

THE KNIGHT & THE GARDENER

WORLDVIEWS MAKE WORLDS



CASSIDY S. DALE

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TELL ME YOUR IMAGE OF
GOD AND I WILL TELL YOU
YOUR THEOLOGY.
- CARL JUNG

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Have you ever considered how you see the world? Why people disagree over what is moral, heroic, loving, or holy? Why you team well with some people and conflict with others? Why two people sitting next to each other in the same church can read very different things in the same Bible? Why people disagree about politics and war?

The answer is *worldviews*. Everyone holds a worldview of his or her own. **Worldviews are like the glasses one wears to see the world—every “lens” shows you the world in its own way.** And these lenses, since they shape how you see the world, influence how you react to situations around you and how you make decisions. For example, some worldviews or lenses present events around you as aspects of a great conflict in which you are a hero who can help win a great victory. Other worldviews or lenses show you a world in which you are an inventor, explorer or pioneer who can solve a critical world problem to make the world a better place.

Here’s an example. Not long ago I asked a large group of pastors what they would title a history book—if they wrote one—on the moral, religious, societal, and political story of the past two decades. Half of the pastors answered that they would give the history book titles like “Decline,” “Collapse,” or “Faith Under Attack.” The other half of the pastors provided titles like “Slow Progress.”

Their responses showed me that—beyond mere optimism or pessimism—there were two worldviews at work in the room. **These two worldviews served as these pastors’ lenses for interpreting all recent events, understanding the world around them, and providing their approaches to change the world. I call these two worldviews *The Knight and The Gardener*.**

I have seen these two worldviews at work during my years as a futurist and consultant. And as we moved into the Bush years, the War on Terror, and war in Iraq, I found that the Knight-Gardener distinction explained more—and enabled me to forecast more—of the behavior of Bush Administration officials,

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fundamentalists and liberals on the religious and political scene, the actions and rhetoric of al-Qaeda senior leadership, and some of our military successes and failures against the insurgency in Iraq.

This book “maps” the basic framework for how Knights and Gardeners address problems and conflict situations. Here I seek to explain those two worldviews and how they have shaped or affected our public and private lives today in religion, relationships, politics, and war and peace.

This book also seeks to explain how Knights and Gardeners differ—and how they’re similar across spiritual, political or theological orientations or contexts. **Originally written as a list of maxims** for my students and consulting clients, you may find these Knight-Gardener distinctions useful as well. **You may even recognize the influence of these two worldviews in your work, family, faith, and politics—or even in yourself.**

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Knights see themselves—and all people and things—as part of a great, **cosmos-spanning war** between the forces of divine good and demonic evil or instead, say, between enlightened reason and destructive ignorance. Knights believe the primary calling of good people is to undertake crusades—moral, spiritual, and political—to protect the innocent and defeat the forces of evil. Knights categorize people as allies or enemies, and see most situations as zero sum games. **Any combative or competitive endeavor is a Knight's endeavor.**

For religious Knights, regardless of faith perspective, God is the supreme divine authority whose order requires courageous, determined, moral champions. Christian Knights, for example, spread the Gospel to save people from the consequences of their sinful behavior, and seek out ways to eradicate immorality from the world.

A Knight looking down on the world from a space capsule would see good, noble paladins fighting great, menacing dragons for control of the world. **For Knights, the world—and the terrain of the individual human soul—is a battlefield, always at war.**

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Gardeners see themselves—and all people and things—as part of the growth of a great, cosmos-spanning Garden, one that can flourish further if aided by well-meaning and inspired people. Gardeners believe the primary calling of good people is to cultivate the Garden through planting, good planning, the pursuit of transformative discovery, invention and innovation, and artistic revelation. **Any constructive endeavor is a Gardener's endeavor.**

For religious Gardeners, God is the creative force whose greatest attributes are imagination and creativity. Gardeners view themselves as imbued by the Creator with the divine creative spark and charged with growing the Garden beyond its current borders. Christian Gardeners, for example, spread the Gospel to restore broken people so they can rejoin the ongoing creation process, and to awaken others to their meaningful role in tending the Garden.

A Gardener looking down on the world from a space capsule would see a great Garden of lush jungles, farms, the construction or rejuvenation of beautiful cities, and new opportunities in the now-barren places. And over the blue parts of the globe, the Gardener would see a shining silver rain fall silently into a swirling silver sea. **For Gardeners**, to paraphrase the Apostle Paul in Romans chapter 8, **all of Creation is involved in one great act of giving birth.**



Other thinkers have seen the Knight and Gardener worldviews at play in world history, world religions, game theory, and politics, but refer to them by other terms.

- **Winners and Losers and Challenge and Response** are the terms used by historian Arnold Toynbee in his 12-volume examination of the life cycles of 23 major world civilizations *A Study of History*, published between 1934 and 1961. Toynbee's thesis is that civilizations fail when they remain too long in Winners and Losers mode, and fail to operate primarily from a Challenge and Response orientation. Futurist Peter Schwartz borrows from Toynbee in his book on scenario methodology *The Art of the Long View: Planning for the Future in an Uncertain World* (1996).
- **Zerosum games and Nonzerosum games** are the terms used by journalist and historian Robert Wright in his study of the intersection of human evolutionary biology, civilization, and moral development *Nonzero: The Logic of Human Destiny* (2000).
- **Finite games and Infinite games** are the terms used by New York University religion professor James Carse in his study of religion, culture, and history *Finite and Infinite Games* (1987). (Many thanks to Dr. Carse—the unconventional structure of this book is based on his.)
- **Strict father and Nurturant parent** are the terms used by cognitive linguistics and political rhetoric professor George Lakoff in *Moral Politics* (1996) and *Don't Think of an Elephant* (2004).

Other thinkers have made similar points, but have not coined counterpart terms. Historian Jared Diamond outlines how zerosum (Knight) orientations have caused civilizations to fail in *Collapse: How Societies Choose to Succeed or Fail* (2005). Comparative religions expert Joseph Campbell often said that a major theme across the major world religions was a quest to reunite two warring factions or separated halves in the world into one-ness.

