



When I am among the trees,  
especially the willows and the honey locust,  
equally the beech, the oaks, and the pines,  
they give off such hints of gladness.

I would almost say they save me, and daily.  
I am so distant from the hope of myself,  
in which I have goodness, and discernment,  
and never hurry through the world  
but walk slowly, and bow often.  
Around me the trees stir in their leaves  
and call out, "Stay awhile."



The light flows from their branches  
And they call again, “It’s simple,”  
they say, “and you, too, have come  
into the world to do this, to go easy,  
to be filled with light, and to shine.”





## The Mangroves, by Mary Oliver

As I said before, I am living now in a warm place, surrounded by mangroves. Mostly I walk beside them, they discourage entrance. The black oaks and the pines of my northern home are in my heart, even as I hear them whisper, "Listen, we are trees too." Okay, I'm trying. They certainly put on an endless performance of leaves. Admiring is easy, but affinity, that does take some time.



So many  
and so leggy and all of them rising as if  
attempting to escape this world which, don't  
they know it, can't be done. "Are you  
trying to fly or what?" I ask, and they  
answer back, "We are what we are, you  
are what you are, love us if you can."



"We are what we are, you  
are what you are, love us if you can."

(how) do i stay christian?



# Naked Spirit- uality

A LIFE WITH GOD  
IN 12 SIMPLE WORDS

BRIAN D.  
McLAREN

*Author of A New Kind of Christianity*

# THE GALÁPAGOS ISLANDS

ON  
LOCATION

A SPIRITUAL JOURNEY

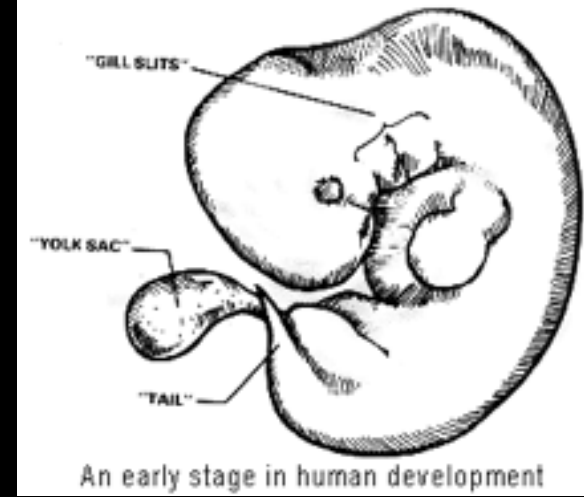
BRIAN D. McLAREN

**Faith is not one  
thing: it is at  
least four.**

**And each kind  
of faith has its  
own doubt.**



# Four Stages of Faith Development



**William Blake** - innocence, experience, higher experience

**Soren Kierkegaard** - aesthetic, ethical, religious

**William Perry** - dualism (a,b), multiplicity (a,b), relativism (a,b),  
commitment (a,b,c)

**James Fowler** - primal, mythical-literal, synthetic-conventional, individual-reflective, conjunctive, universalizing

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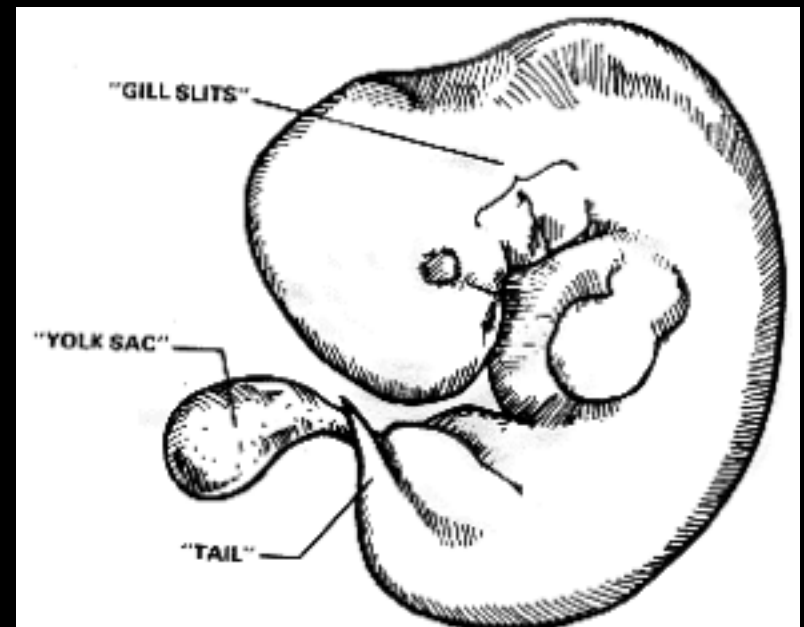
**Paul Ricoeur** - precritical/first naivete, critical, postcritical/second naivete

