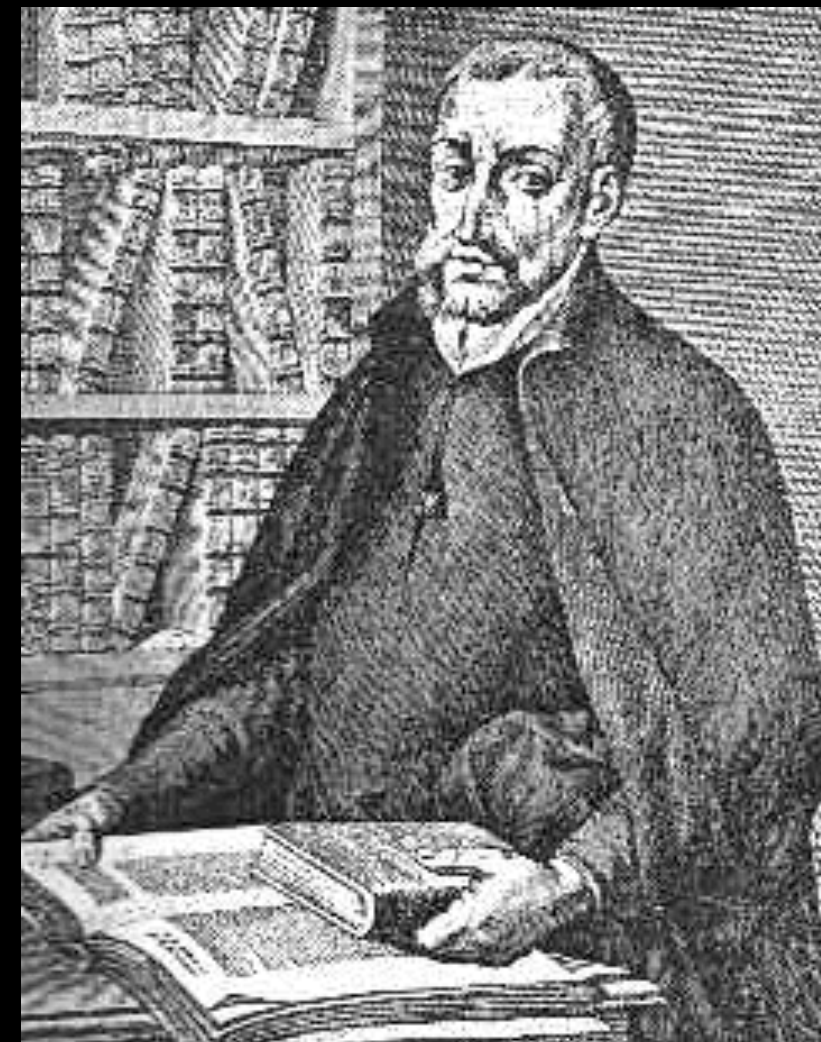
“We can estimate very surely and truthfully that in the forty years that have passed, with the infernal actions of the Christians, there have been unjustly slain more than twelve million men, women, and children. In truth, I believe without trying to deceive myself that the number of the slain is more like fifteen million.”

- Bartolome de las Casas



The Spanish have a perfect right to rule these barbarians of the New World and the adjacent islands, who in prudence, skill, virtues, and humanity are as inferior to the Spanish as children to adults, or women to men; for there exists between the two as great a difference as between savage and cruel races and the most merciful, between the most intemperate and the moderate and temperate, and, I might even say, between apes and men.

- Juan Gines de Sepulveda



The people of Hispaniola had their lives unjustly and savagely taken by, as de Las Casas repeatedly notes, professed Jesus followers, and they were not, as we all know, the only ones to meet such a fate. Millions of their indigenous sisters and brothers on Turtle Island were killed at the hands of other Europeans, as nation after imperial nation, bearing Christ on their lips and crosses on their military standards, followed suit.

- Waziyatawin



Can you see why the descendants of the colonizers
would emphasize

sin & forgiveness

God loves me,us* (Christians)

God is like a King or Father?

We wanted

personal forgiveness without corporate
repentance

God love us - NOT THEM!

God is like a dictatorial king and autocratic father

Christianity has been the chaplain/enabler of 5 centuries
of colonization by white Christian nationalists.
It is time for that to change.

What do we do now?

For starters, flip the script:

- ask forgiveness for racism, religious supremacy, pride, exploitation, cruelty, torture, violence
- God loves everyone, including “them”
- God is great like Jesus ... who overturns traditional monarchy and patriarchy!

hymn of remorse

G D/F# G
Who covered over your colorful earth with gray cement?

G D/F# G
Who cut down trees and stripped the soil wherever they
went?

C D
Who scarred the hills for gold and coal,

C D
Blind with greed that stole the soul -

C D G D/F#
The goal: to have complete control? Lord, we repent.

Who soured the air with smoke that chokes our every breath,
So acid rain drops from the sky with subtle death?
How many rivers burn and stink?
Why don't we ever stop to think
Of living beings on the brink who will go extinct?

C D G Em C D G
Lord, have mercy. Can we be restored?
C D G Em C D
Lord, have mercy, Lord.

Who stole the land of tribes and nations who lived here first?
Who took the best with broken treaties, left them the worst?
Who bought slaves, abused, and sold,
And in their sweat, who panned for gold,
Who told their racist lies until their hearts went cold?

Lord, have mercy. Can we be restored?
Lord, have mercy, Lord.