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The Hero with a Thousand Faces (1949), *The Masks of God: Creative Mythology* (1968), *The Power of Myth* (1991) and *Reflections on the Art of Living: The Joseph Campbell Companion* (1995) contain this theme in Campbell's works. Even national security and global affairs thinker Thomas Barnett refers to a Knight military as a "Leviathan" military, and Gardener military as a "System Administration" military—and outlines the need for both—in *The Pentagon's New Map* (2004) and *Blueprint for Action* (2005).

Don't mistake me as saying "There are two kinds of people in the world"—that's absurd. While there are many other worldviews and worldview-narratives at work in the world today, I focus on the Knight and the Gardener because they are the most relevant to our current political, cultural and religious situation.

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Where do these worldviews come from? No one knows for sure. Some argue that religions create worldviews; others argue that worldviews create religious orientations—a real “Which came first—the chicken or the egg?” conundrum.

Separating worldviews from their religious roots (or vice versa) is impossible. For the purposes of this book I argue that *worldviews create religious orientations*. Why? It’s simpler. Since this book is written to be helpful for as many people as possible, and since many of you may not be religious, I begin the book with the areas of life *most* people find *most* familiar, and end with spiritual matters.

Even if you have no interest in religion, but still find religion in society important to understand, you may find that the last section of this book—Soul—explains why and how religious groups such as the Religious Right pursue their political agendas.

Regardless, one need not be religious to hold one of these worldviews.

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Everyone has both the Knight and the Gardener within him or herself, but tends to emphasize one worldview over the other out of choice, habit, upbringing, religious background, or education. Everyone is primarily one and secondarily the other. You may also function in different modes in different parts of your life, say, as a Knight at work and a Gardener at home.

Worldviews aren't destiny. Even the most strident Knights function as Gardeners from time to time; and most Gardeners must function as Knights occasionally. And Knights and Gardeners encounter "conversion experiences" to the other orientation for any number of life reasons.

In this book, I seek to **outline only the patterns and tendencies of Knights and Gardeners' worldviews and behavior.** These two worldviews are described as opposites—and sometimes presented in extremes—for illustrative purposes and clarity only. In reality, they are not opposites or mutually exclusive, but the two ends of a continuum.

Like all paradigms, this book seeks to explain *most* of a phenomenon, *most* of the time.

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Which are you primarily—a Knight or a Gardener? Which have you been?
Which do you aspire to be?

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What you perceive as heroic or virtuous behavior influences how you form and maintain your love relationships, which in turn affects how you behave during conflict situations. All of these influence how you approach matters of the soul.

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Holding the Knight's or the Gardener's worldview shapes how you believe heroes are supposed to behave, and what virtue is.



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In Western culture, our heroic ideals are drawn primarily from three sources—the Bible, stories about the quest for the Holy Grail, and pop culture.



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Knights find warriors—literal or spiritual—heroic. In the Bible, Knights find their greatest heroic inspirations in the God-as-“Yahweh” stories in the early Old Testament, and the apocalyptic stories in *Daniel* and *Revelation*. These stories depict the people of God succeeding or failing in great spiritual showdowns with the forces of evil. Knights aspire to serve in God’s army against the Devil.

Knights’ imaginations are often sparked by *Revelation’s* depictions of a sword-wielding Christ leading God’s army against Satan and his forces. For Knights, there are only two camps in Creation—good and evil—that struggle for victory in the world. **Knights idolize the champions of good, and want to become one.** Knights believe that siding with the right pleases God, and refusal to do so displeases God.

Knights use *Revelation* to interpret the rest of the Bible as an epic story of conflict in which great champions are required. Seen in this light, Jesus serves as the Great Commander or Great Redeemer who returns souls home from the outland of sin—Satan’s realm—to God’s arms and God’s service. And Jesus’ miracles are proof of his authority and strength.

Knights’ primarily ask *Who should be combated? Who are the good guys and who are the bad guys? Am I worthy to serve in God’s army—or how can I become so? What degree of force does God say is warranted to overcome this foe?*





Gardeners find healers—literal or spiritual—heroic. Gardeners find their inspiring hero role models in the biblical stories about wholeness and spiritual growth or progress. Gardeners admire, and seek to emulate Adam tending the Garden of Eden, Moses leading the Israelites to the Promised Land (a new Garden), the prophets working to renew the nation to its creative purposes, Jesus healing wounds and reconciling people with God and each other, and Paul establishing churches.

Gardeners idolize healers and view atonement not as a process of penance, but as “at-one-ment”—the process of reconciliation, of merging split parts back together. For Gardeners, the seven sacraments of the church are acts of at-one-ment with God or each other—baptism (a ritual of dispensing of a past life, and giving birth to a new spiritual life within the Spirit of God), the Eucharist (a ritual of infusing one’s physical body with the Spirit of the divine), confirmation (affirmation of one’s belief in God), ordination (commission of clergy), confession of sins, anointing (healing) the sick, and matrimony (uniting two separate people into the one-ness of marriage).



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Knights believe the world consists of two camps—and that those camps should remain separate.

Gardeners believe there should be only one.





Gardeners also idolize pioneers, innovators and midwives of the future.

Gardeners believe the overall story of the Bible is one of birthing, of moving from *womb* to *wilderness* to *wow!* In the Bible, the pattern is of someone or a group leaving the familiar (a *womb*), going out across an unknown desert or *wilderness* and creating something new for God on the other side—or God creating something new for them (the *wow!*). One translation states that Adam and Eve were *expelled* from the Garden, but the original Hebrew verb is also the one used for *being born*. In the original, Adam and Eve are born—expelled—from the womb of the Garden. (Genesis 3:23-24, *RSV*).