**Graves/Beck/Wilber** - archaic-instinctive, animist/tribal, ego-centric-exploitive, absolutist -obedience authoritarian, scientific strategic, relativistic-personalistic - communitarian; systemic-integral, holistic,

**Richard Rohr** - first half of life, second half of life/ order, disorder, reorder

# Stage 1

## Simplicity



An early stage in human development



# **Stage 1**

## **Simplicity**

**dualism:**

**seeing in terms of  
binary opposites.**

**You're either for us or against  
us. It's all or nothing.**

# **Stage 1**

## **Simplicity**

**Focus: Right or wrong? Good or bad? Like or dislike? Us/them?**

**Motive: Pleasing authority figures, being an insider “us”**

**Perception: Dualistic**

# **Stage 1**

## **Beliefs**

- everything is known or knowable; there are easy answers to every question**
- good authorities/us are the ones who know the right answers**
- the bad guys/them are wrong**

# **Stage 1**

## **Authorities**

**Godlike, God's representatives,  
they know and give answers**

# **Stage 1**

**Simplicity**

**Life is a war.**



# **Stage 1**

**Identity: In my leader or group.**

**Relationships: Dependent or co-  
dependent**

# **Stage 1**

**Simplicity**

**God is ...**

**The Ultimate Authority Figure  
or Ultimate Friend/Defender/  
Champion**

# **Stage 1**

**Key Moral Question:**

**What do our authority figures say?**

# Stage 1

## Simplicity

**STRENGTHS:** highly committed, willing to sacrifice and suffer.

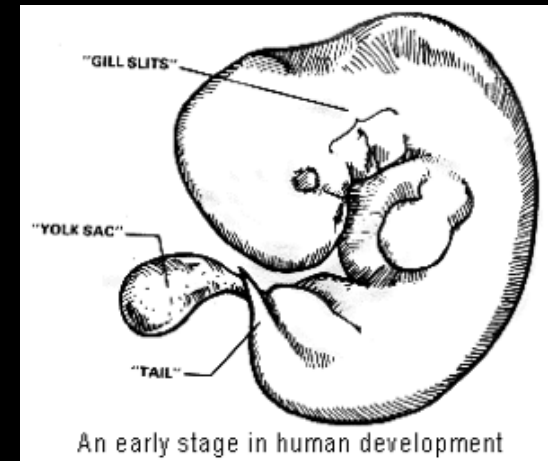
**WEAKNESSES:** Also willing to kill or inflict suffering. Arrogant, simplistic, combative, judgmental, intolerant