The noise of traffic is drowning out the songbird's song.
Your voice within us is telling us that we've gone wrong.
You call us from our selfishness,
To be blessed – and to bless
To turn to you, begin anew. Lord, we say yes. (Lord, we say yes.)

Lord, have mercy. Can we be restored?
Lord, have mercy, Lord.

Lord, have mercy. Can we be restored?
Lord, have mercy, Lord.

2. inclusive language

for people

for God

The old practice of capitalized “He, Him” - unique category of pronoun, or super-masculinization?

The option of feminization ...

The option of treating “God” as a special category of noun, pronoun ...

This leads to a deeper and ongoing dialogue:

how do we speak of God?
“the universe”
the divine

my solution?

1. be gracious. don't be fundamentalistic pronoun police.
model rather than police.
2. try to avoid gender pronouns for God (m or f)
3. diversify ... the Holy One, the living God, the Great Spirit,
the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Love, the Spirit of Jesus, God as
Jesus taught, God as embodied by Jesus, the Creator, etc.
4. remind people consistently (but not constantly!) about the
limitations of language and the necessity of embodiment
5. remind people that our understandings of God are
consistently evolving
6. don't abandon 2nd person -

from Cynthia Bourgault

“The Christian mystical tradition ... [insists] that the leap to this new level of consciousness is not simply an extension of the cognitive line but requires ‘putting the mind in the heart,’ not only attitudinally but neurologically.... And this means, basically, it will happen in the domain of **devotion** - i.e. our heart’s emotional assent and participation in the ultimate ‘thouness’ of the cosmos and the experiential certainty of the divine not simply as “love” but as **Lover.**”

In other words, God is not less than personal. Neither is the universe. Neither are we. Our way of loving is to address from our deepest personhood - whether your golden retriever, your infant, your car, or God.

o majestic mystery

Em B7/D# G7/D A/C# C B7

O Majestic Mystery

Em B7/D# G7/D A/C# C B7

O Mysterious Majesty

Am

My small hand can

Em

Not contain you

Am

I can only

B7

Hold it open.

O Majestic Mystery
O Mysterious Majesty
My small mind can
Not explain you
I can only
Hold it open.

Em

Open ... to your mystery

D/F#

Open to your wonder

G

Open ... to your radiance

Am

Open ... to your wisdom

Em/B

Open ... to your fullness

C

Open ... to your goodness

B7

Open ... to your love

O Majestic Mystery
O Mysterious Majesty
My small heart can
Not contain you
I can only
Hold it open.

3. progressive theology

Emphasizes:

inclusion, unconditional love, extravagant welcome, full acceptance, radical grace

Justice, call to discipleship, respect for self, others, creation
Spiritual gifts, service

Progressive approach to the Bible

De-Emphasizes:

Penal Substitutionary Atonement theory

Blood Sacrifice

Escaping from this world

Hell as a place of eternal torture

Jesus as exclusive

Our contemporary gospel is primarily

INFORMATION ON HOW TO GO TO HEAVEN AFTER YOU DIE

*with a large footnote about increasing your personal
happiness and success through God.*

with a small footnote about character development

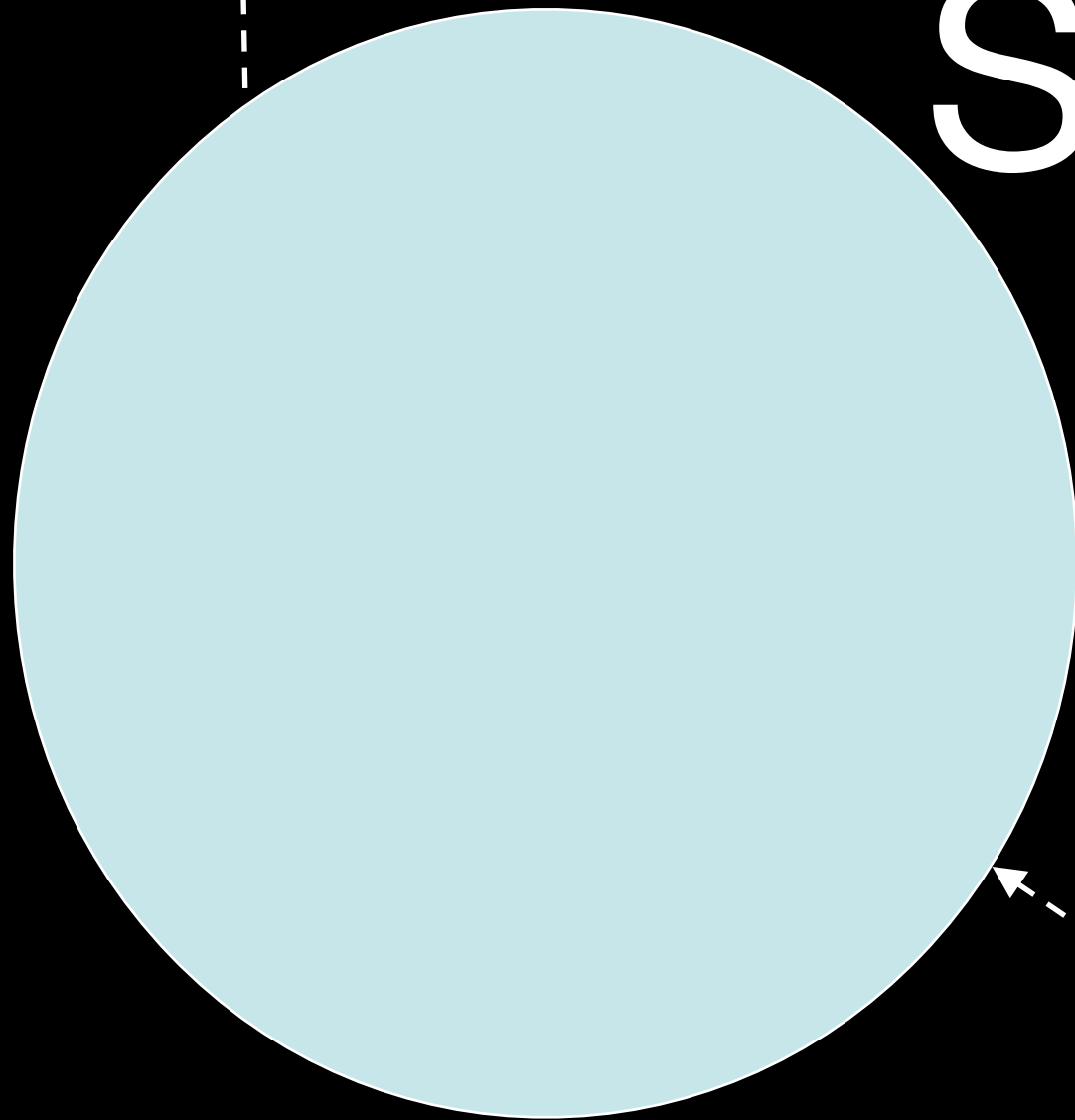
with a smaller footnote about spiritual experience