For Gardeners, the biblical pattern is of God's people leaving the womb, crossing a wilderness, and creating a "wow"—an awe-inspiring future with God. Adam and Eve left the Garden and created humanity. Cain went east of Eden and created the first civilization. Noah went out across unknown waters and created a new beginning. Moses took his people out of Egypt across a desert to the Promised Land. Jesus left his home, went out into the wilderness and came back with the vision of the Kingdom of God. Paul went into the wilderness of his own blindness and came back with the vision of the Christian church. For Gardeners, refusal to leave the womb, to cross the wilderness and birth a "wow" results in spiritual death or frozenness—just like Lot's wife, who became a pillar of salt when she would not leave her past behind.

Gardeners use these stories to interpret the rest of the Bible as the epic story of God's Ongoing Creation in which all creatures participate. Seen in this light, Jesus is the Great Redeemer, Great Healer, and Great Visionary who came to save souls so they can rejoin God's creating process, both in this life and the next. For Gardeners, Jesus' miracles were not evidence of power, but of God's intention to restore people to their ability to participate in his Creation. Jesus' sacrifice and resurrection show God's supreme desire to remove all the obstacles to Creation and show that life never ends. And that God's infinite vitality would not allow Jesus to stay dead.

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Many Gardeners believe the future is not fixed. For them, God has broad intentions for the future—that it be filled with kindness, that all of Creation should grow and overflow with life—but has no fixed plan for how that will be realized. We have free will to choose whether or not to cultivate the garden.

Gardeners' primarily ask *What womb am I called to leave? What wilderness am I called to cross? What "wow" am I called to give birth to?*





There are two different tales of the quest for the Holy Grail—the Galahad version, which was written by a Knight, and the Parzival (Percival) version, which was written by a Gardener. Both hero-stories influence us today though few Knights or Gardeners are aware of the original tales.

Both accounts of the Grail quest were written to diagnose and solve the greatest spiritual problems of 12th and 13th century Europe—the corruption of the Church, and the Church’s requirement that people order their lives along the dictates of the orthodoxy rather than the divinely-inspired callings of their own hearts. As both Grail stories begin, the world has fallen into literal ruin—a wasteland—as a reflection of its spiritual ruin.



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Knights seek to emulate Galahad—the honorable, steadfast, incorruptible knight whose heart was pure enough to retrieve the Holy Grail. The Galahad tale was written by Catholic monks of the Order of Cistercian. As a result, Galahad lives as purely and chastely as a monk, and resists the sins and temptations of the world. The most popular representations of Galahad's quest for the Grail show him in full armor, resisting the beckoning of beautiful forest nymphs. For Galahad's priestly creators, the corruption of the Church can be corrected—and the world repaired—by a return to strict adherence to principle.

For Knights, the best, truest hero acts like a knight in shining armor, the one who saves the world by doing the purest, most correct thing despite impossible odds.





Gardeners seek to emulate Parzival—the knight who followed the guidance of his divinely-inspired heart to the hiding place of the Grail.

In the epic poem *Parzival*, written by medieval poet Wolfram von Eschenbach, the world has fallen into ruin because of an ongoing war between the forces of good and evil. As the war rages in heaven between God and Satan, a band of neutral angels bring the Grail down from heaven and hide it on Earth to prevent it from being destroyed in the crossfire. (In this tale, the Grail is not the cup of Christ from the Last Supper, but a rock that embodies the divine quality of unconditional love and compassion.)

These neutral angels charged an earthly knight with protecting the Grail, but the newly-minted Grail King quickly fails to represent that spirit of unconditional love and compassion when he draws his sword against another knight in the name of a virtue. During the ensuing duel, both opponents are maimed. As a result—just as conflict has wreaked havoc in heaven—combat between the guardian of the Grail on Earth and his opponent renders the world into a total wasteland.

A replacement Grail King is needed who can reconcile this world split by strife, and pioneer the establishment of a new order. Into this world Wolfram introduces the hero Parzival, whose name in French *perce a val* means “pierce through the middle” or “one who finds the way between opposites.” Parzival’s spiritual missions in this tale are to achieve at-one-ment between warring parties, and to pioneer a new spiritual order based on the heart rather than the rules of the day about virtue and evil. These missions are those of a Gardener even though Parzival—and Wolfram, his author-creator—were both actual medieval knights.

Immediately after Parzival begins his quest for the Grail, he meets the maimed Grail King in agony on his throne in the Grail Castle. Rather than compassionately asking the Grail King why he suffers, Parzival—attempting to behave as a “proper,” quiet, obedient, respectful knight should—merely stands

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at attention, awaiting an order. As a result, the next morning the Grail King's castle magically expels him, and disappears. Parzival wanders for years before realizing that he had failed spiritually with the Grail King—that *holy, virtuous service* means responding compassionately and without regard for one's station in life, or the station of those who need you, rather than engaging in crusades in the name of virtue.

During his time in the wilderness, Parzival learns to follow his heart rather than the rules of his day. All other knights questing for the Grail fail because they (1) roar off the path to vanquish evil, or (2) follow orders from political and spiritual authorities to deviate. Parzival, however, follows the compass of his own divinely-inspired heart.

Along the way he falls madly in love with and marries the beautiful young queen Condwiramurs rather than agreeing to an arranged marriage. He has many other adventures until finally he faces a "heathen soldier"—a Muslim knight from the court of the Caliph of Baghdad. Parzival is duty-bound to fight, but refuses, later learning that the Muslim knight is his own half-brother.

Only after passing these three spiritual tests—that he should pursue the ways of compassion (as with the Grail King), the ways of true love (as with his wife), and the ways of at-one-ment (that he and his enemy are one) does he rediscover the location of the Grail Castle. Inside, he approaches the maimed Grail King again and asks "Why are you hurt? How can I help you?" And this signal of compassion is all that is necessary to heal the Grail King, reveal the Grail in its radiant glory, and restore the entire world to vitality.

In Galahad's story, the world falls into ruin because it abandoned principle. In Parzival's story, it falls because it refused to be guided by the heart.

For Gardeners, the best, truest hero is the one who pursues with single-minded devotion one's calling from God despite impossible odds.