# Stage 1

## Simplicity

Connection through  
correctness of

belief, behavior, belonging





# **Stage 1 Doubt**

**Maybe the bad guys aren't  
all bad/wrong?**

**Maybe the good guys  
aren't all good/right?**

**Maybe there are shades of  
gray?**

# Stage 2

**Complexity**



# **Stage 2**

**Complexity**

**Pragmatism**

**There are more than two ways  
to do things.**

# **Stage 2**

## **Complexity**

**Focus: Effective or ineffective?**

**Technique, winning, success**

**Motive: Reach goals, being  
effective**

**Perception: Pragmatic**

## **Stage 2**

### **Beliefs:**

**-anything is doable**

**-there are many ways to reach  
the goal**

**-authorities/us are the ones who  
know how to do it**

**-the bad guys don't do the right  
stuff**

# **Stage 2**

## **Authorities**

**Coaches. They help you grow and succeed with know-how.**

# **Stage 2**

## **Complexity**

**Life is a game.**

**Learn the rules.**

**Play to win.**

# **Stage 2**

## **Complexity**

**Identity: My cause or achievement.**

**Relationships: Increasingly independent.**



# **Stage 2**

**Complexity**

**God is ...**

**The Ultimate Guide or Coach**

# **Stage 2**

**Key Moral Question:**

**Does it help me succeed?**

# Stage 2

## Complexity

**STRENGTHS: Enthusiasm,  
idealism, action**

**WEAKNESSES: Superficial,  
naïve, overly pragmatic**

**Stage 2**

**Complexity**

**Connection through  
curiosity & competence**



## **Stage 2 Doubt**

**Maybe winning isn't so good. Maybe losing isn't so bad. Maybe this is the wrong game to play.**

# Stage 3

# Perplexity

## Carnegie Stages of Human Development

Dr Mark Hill, Cell Biology Lab, School of Medical Sciences (Anatomy), UNSW



### Acknowledgements

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# **Stage 3**

**Perplexity**

**Relativism**

**Everyone has an opinion. Who knows who is right? Maybe there's no such thing as right and wrong? Maybe everybody is right - and wrong?**

# **Stage 3**

## **Perplexity**

**Focus: Honest or dishonest?**

**Authentic or inauthentic?**

**Motive: Being honest or  
authentic**

**Perception: Relativistic, critical**



# **Stage 3**

## **Beliefs**

**-little/nothing is known or knowable; everybody has an opinion**

**-good people are honest about their questions**

# **Stage 3**

**Authorities are ...**

**Controllers**

**The Enemy**

**Trying to impose easy answers  
on the naïve**

**Trying to use the naïve**

# **Stage 3**

## **Perplexity**

**Life is ...**

**a joke**

**mystery**

**or search**

## **Stage 3**

**Identity: In solitude, or among a small band of similarly alienated friends**

**Relationships: Counter-dependent**

# **Stage 3**

## **Perplexity**

**God is ...**

**mythic authority I've outgrown**

**mysterious reality I'm seeking**

**or opiate of the pathetic**

**masses**

# **Stage 3**

**Key Moral Question:**

**Is it honest, authentic, and  
suspicious?**

# Stage 3

## Perplexity

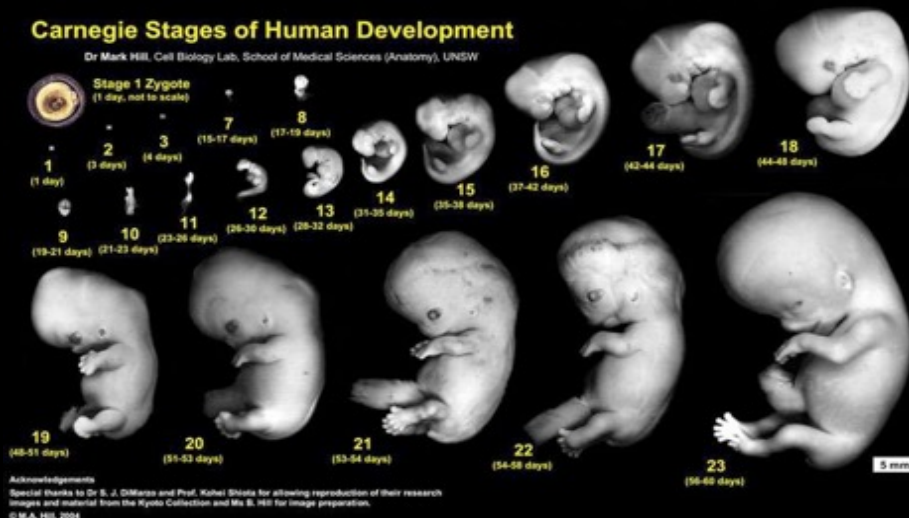
**STRENGTHS:** depth, honesty, sensitivity to suffering, perhaps ironic humor