with a smaller footnote about social/global transformation.

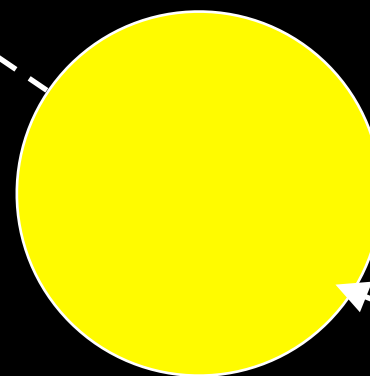
Heaven



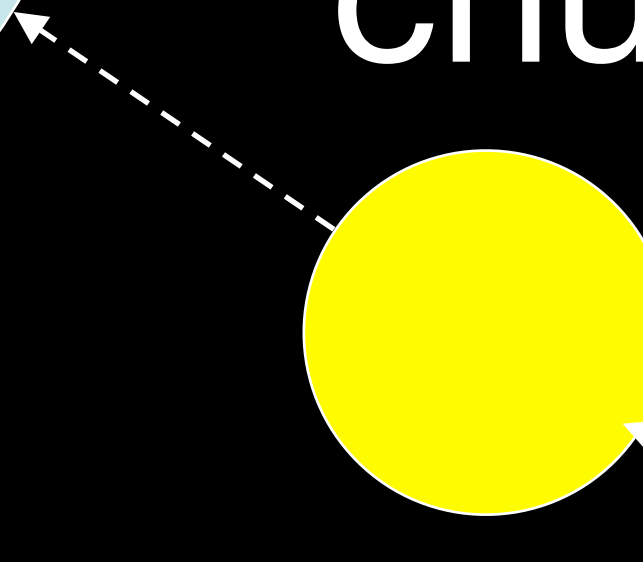
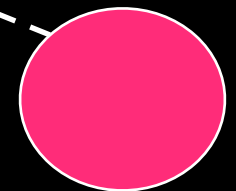
Self (soul)