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While many Knights today do not know the story of Galahad, they idolize his example in modern TV and movies. Modern-day Knights still aspire to do battle with the forces of evil, live by a code of honor or principle, and do what's right even if it means becoming the last good, brave man in the world.

Modern-day Knights dreams of being...

- The steely-eyed lawman, the only law in a lawless land, squinting in the prairie sun, squaring off against outlaws at the OK Corral (*Tombstone, The Lone Ranger, High Noon, Deadwood*)
- The Allied soldier in World War II fighting the Nazis to save the world (*Band of Brothers, Saving Private Ryan, the Indiana Jones series*)
- The hero facing off against hopeless odds to protect the innocent (*The Magnificent Seven, The Lord of the Rings movies, Die Hard, Mad Max*)
- The underdog winning the game against all odds (*Rocky, The Natural, Bang the Drum Slowly*)
- The sentinel living according to principle even at the risk of total ruin (*The Untouchables, Chariots of Fire*)
- The vigilante ignoring the rules to make sure justice is done (*Dirty Harry, Fistful of Dollars, Batman Begins*)
- The hard-boiled detective following the trail of a mystery no matter where it leads (*The Maltese Falcon, The Big Sleep, The X-Files*)
- The antihero given an opportunity to redeem a selfish life (*The Dirty Dozen, Michael Clayton*)

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- The superhero swooping in to save the day (*Superman, Spider-Man, Iron Man*)
- The cool-under-fire, quick-witted rebel against oppression (the *Star Wars* movies, *The Matrix* trilogy, *The Great Escape, Braveheart, The Patriot*, the *James Bond* series)
- The Jedi Knight igniting his lightsaber and turning to duel a menacing Dark Lord of the Sith (the *Star Wars* movies)



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While many Gardeners today do not know the story of Parzival, they idolize his example in modern TV and movies. Modern-day Gardeners still aspire to change the world, break new ground, and bring warring parties together.

Modern-day Gardeners dream of...

- Overcoming barriers between people (*Cry Freedom, In the Heat of the Night, Mississippi Burning*)
- Exploring new frontiers (*The Right Stuff, Dances with Wolves, the Star Trek* series)
- Pursuing a crazy dream (*Field of Dreams, Stand and Deliver, Ray, Walk the Line*)
- Pursuing a hidden truth that will transform a world (*A Beautiful Mind, Dead Poets Society, Awakenings, The X-Files*)
- Delivering something precious out of a land of darkness that transforms a world (*Schindler's List, Hotel Rwanda, Children of Men*)



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For Knights, standing against evil makes one virtuous.

For Gardeners, bringing worlds together or working to fulfill a dream makes one virtuous.



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Knights yearn for the Great Showdown.

Gardeners yearn for the Great Breakthrough.





The *Star Wars* saga and *The Matrix* trilogy are both Knight and Gardener epics that conclude when the main characters—who have been pursuing a Great Showdown—realize that their wars cannot end without a Great Breakthrough of insight, wisdom or compassion.

Both series' plots were drawn from the lessons and stories of the great religious traditions. George Lucas (*Star Wars*) and the Wachowski brothers (*The Matrix*) are serious students of world religions.

The *Star Wars* saga is the story of the corrupting of a Republic, and the rise of an Empire engineered by a power-hungry politician (Senator-turned-Emperor Palpatine) and his chief military enforcer (the corrupted Jedi Knight Anakin Skywalker—Darth Vader).

The collapse of the Republic and subsequent “star wars” were caused by the repeated spiritual and human failings of the major characters. Palpatine’s and Vader’s pursuit of unlimited spiritual and political power was not countered for two reasons. First, Palpatine’s opponents in the Republic’s Senate failed to show political courage and check his power. And second, the Order of Jedi Knights, which had gained worldly power and become a political institution—a kind of state Church—had become arrogant and forgotten its intended role in the cosmos as nonpartisan peacemakers. (The Jedi are a combination of Parzival and Galahad. They follow the Parzival model, but wear monk’s robes and live in a monastic order, spiritually separated from the world.) The result was a galaxy-spanning war between the Empire and Rebellion that lasted a generation.

During the Great Showdown with the Emperor and Vader at the end of *Return of the Jedi*, Luke Skywalker realizes the nature of his father’s spiritual failings. He realizes that Vader’s originally well-intentioned pursuit of power in the name of establishing order, justice and peace in the name of a “good” over an “evil” led him down the path of the Dark Side of the Force. At the trilogy’s climax, Luke defeats his father in single combat and stands over him, ready to administer the *coup de gras* with his lightsaber. In that moment he realizes he is about to

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repeat his father's spiritual failing and continue the war forever. Luke stands tall, throws away his lightsaber and tells the Emperor that he will not fight; that he is a Jedi—a nonpartisan peacemaker; a spiritual sage—like his father before him. Luke shows mercy to his father—the dark Knight—and then places himself at the mercy of the Emperor—the dark king—the most powerful, deadliest man in the galaxy. As the Emperor begins killing Luke slowly, Vader experiences the Great Spiritual Breakthrough he'd missed his entire life—that compassion rather than the pursuit of virtue is what transforms worlds, including the world of his own heart—and saves his son's life. Only then do the "star wars" truly end.

Similarly, at the end of *The Matrix* trilogy, Neo experiences a Great Spiritual Breakthrough and saves *both* the world of the Matrix and the real world—a Gardener resolution—rather than eradicating the Matrix, to the disappointment of fans and critics who expected a Knight resolution.





Some movies present impossible dilemmas for Knights and Gardeners.

(Warning: plot spoilers ahead.) *Gone Baby Gone* and *Watchmen* end with the world saved by the commission of secret, unconscionable acts. These movies beg questions for Knights and Gardeners—should the secrets be brought to light at the risk of destroying the world, or should the world remain saved even if it means keeping a dirty secret? Were these secret, unconscionable acts truly unethical? Does the end justify the means?