**WEAKNESSES:** cynical, uncommitted, withdrawn, critical, depressed, elitist

# Stage 3

## Perplexity

### Connection through unknowing





# **Stage 3 Doubt**

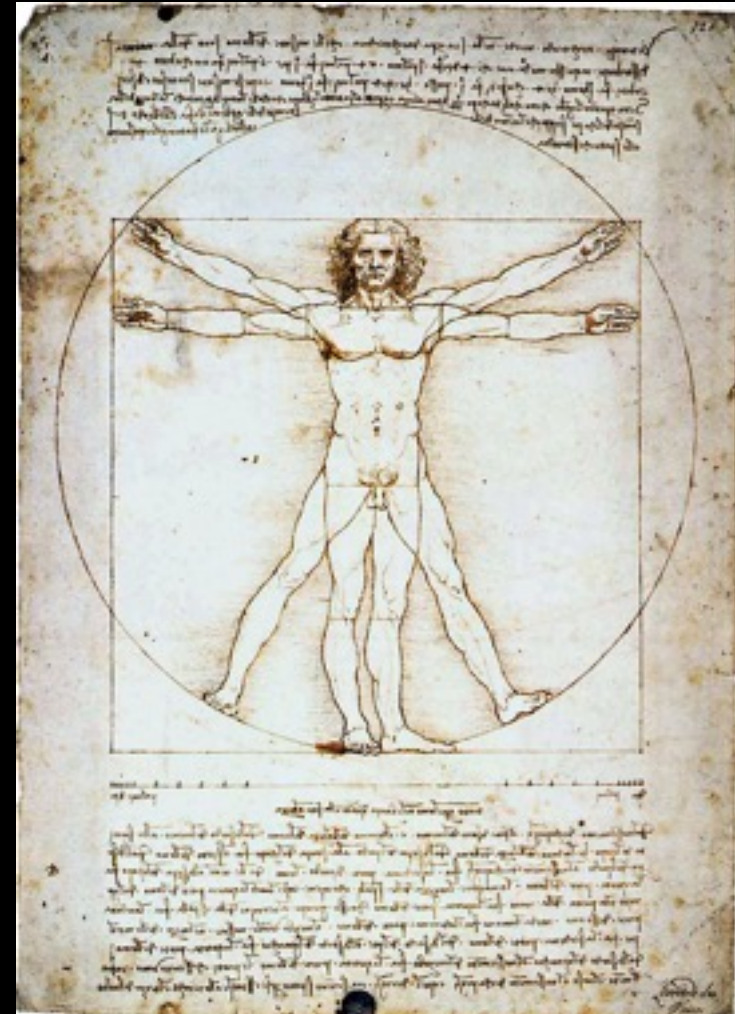
**Do I see through  
everything? Is there no  
morality or meaning left?**

**Where do I belong?**

**How do I live now?**

# Stage 4

## Harmony



# **Stage 4**

## **Harmony**

### **Holistic/Integral**

**Recovering and integrating  
strengths of simplicity,  
complexity, and perplexity:  
Enough light to choose & live,  
enough mystery for humility.**

# **Stage 4**

## **Harmony**

**Focus: Wise or unwise?**

**Fulfilling potential**

**Motive: Serve, contribute, make  
a difference**

**Perception: Integrated,  
synthesizing, sympathetic**

# Stage 4

## Beliefs

- some things are known, many are mysteries; life is a quest
- there is no “them”

# **Stage 4**

## **Authorities**

**people like me:**

**imperfect**

**sometimes doing their best,**

**sometimes dishonest,**

**sometimes sincerely misguided**

# **Stage 4**

**Life is ...**

**What you make it (with God's  
help)**

# **Stage 4**

**Identity: In mutual relationships**

**Relationships: Interdependent**



# Stage 4

**God is ...**

**the May Be, Knowable in part,  
yet mysterious, present yet  
transcendent, just yet merciful  
(able to hold truths in tension --  
“paradoxy”)**