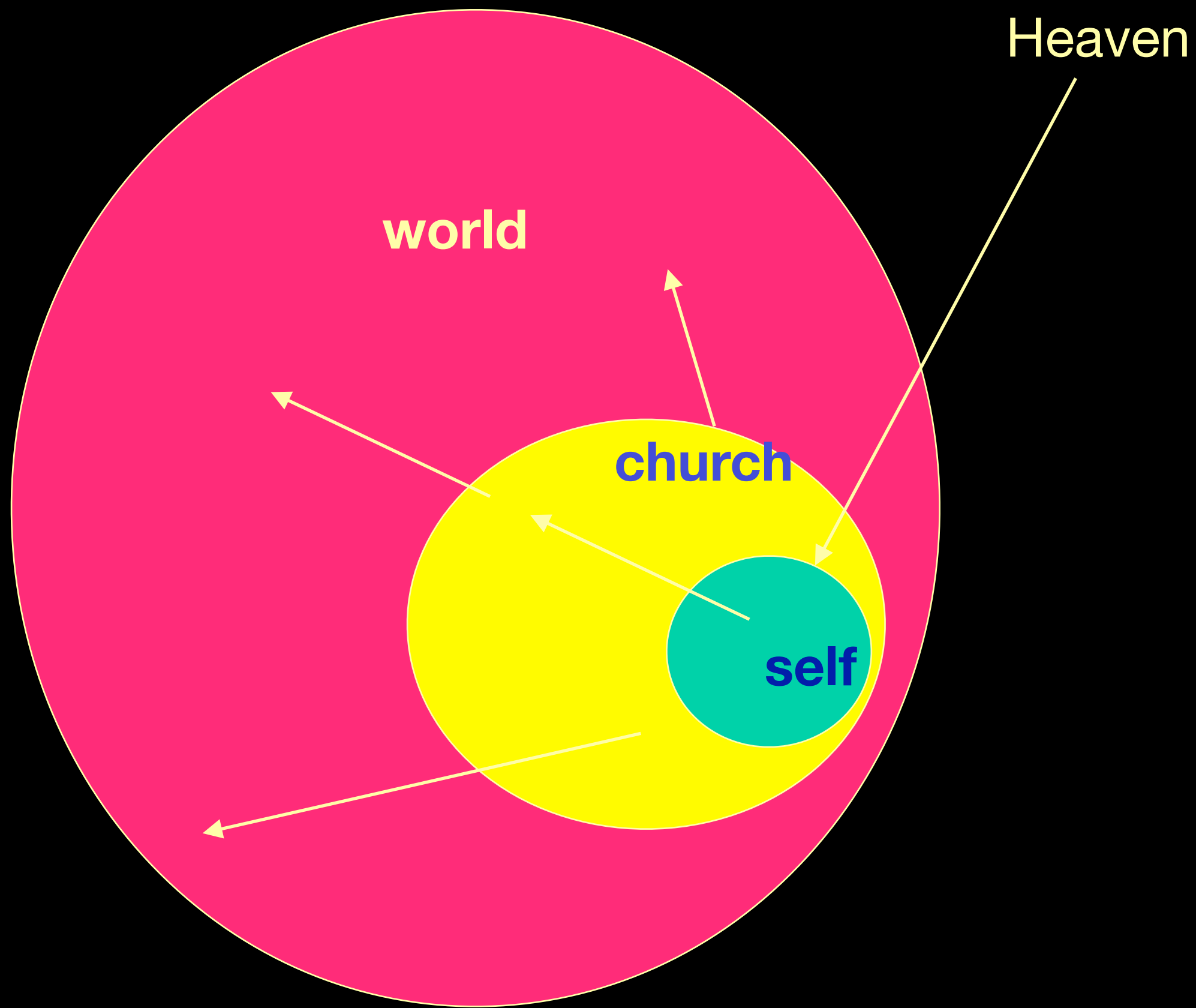


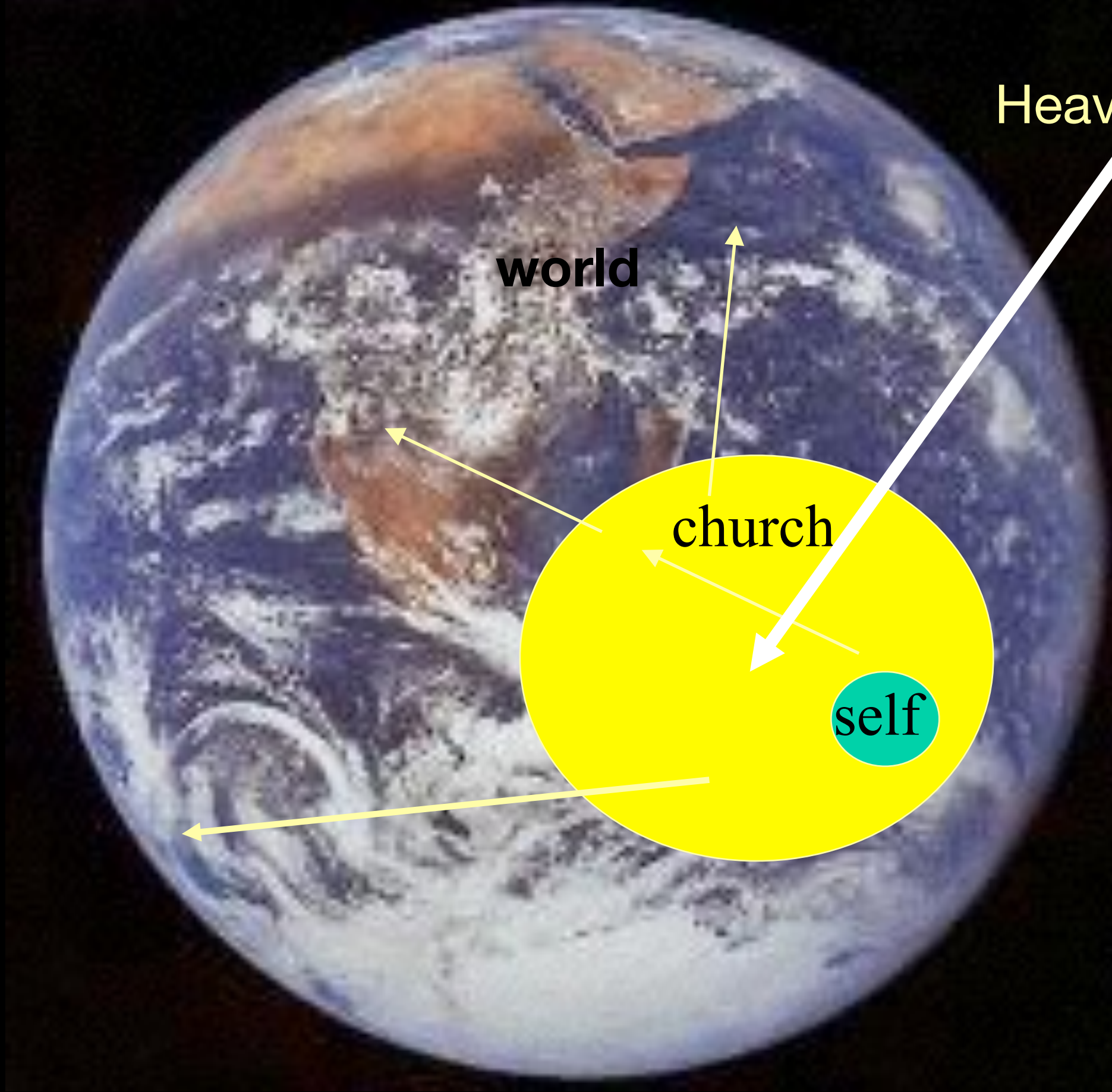
church



world







world

church

self

Heaven (God's will)

Gospel of saving individual souls from hell, and abandoning earth to destruction.