Knights can also become frustrated when watching movies in which the pursuit of the most virtuous path cannot win the fight, eradicate the threat, or resolve the problem. (Warning: Plot spoilers ahead) *No Country for Old Men* ends without victory for the righteous and punishment for the wicked. *L. A. Confidential* ends with all the honest characters corrupt and all the corrupt characters redeemed. *The Wire* outlines how pursuit of the War on Drugs—a Knight endeavor—makes the problem worse, not better.



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In the world of government policy, Knights can become frustrated when a problem cannot be resolved with a Knight approach, and requires a Gardener approach instead, such as the drug problem in the United States. Likewise, Gardeners can become frustrated when a problem cannot be resolved with a Gardener approach, and requires a Knight approach instead, such as military responses to, say, genocides in Rwanda or the former Yugoslavia.

Knights see the use of Knight solutions as most heroic and most appropriate, and Gardeners see the use of Gardener solutions the same way. Adopting an approach from the other mode can be uncomfortable—or even perceived as a betrayal of principle.

If inflexible, Knights' and Gardeners' approaches can reflect psychologist Abraham Maslow's observation that if the only tool one possesses is a hammer, all one's problems begin to look like nails.





Knights aren't always conservative and Gardeners aren't always liberal.

Many 1960s liberals saw themselves as “The Movement” opposing “The Establishment”—a Knight’s viewpoint. And many financial conservatives work to grow world economies—a Gardener’s approach.





Some Knights—because they view the world in “either/or” terms—can interpret others’ disagreements *with them as attacks on them, attacks that warrant a heroic response.* These Knights assert that the world—out of ego, selfishness, greed, or lust for power—will persecute them, the righteous. They conclude they should resist or persevere nobly in the face of the onslaught. And they believe that the greater the attacker—and the greater their noble perseverance—the more heroic they are. And that those who make great sacrifices in their efforts to persevere will earn places as honored martyrs.

- Some American Christian fundamentalists interpret efforts to accommodate greater religious diversity in the United States in recent decades as efforts to push Christianity out of the public square. These fundamentalists assert that there is a “war on Christianity.” In response, these fundamentalist Knights have politically mobilized to protect Christianity in the United States by “taking back” or “restoring” America to its spiritual roots. Even though these fundamentalist Knights have gained significant influence within all three branches of the federal government in recent years, they continue to claim they are a persecuted minority.
- Liberal anti-globalization protesters see an interconnected global economy as a threat to the world’s poor, and have mobilized politically to protect them from corporate greed—and the government agencies they believe aid that greed.
- Osama Bin Laden and other al-Qaeda leaders believe that a malevolent alliance of “Crusaders and Zionists” (Christians and Jews) is waging a war against Islam, and seek to conquer the Middle East to steal its oil resources. For them, the United States’ invasion of Iraq was definitive proof that this alliance exists—and has begun its long-expected military onslaught. According to them, only pure faith and violent methods will purge non-Islamic influences from Muslim lands, and allow Islamic civilization to flourish again. Al-Qaeda sees itself as a worldwide alliance of daring Muslim heroes that works to

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defend Islam from evil. Bin Laden's deputy Dr. Ayman al-Zawahiri outlined this view in his first book, *Knights Under The Prophet's Banner*.

Knights like these see themselves as heroic defenders, and object to being cast as trying to conquer and convert an entire world. Fundamentalists like al-Qaeda or conservative American Christian evangelicals do not want to establish a theocracy in their regions. They want a world *safe enough for them* that establishment of a theocracy is not necessary. Similarly, liberal anti-globalization protesters do not want to destroy the global economy; they want a global economy that does not threaten the poor.



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In the workplace, Knights find winners—victors—heroic, and sometimes interpret those who hold high position as evidence of their success. As a result, **Knights can become ambitious.**

Knights often envision God—or a company's CEO—as the Great King or the Great Knight. Kings have courts, and courts have hierarchies. Because of this, Knights admire champions whose successes or virtue have earned them a special place in the King's court—or the corporate boardroom. Knights can be competitive and seek to best or surpass professional enemies. They sometimes seek to climb organizational ladders to sit among God's—or the industry's—champions. Knights may also try to identify their allies and enemies at work and engage in intrigues to gain advantage.

Knights in the workplace defer to rank, and follow orders from superiors. And Knight authorities in corporate or spiritual life attribute dissent or disagreement with them to insubordination or inferior thinking.

In churches, Knights often believe they should defer to those who hold positions of authority. These Knights believe those of higher rank prospered because they followed the rules more accurately or hold greater spiritual wisdom. As a result, Knights conclude God ordained their leadership and their orders should be followed or their example should be emulated.



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In the workplace, Gardeners find ingenious problem-solvers heroic regardless of whether those heroes hold high position or not.

Gardeners often envision God as the Great Source of Creativity rather than a Great King with a court. There are no hierarchies in Gardeners' worlds. Gardeners gravitate toward the tables in the offices, conferences, coffee shops or churches where problems are being solved. And they're not afraid to pull up a chair because they believe they can contribute.

Gardeners ignore rank. Instead, they afford people respect according to how helpful those people are in solving a crucial problem. As a result, they can be perceived by Knights as insubordinate or arrogant as they take the initiative to solve a problem that is "above their pay grade."



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Knights' work excels to heroic levels when they face a great adversary or great competitor.

Gardeners' work excels to heroic levels when they face a great challenge, great problem, great question, or great need.





Asking *“What needs to happen here?”* can help diagnose whether someone is a **Knight or Gardener**. Knights will answer that particular people or groups need to be heroically opposed to achieve victory. Gardeners will answer that heroic new breakthroughs are necessary to solve a crucial problem.





Some industries are inherently Knight or Gardener (though businesses within every industry compete for customers). Knight industries include sales, sports franchises, law, retail, or the stock market—industries with competitive cultures. Gardener industries include research and development, software engineering, pharmaceuticals, forensics, art, architecture, design, or education—industries with problem-solving cultures. As a result, the standards for “heroic” behavior is different in each industry.

Knights who join Gardener industries—or vice-versa—may experience a culture shock, and may be perceived by the industry’s veterans as a new hire that doesn’t “get it.”