# **Stage 4**

## **Key Moral Question:**

**Is it appropriate to context, and conducive of the common good?**

# Stage 4

## Harmony

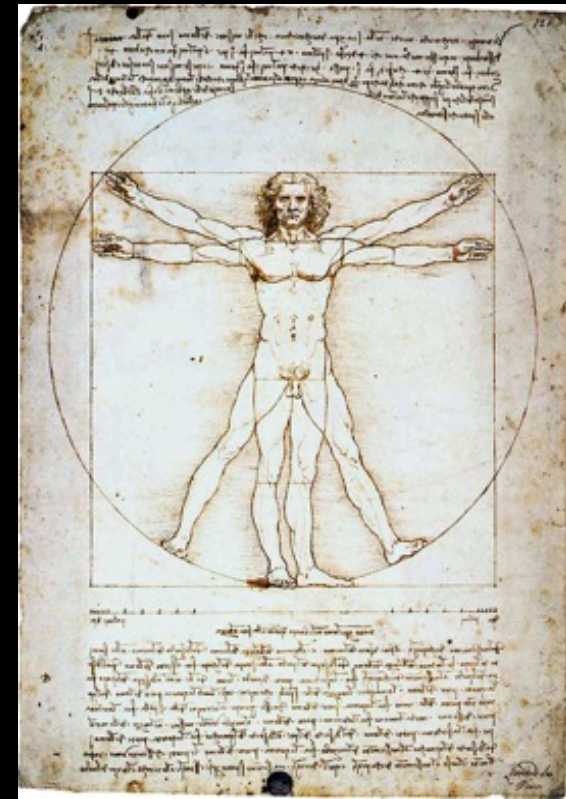
**STRENGTHS:** May exhibit strengths of previous stages, plus stability, endurance, wisdom

**WEAKNESSES:** May display weaknesses of earlier stages

# Stage 4

## Harmony

connection through love



# **Stage 4 Doubt:**

**Am I willing to face new levels of complexity and perplexity?**

**Am I willing to extend empathy to people in other stages?**

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**Richard Rohr** - first half of life, second half of life

**1. faith expressing itself through beliefs (or behavior or belonging)**

**2. faith expressing itself through knowledge and action**

**3. faith expressing itself through questioning, doubt, refusal to settle.**

**4. faith expressing itself through love.**

**Options when a stage stops  
working:**

**linger through denial**

**lateral transfer**

**leave**

**revert**

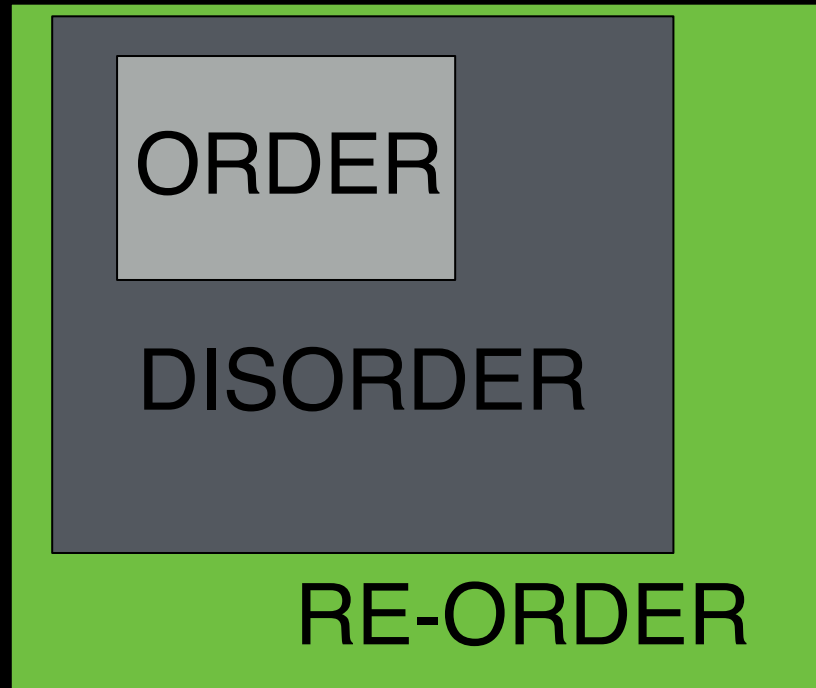
**grow**



ORDER

DISORDER

RE-ORDER



**include and transcend**

**include and transcend**



**ORDER**

**DISORDER**

**RE-ORDER**

(how) do i stay christian?

perhaps you cannot stay a  
stage 1 Christian ... but you  
can become a stage 2  
Christian ... or stage 3 ... or  
stage 4.