Two
Gospels:



Gospel of saving earth* from human sin, beginning with us.

*Including individuals

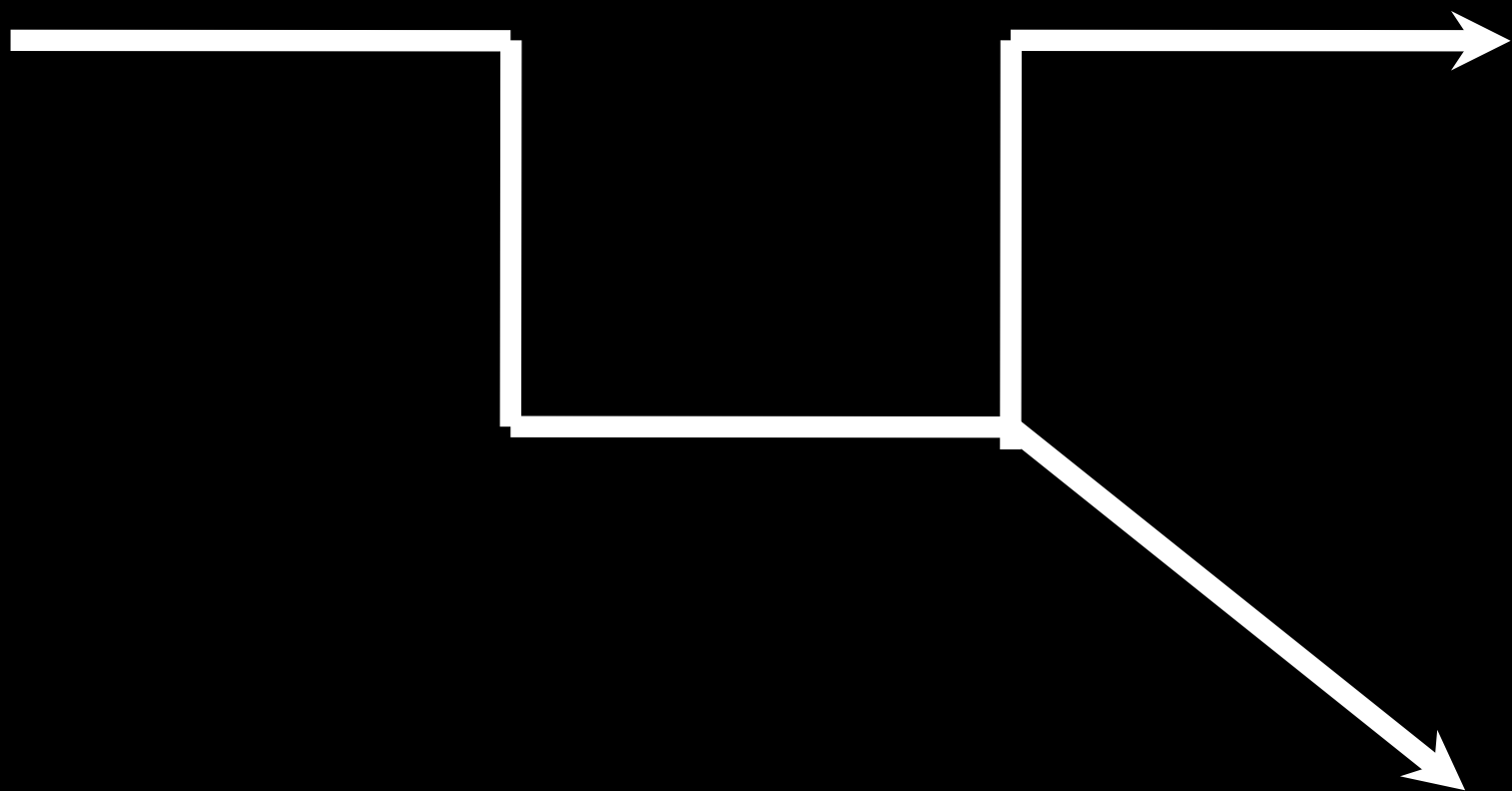
2 gospels/2 churches

One of evacuation (warehouse)

One of transformation (community of
practice ...)

fear: if we lose the evacuation gospel, we lose Jesus.

truth: Jesus is reduced by the evacuation gospel
He is infinitely more beautiful, important, and expansive in
a larger vision of the gospel.