The United States has gone through—and been defined by—Knight and Gardener phases in its history. Heroism in each time was defined differently.

- The country began in a Gardener mode—a time of exploring, pioneering, settling, and prospering from the bounty of the New World. While conflict with Native Americans, the British, and others was always a factor, the time was defined by opportunity more than conflict.
- The country operated in Knight mode during conflicts like the Revolutionary War, Civil War, both World Wars, and partly through the Cold War.
- Since the end of the Cold War the United States has had difficulty deciding from which mode to operate on the world stage. Without a worthy enemy the size and menace of the Soviet Union, Knights cast about for another worthy enemy. They finally set their sights on—and thoroughly stomped—Panamanian dictator Manuel Noriega's forces, and Saddam Hussein's forces in 1991. This struggle for direction was reflected in the James Bond film series. The producers, unable to identify new global menaces worthy enough for Bond to fight, suffered a six-year gap between 1989's *License to Kill* and 1995's *Goldeneye*. In *License to Kill*, Bond fought a drug kingpin and American televangelist. In *Goldeneye*, he fought world-class villains again—a rogue Russian general and a computer hacker bent on ransoming the world with a military satellite capable of assassinating world leaders from space.
- During the relative peace of the 1990s, the country operated from a Gardener mode on the world stage as economies and political structures became increasingly interconnected.
- In the post-9/11 era Americans have struggled over whether terrorism can be best resolved with a Knight or a Gardener approach in the lead.

Currently the U.S. is trying to decide whether to relate to other countries and peoples—and world problems—from a Knight's or a Gardener's perspective and policy orientation.





Knights worry they will lose their souls (and status as a hero) if their courage or perseverance fails during a spiritual test or test of character—if they are not hard-hearted at the critical moment.

Gardeners worry they will lose their souls (and status as a hero) if their compassion fails during a spiritual test or test of character—if they are not soft-hearted at the critical moment.



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What you perceive as heroic or virtuous behavior influences how you form and maintain your love relationships.





Love is the exclusive domain of neither Knights nor Gardeners. Both Knights and Gardeners have Great Loves of their Lives, love their children, love their parents, and love their pets. They experience great passions and heartaches just the same.

How we believe we should handle our experiences of love and behave when we are seized by love—those choices and those views are influenced by which worldview you hold. And those worldviews about love are often heavily influenced by religion and the movies.



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In matters of love, Knights seek to follow the example of pure, chaste Galahad. For Knights, love is fraught with peril. Many Knights believe the desires of the heart must be guarded against because the heart is not trustworthy to lead one down the right path.

For religious Knights, following one's heart might mean abandoning God's will in favor of one's own selfish desires. Passions are dangerous, and must be defended against, because they come from the wiles of Satan rather than the will of God. Knights may even say that they pursue "not what I want, but what God wants."

Knights struggle against their passions to preserve their integrity.

- Like Galahad, who resisted the temptations of beautiful nymphs in the forest that sought to entice him away from his quest for the Grail.
- Like Joseph and Potiphar's wife, whose love was pure in the Koran's telling, who sacrifice their relationship out of devotion to God. In the Old Testament's telling, Joseph flees her efforts to seduce him out of his devotion to God.
- Like Sam Spade in *The Maltese Falcon*, who turned his love Brigid O'Shaughnessy over to the police for the murder of his private detective partner Miles Archer rather than running away with her.

Knights view Jesus or other divine figures as the ultimate Knight—the ultimate example of obedience to divine principle. **For Knights, correctness trumps love.**



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In matters of love, Gardeners seek to follow the example of instinctive, heart-led Parzival. For Gardeners, love is the divine guide for life because they believe the heart is trustworthy—it tells the truth. Gardeners believe that within one's deepest passions and compassions lies one's true path in life and love. Instead of pursuing "not what I want, but what God wants," Gardeners often conclude that "God planted this deep desire in me for a reason." Gardeners sometimes sum this up in comparative religions expert Joseph Campbell's phrase "Follow your bliss."

Gardeners may be willing to sacrifice adherence to the rules—even of principle—on the altar of passion or compassion.

- Like Jesus, who healed on the Sabbath despite the religious rules of his day.
- Like the couple in *The Song of Songs*, singing about their illicit love.
- Like Parzival who married Condwiramurs, the love of his life, without a wedding performed by the corrupt Church.
- Again, like Parzival, who refused to slay his brother though his brother was an enemy of Christendom.
- Like those who protected Jews during the Holocaust by lying to the Nazis.

Gardeners view Jesus or other divine figures as the ultimate Gardener—the ultimate guide of the heart. **For Gardeners, love trumps correctness.**





It may be tempting to think of Knights as predominantly male and Gardeners as predominantly female, but **gender has nothing to do with it**. Men may play the Gardener role in families and romance. Men buy many more tools and build many more projects than they buy weapons and go to war.

Women can play the Knight's role in families and romance. Women may play the Knight's game of discerning who their "allies and enemies" are in family systems and workplaces. And they may consider the choice between raising children and having a successful career to be an "either/or" choice or a zero-sum game. Some professional women may characterize their workplaces as embroiled in a "battle of the sexes." Women seek out the dragons they believe threaten themselves or their loved ones just as men do.





The courtship model of male Knights is to earn the lady's favor by proving his honor, strength or worth as a chivalrous protector. After winning the lady, the Knight continues demonstrating his worth by playing the role of the sentinel—the paragon of steadfastness, fidelity and chivalry. Knights dream of walking away from the movie's final battle with the leading lady, having won her heart by proving his mettle and intentions. Knights sometimes secretly wish for a crisis to occur so he can demonstrate the depth of his love for her again. For this reason, at a boring wedding reception, Knights secretly wish terrorists would attack so they would have something to *do*.

The courtship model of female Knights is to earn a man's favor by proving her moral virtue by remaining pure, steadfast and moral to demonstrate her worthiness as a potential mate. The fair and virtuous princess is the female version of the Knight.