Your portal to the next stage of  
faith is doubt.

# **What happens after Stage 4?**

**Harmony becomes the new  
simplicity ...**

# **What happens after Stage 4?**

**Harmony becomes the new  
simplicity ...**

**which encounters new  
complexity ...**

**which enters new perplexity ...**

**which discovers new harmony ...**

# **What happens after Stage 4?**

**Eventually ... one becomes less aware of stages and struggle and more aware of learning, life, love.**

## **a never-ending journey**

The spiritual journey could be seen as a constant purification of motive until I can finally say, “I have no other reason to do anything except love of God and love of neighbor. And I don’t even need people to know this.” When I can say this I have total and full freedom. I can no longer be bought off! Finally I realize that my life is not about me. It’s about Love.

Richard Rohr, Adapted from Francis: Subverting the Honor/Shame System  
(CD, MP3 download)



## **An observation:**

**Cults and “bad faith” or “toxic” religion can be seen as groups which require people to revert to a Stage 1 status and stay there.**

**Stage 1 is easier for the leaders and followers ... in a way.**

# **An observation:**

**Whole denominations or parachurch organizations seem to specialize in certain stages, and fail people in other stages.**

# **An observation:**

**Leaders seldom (never?) lead people in a stage beyond their own.**

**1's lead 1's.**

**2's lead 2's and 1's.**

**3's lead 3's and 2's.**

**4's lead 4's and 3's (plus?)**

# **An observation:**

**Stage 3 is tough on everybody --  
leaders and followers.**

## **A question:**

**How do we minister to people with such contrary expectations, needs, issues, and desires?**

## **A direction:**

**Explore Jesus as teacher ... not just in content, but also in method.**

## **An observation:**

**Jesus models working with people  
in each stage, and always brings  
them farther on the journey.**

## **An important reminder**

**The goal isn't to rush through the stages to get to 4 as soon as possible.**

**Each stage has lessons to teach, and prepares for the next.**

**You don't move on until you're ready ... in the fullness of time.**

**We need churches and ministries  
that help people at all levels ...**



**disciple \Dis\*ci"ple\, n. [OE. disciple, deciple, OF. disciple, fr. L. discipulus, fr. discere to learn (akin to docere to teach; see Docile) + prob. a root meaning to turn or drive, as in L. pellerere to drive (see Pulse).] One who receives instruction from another; a scholar; a learner; especially, a follower who has learned to believe in the truth of the doctrine of his teacher; an adherent in doctrine; as, the disciples of Plato; the disciples of our Savior**



# Stage 0

## Egocentricity

**It's all about me.**



# **Stage 0**

## **Egocentricity**

**Focus: Like or dislike? Fun or not?**

**Motive: Pleasing & comforting  
myself**

**Perception: Narcissistic**

# **Stage 0**

## **Beliefs**

**-I would be constantly happy if everyone would cooperate**

**-authorities exist to make me feel good**

**-bad people make me feel bad**

# **Stage 0**

## **Authorities**

**Exist for my benefit, serve my entitlement, are genii-like.**

# **Stage 0**

**Egocentricity**

**Life is play or party.**

# **Stage 0**

**Identity: In my likes and dislikes.**

**Relationships: Presumptive**



# **Stage 0**

**Egocentricity**

**God is ...**

**The Candyman, the Genii, the  
Magic Lamp**

# **Stage 0**

**Key Moral Question:**

**does it make me feel good or bad?**

**do i “like” it?**

# **Stage 0**

## **Egocentricity**

**STRENGTHS:** emotionally expressive, transparent, aware of own needs and desires.

**WEAKNESSES:** Largely oblivious to the needs and desires of others

**Stage 0**

**Egocentricity**

**Connection through need.**



# **From selfish to true self**

- 0. Egocentricity - One (me!)**
- 1. Simplicity - Two (us/them)**
- 2. Complexity - Three or more**
- 3. Perplexity - Fractions**
- 4. Harmony - One (all)**