Eden

Heaven

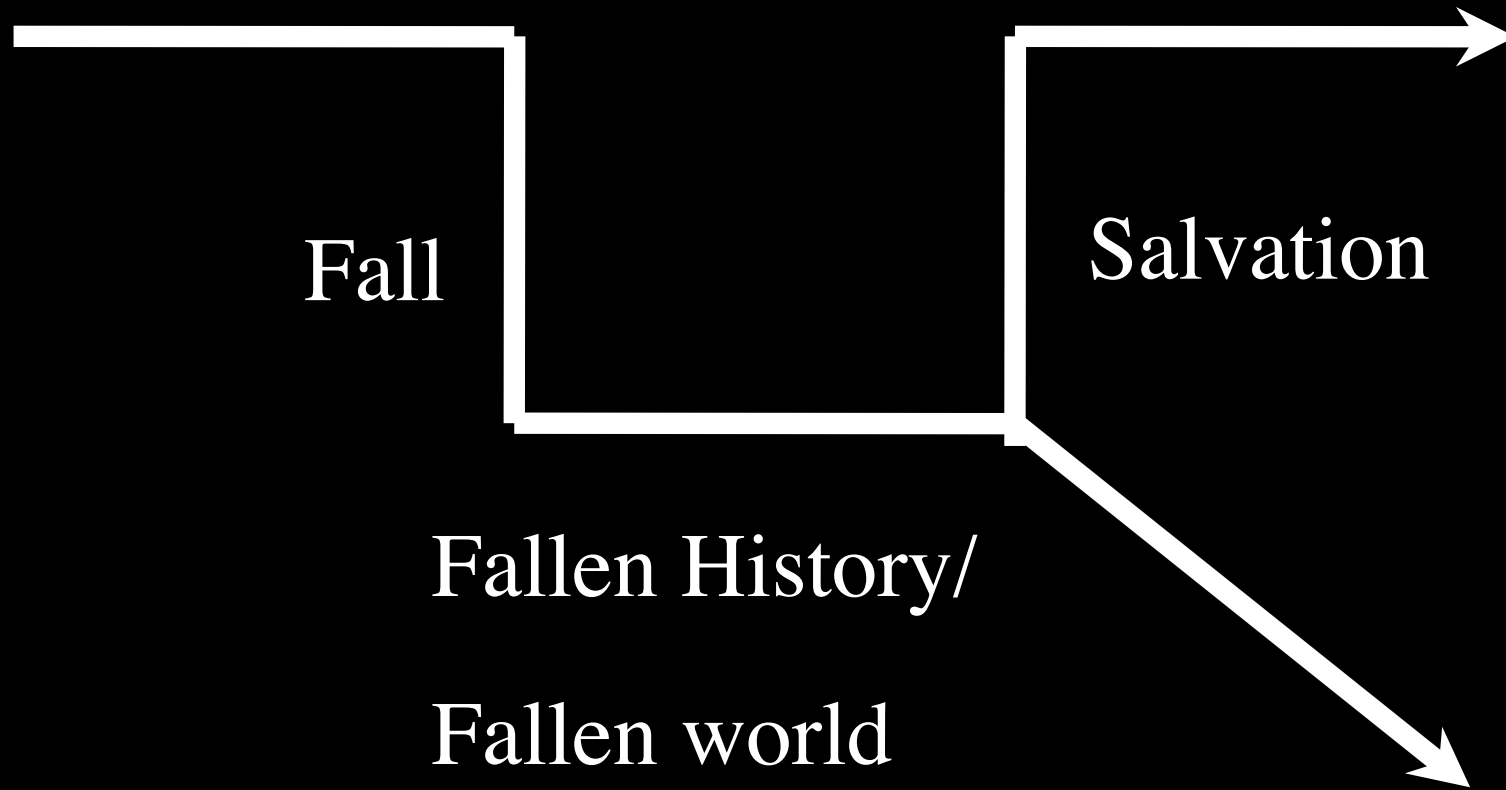
Fall

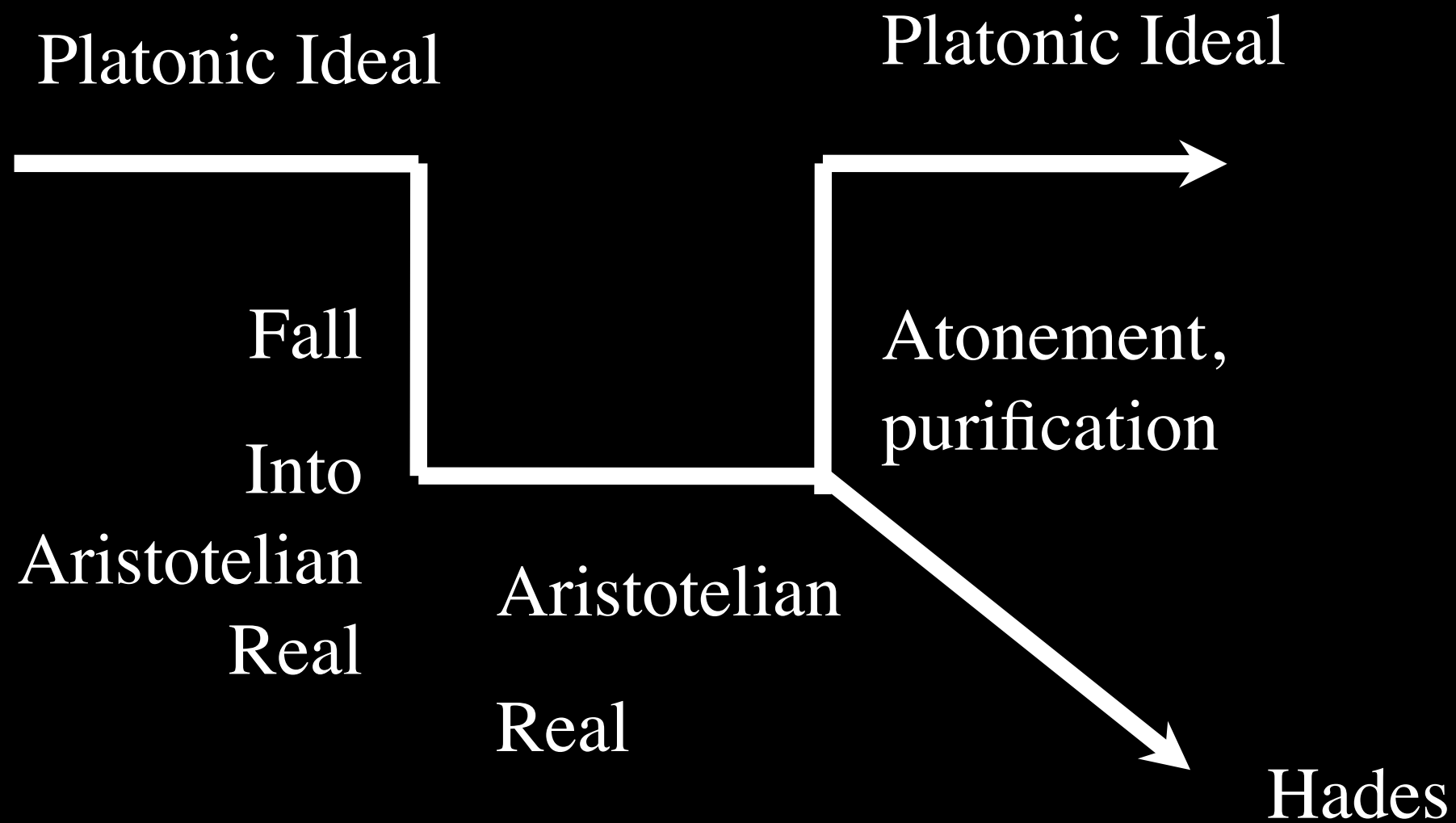
Salvation

Fallen History/

Fallen world

Hell





Pax Romana

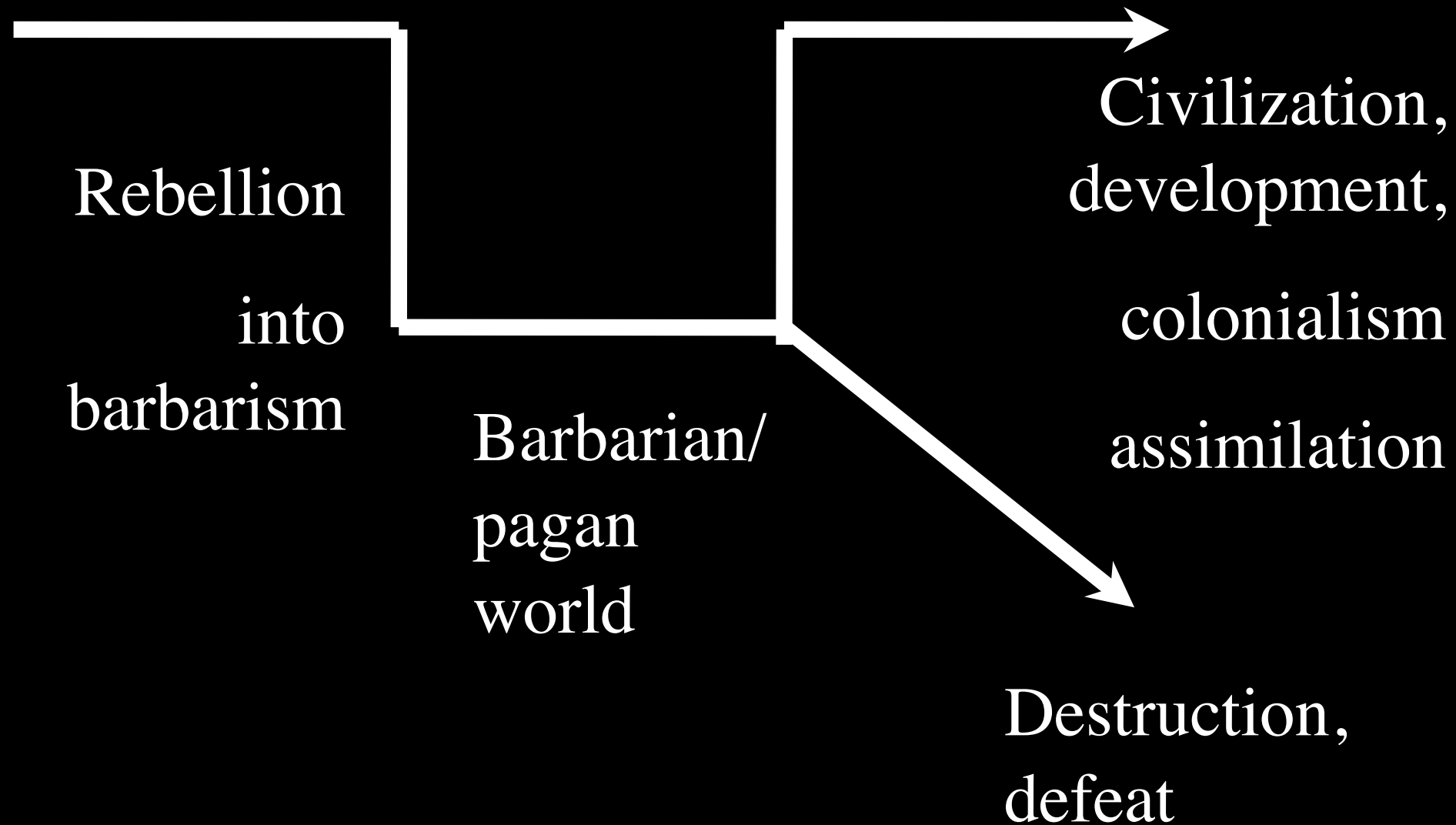
Pax Romana

Rebellion
into
barbarism

Barbarian/
pagan
world

Civilization,
development,
colonialism
assimilation

Destruction,
defeat





Exodus: Liberation & Formation

A suggestion: celebrate Jesus by singing his words!

People, seek first the commonwealth of God
And God's justice for all
And all you need will be added to you
Allelu ... Alleluia.

Ask and it shall be given to you
Seek and you shall find.
Knock and the door shall be opened unto you.
Allelu ... Alleluia


As you have done to the least of these
So you have done to me
Do as you'd have others do for you.
Allelu ... alleluia.

A suggestion: celebrate Jesus by singing his words!

A challenge: -
Songwrite the Beatitudes

4. both the individual & the community

little we versus BIG WE



Turquoise God of Transcend/Include
Green God of Justice/Liberation
Orange God of Universal Principles
Amber God of Tribal Security
Red God of Personal Survival

spirit running

E

Care for your neighbor.

A

Care for yourself.

E

Care for the stranger,

A

And everyone else.

D

Love both your friend

E F#m

And your enemy.

D

For we are all

E

One humanity.

There is this

D9*

A9**

Great big love that links us all with

D9*

A9**

-in one web of life. There is this

D9*

A9**

Spirit running like a river

D

E

A

Through creation.

Care for the earth
And all it contains.
We share the same sunshine
The winds, and the rains
With all creatures
On air, land, and sea.
Protect wild places where they
Can live free.

Chorus

There is this

D9*

A9**

Great big love that links us all with

D9*

A9**

-in one web of life. There is this