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Gardeners court each other by contributing to each other's lives, making each others' lives softer and easier, and helping each other pursue their dreams. (This is why Gardener women like to receive flowers and love men who cook for them.) While Gardeners appreciate demonstrations of valor and virtue, they believe those are only small parts of a lifelong relationship.





Knights and Gardeners who fall in love can confuse each other as they try to demonstrate their love for each other. Knights can become frustrated when their efforts to prove their virtue and mettle to Gardeners fail to win the Gardeners' hearts because the Gardeners expect contributions to their lives instead. And Gardeners can become frustrated when their efforts to contribute to Knights' lives fail to win the Knights' hearts because the Knights expect signs of virtue or mettle instead.

Put another way, Knights may say to themselves "He or she will love me because I am a good man or woman," while Gardeners ask "Will he or she contribute to my life or support me in my life or on my quest?"





Knight tales of romance end in victory or tragedy for the couple—and sometimes both at the same time. The movie *Casablanca* is a classic case. At the end of *Casablanca*, Rick—the bitter cynic who fights only for himself—rises to the occasion and chooses to aid the Resistance. In the same moment, he decides to sacrifice his relationship with Ilsa for a noble reason, choosing principle above all. In doing so, Rick sacrifices the great love affair of his life, but regains his hope, courage and idealism—he gets his soul back.





Some Gardener loves risk being dashed against the Knight rocks of principle, pride, or the society's rules of the day. Sometimes these stories end happily, as in *Pride and Prejudice*, *An Affair to Remember*, and *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner*. Sometimes the stories end tragically, with loves unfulfilled, as in *West Side Story*, *Remains of the Day*, or *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*.

The struggle of true love against the Knight authorities—the Church—or societal rules of the day was a mainstay theme of the songs sung by the medieval troubadours... and by rock and roll bands today.





Some loves feature Gardeners on an epic quest to discover a truth or acquire the wisdom necessary to transform a world—a quest opposed by Knights who seek to thwart them. The clearest recent example of this kind of love story is *The X-Files*—a series about two investigators who sought the truth about the existence of extraterrestrial life on Earth. Though they were opposed by shadowy conspirators, Mulder and Scully were motivated more by discovering the truth than they were by achieving victory over the conspirators. Along the way, shunned by the FBI, their friends and family—two people alone in a world filled with darkness—Mulder and Scully’s professional partnership blossomed into romance.





Some loves feature Gardeners so lost in each other they ignore the Knight boundaries or evils of the world around them. Nick and Nora Charles of the *Thin Man* movies were lusty equals. Likewise John Steed and Mrs. Peel in the TV series *The Avengers* fought threats to England, but those threats were just “MacGuffins,” narrative excuses for the couple to be together.





In terms of love and virtue, **Knights emphasize dichotomies**. Religious Knights, for example, see the world in “either/or” terms and conclude that one can **only choose to obey or disobey God’s law**. Oftentimes this means religious Knights categorize men and women only as saints or sinners. As a result, as Knights see it, virtuous men and women have only two moral options—to resist temptation or succumb to it.

Some self-proclaimed “outlaws” or “rebels” delight in flouting the ways of virtuous Knights. However, by defining themselves by what they are *not*, they still follow the “either/or” mindsets and ways of a Knight, just from the shadow side. Willie Nelson is a modern example, as are members of biker gangs who aspire to live life by their own rules rather than by the constraints of polite society. Evangelist Franklin Graham, who rebelled against the ways of his father Billy Graham until he “surrendered” to the ministry later in life, is another modern outlaw-turned-champion of virtue.

Occasionally, Knights will play both the saint *and* the rake—and other Knights will enjoy living vicariously through them. James Bond is a modern Knight who both saves the world and beds exotic beauties. Indiana Jones splits his time between teaching university students and hunting archaeological treasures—and killing Nazis. Han Solo from *Star Wars* is a smuggler and pirate whose attack of conscience spurs him to join the Rebellion against the evil Empire. Robin Hood robbed the rich and corrupt and gave to the poor. Johnny Cash knew about—and sang about—both virtue and vice.



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In terms of love and virtue, Gardeners see no dichotomies—no purely good guys and no irredeemable bad guys. Since religious Gardeners emphasize the ongoing creation process, everyone has the potential to further and expand God's Creation. Since Gardeners admire ingenuity, they see the qualities of cleverness and wisdom in some—and understand that those who lack those qualities today may possess them tomorrow. Categorizing someone as evil means one has decided that God is finished with that person—a conclusion religious Gardeners find dangerous to draw. Gardeners see potential in a person, even a terrorist or a criminal.

Gardeners see the purpose of love as to overcome the boundaries that enforce dichotomies. Religious Gardeners believe the intention of the divine is to reunite separated aspects of the world.

- In the Bible, the story of marriage begins at the very beginning of time, in the story of Creation in *Genesis*. The story of creation is the story of God splitting that which was one into two—"In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth." God goes on to divide light from darkness, land from sky, water from land, and then creates men and women at the same moment. Adam, upon first seeing Eve, says, "She is made of the very same stuff, the same flesh and bone that God made me"—they recognize that they are each other's half. Later Mark wrote in his gospel (chapter 19, verse 6), "At the beginning, God made them separate, male and female. For this reason they will leave their families and be united, the two will become one flesh, so they are no longer two but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one put asunder."
- From the holy scriptures of Hinduism, the *Upanishad*: "In the beginning this universe was but the Self in the form of a man. He looked around and saw nothing but himself. He was just as large as a man and a woman embracing. This Self then divided himself into two parts; and with that, there were a master and a mistress. He united with her, and from that mankind arose."

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- And from Plato's *Symposium*: "The earliest human beings were round and had four hands and four feet, back and sides forming a circle, one head with two faces looking opposite ways. They were immensely powerful; and since the gods were in fear of their strength, Zeus decided to cut them in two. After the division the two parts, desiring its other half, sought and found each other, and threw their arms about each other, eager to grow into one."