# **NEEDED:**

**Faith communities that can practice harmony ...**

- welcoming people where they are**
- creating space to learn the lessons of each stage**
- opening space to grow**
- providing models/mentors**



**three poems**

**by**

**mary oliver**



## **WILD GEESE**

**You do not have to be good.**

**You do not have to walk on your knees**

**for a hundred miles through the desert repenting.**

**You only have to let the soft animal of your body**

**love what it loves.**

**Tell me about despair, yours, and I will tell you mine.**

**Meanwhile the world goes on.**

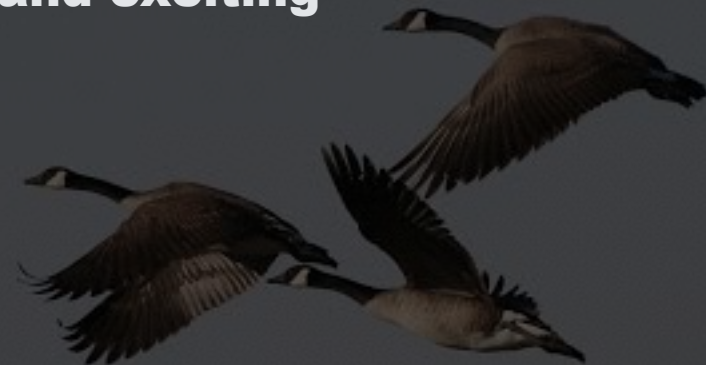


**Meanwhile the sun and the clear pebbles of the rain  
are moving across the landscapes,  
over the prairies and the deep trees,  
the mountains and the rivers.**

**Meanwhile the wild geese, high in the clean blue air,  
are heading home again.**

**Whoever you are, no matter how lonely,  
the world offers itself to your imagination,**

**calls to you like the wild geese, harsh and exciting –  
over and over announcing your place  
in the family of things.**