D9*

A9**

Spirit running like a river

D

E

A

Through creation.

Care for the forest,
The prairie and pond,
For your little corner,
And what lies beyond.
Care for the ocean,
The atmosphere too,
For this good earth takes
Good care of you.

Chorus

Chorus

There is this

D9*

A9**

Great big love that links us all with

D9*

A9**

-in one web of life. There is this

D9*

A9**

Spirit running like a river

D

E

A

Through creation.

5. emotional authenticity

weep with those who weep
rejoice with those who rejoice

anger
fatigue, depression

also ... fun!

**God of Love &
Justice**

Am

G

Am

When politicians lie to lengthen their regime

Am

G

E7

When corporations buy souls for profit

When factories breathe acid and leak into the stream

When every year the earth gets hotter, who will stop it?

Am

Em

Am

Oh God of love and justice, let your will be done!

Oh God of love and justice, let your will be done!

When newscasters amuse, distracting from the truth,

When advertisers use sex for profit,

When entertainers choose to seduce our youth,

When life gets cheaper every day, who will stop it?

Oh God of love and justice, let your will be done!

Oh God of love and justice, let your will be done!

When terrorists plot violence and governments do too,
When scientists and engineers improve our kill-power,
When parents sit in silence, not knowing what to do,
Who will stir the dying embers of good-will power?

Oh God of love and justice, let your will be done! (2)

When churches pray for peace but then they vote for war,
When preachers tickle ears and twist our story,
No wonder people don't believe anymore.
They're waiting for good news of hope and glory.

Oh God of love and justice, let your will be done! (2)

The human race is building a suicide machine.
The people cheer and dance as the gears are turning.
When will we awaken from this self-destructive scheme
And seek a higher dream and a higher learning?

Oh God of love and justice, let your will be done! (2)

6. fresh images, ideas, language

what will you write, introduce, reinvent,
explore, develop?

this could be a “new renaissance” - a new birth
of Christian art and worship!

we need you.
now!

we'll get through this

A

C#m

We did not choose this./ But we must face it.

D

E

We can't refuse this./ It's our reality.

This is our moment. This is our history.

It's not our fault but/ It's our responsibility.

This is a tragic/ Chain of events here.
There is no magic/ To make it disappear
The only question is/ What we will make of this
To make this crisis / an opportunity.

D E D E A

Breathe another breath.

D E D E A

Take another step.

D E D E A

Do what's ours to do

A E

And we'll get through.

We can't give up now. We can't cave in now
We can't shrink back now. We can't surrender.
There are no short cuts. No easy answers.
We'll hold back nothing. And we'll get through this.

Breathe another breath.
Take another step.
Do what's ours to do
And we'll get through.

It's like we're climbing/ a tall steep mountain
Our past is heavy/ we feel its gravity.
We also feel - the Spirit rising
We'll keep on climbing ... co-create our destiny.

Breathe another breath.

Take another step.

Do what's ours to do

And we'll get through.

Make a choice for faith

For justice, peace, and hope

Walk the path of love

And we'll get through.

A D A

We shall overcome

A D A

We shall overcome

A D E F#m B E B E

We shall overcome someday

E D E A E D A

Oh Deep in my heart,

D E F#m

I do believe

A D A E A

We shall overcome someday.

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