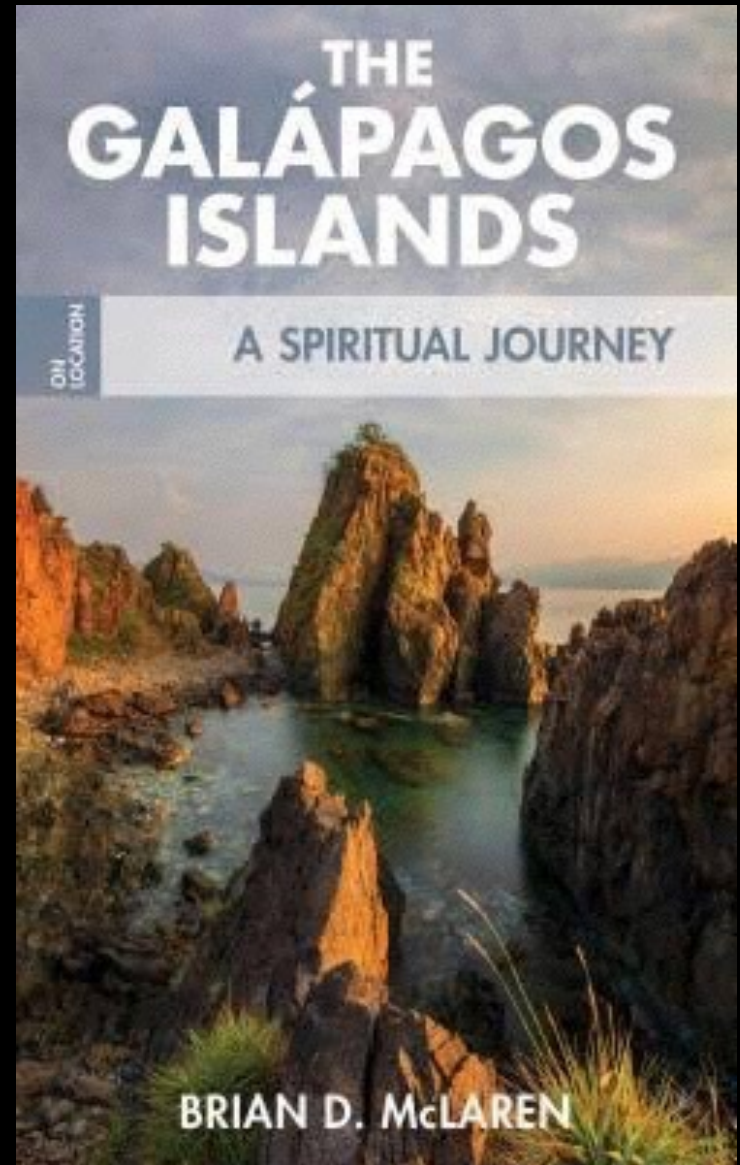


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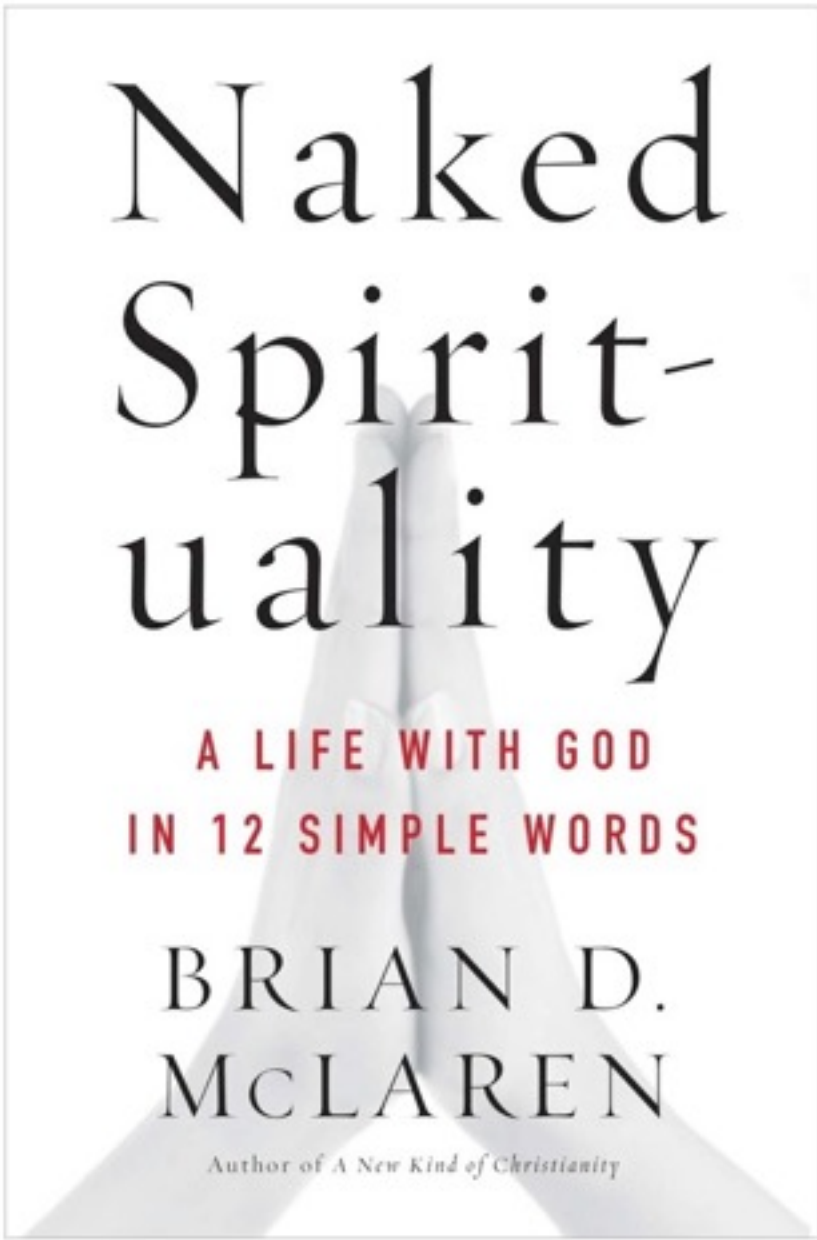
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