Gardeners conclude that this desire for each other is implanted deep within us to reunite those divided halves into one whole. **Each of us, separated, seeks our other half.**





The Bible contains very few romantic love stories, but features an entire book of erotic love poetry—*The Song of Songs* (also called *The Song of Solomon*). *The Song* is the (often explicit) story of two very young lovers who slip away into the dark for nights of passion in the quiet countryside. The lovers are seized with passion, and completely lost in each other. This couple does not agonize over the morality of their behavior. They do not resist love; they pursue, embrace, and savor it. Sex is no sin in this book; it is a blessing that is literally sung about.

Christian Knights and Gardeners have long debated the meaning of *The Song*, particularly over one question: “Does the unmarried couple’s consummated love fulfill virtue—or betray it?” Knights, unable to reconcile the idea that a book of the Bible could contain a joyful celebration of a sin—premarital sex—concluded that *The Song* must be an allegory, a metaphor for God’s relationship to the people of Israel. To whitewash a scandalous book, these Knights made an explicit love poem into something chaste and respectable.

Gardeners read *The Song* more literally—and more romantically.





For Christian Knights, romantic love is an impulse that can threaten one's moral bearings. For this reason, they can be ambivalent about sexuality. For Knights, the sexual ideal is found in the example of the Virgin Mary or the virgins in *Revelation* whose chastity makes them worthy for rescue by God during the End Times. And Christianity features a celibate Messiah and a repressed apostle (Paul). For Christian Knights, sexual purity is the ideal.

As a result, Christian Knight churches sometimes offer little advice to young unmarried couples beyond the dictum to “pray together and don’t have sex.” (This is the focus of the chastity-encouraging “True Love Waits” program popular among evangelical Christians.) These churches encourage young people to pursue only “Christ-centered” romantic relationships, casting them as acceptable only if one’s romantic interest believes the “correct” things, and is willing to accept a holy chaperone—the Holy Spirit—in the relationship.





For Christian Gardeners, romantic love can point one toward God's intention for their lives. The great spiritual skill Gardeners work to learn is not discipline to resist desires, but to discern between God-called desires and selfish desires. And Gardeners work to steer themselves in the best of directions or, as Meister Eckhart once wrote, to "put your passions on a bridle of love."

To use the metaphor of a swimming pool, in matters of love, sexuality and relationships, Knights work to fence off the pool; Gardeners try to teach people to swim. For Gardeners, sexuality is perceived as part of God's ongoing creation process, and to be celebrated when pointed toward one's great love and mate. After all, many Gardeners conclude, all of creation has been making love and singing about it since the first moment of Creation. Sin in sexuality is only as old as—and completely limited to—the human creature. Rather than seeking holy chaperones, Gardeners believe God points those whose love is true toward each other.

Gardeners are no libertines—they merely recognize love and sexuality as blessings and opportunities to grow a good relationship rather than spiritual minefields.





Both Knights and Gardeners can be paragons of honor, chivalry, chastity and fidelity—and live with great integrity to those principles—but for different reasons. Knights pursue the highest morality in romantic relationships; Gardeners work to grow the best romantic relationship Garden.





Both Knights and Gardeners characterize relationship behavior that lies outside their ethics as selfish. Knights see infidelity—and sometimes homosexuality—as selfishness. Gardeners see the pursuit of relationships outside of their committed one—or engaging in relationships lightly or indiscriminately—as selfish.





Today, evangelical Christian Knights see heterosexual marriage as the primary bulwark against evil and societal collapse. They have concluded that (1) the traditional heterosexual marriage—and nuclear family—is the basic building block of society, (2) the United States of America was established by divine will to represent the virtue and idealism needed to transform the world for the better, and that (3) if the basic building block that made the United States strong collapses, then the nation—and God’s intention for the world—will collapse with it. Put another way, if you undermine traditional heterosexual marriage, you undermine *everything*.

Evangelical Christian Knights see humans as morally weak and inherently evil. They believe Satan attacks humans at the weakest point in their moral “armor,” and since they believe the Original Sin was sexual in nature, they believe Satan will attack via sexual temptation first. Sexual chastity and fidelity in marriage is therefore necessary to keep the United States strong and intact.

As a result, evangelical Christian Knights see homosexuality as selfish and aberrant, and believe homosexual marriage is not a harmless personal choice, but an attack—backed by Satan—against the integrity and strength of the United States. And since they believe the United States is God’s moral Knight among nations, this is also an attack against God’s intentions for the entire world. These are the reasons why evangelical Christian Knights support “defense of marriage” legislation, oppose homosexual marriage, and other efforts to protect the traditional (meaning two-parent nuclear) family. It is also why some evangelical Christian Knights work to reinforce the hierarchy and gender roles within the nuclear family along the lines seen in the classic TV show “Father Knows Best.” They believe the traditional, correctly-functioning nuclear family is not only divinely ordained, but the reason for the moral, economic and military supremacy of the United States during the postwar era. More than mere puritanical moralism (they often rankle at the charge of homophobia), evangelical Christian Knights see themselves as crusading to protect the world from the allied forces of Satan.





For religious Knights, pornography, infidelity and homosexuality are **taboo** simply because they see them as violations of God's commands and intentions.

For religious Gardeners, pornography, infidelity and abusive relationship patterns are **taboo** because they thwart the growth of God's Garden that is the love relationship. In Jewish theologian Martin Buber's terms, pornography, infidelity, and abusive relationship patterns create "I-It" relationships—in which one person perceives and uses the other as a thing—rather than an "I-Thou" relationship—in which both people treat each other as equals, and work to grow each others' lives.





Knight families are generally hierarchical. As in “Father Knows Best,” there is a clear leader. (Sometimes, however, they conflict over who “wears the pants” in the family.) Roles within the family are clearly delineated and assigned to the “proper” family members. Within the extended family Knights may seek to discern who their allies and enemies are and engage in family intrigues to gain advantage or protect themselves. In the political realm, “family values” often are Knight values.

Discipline is key in Knight parenting styles. Knights view a disobedient child’s behavior as an attempt to challenge their parents’ authority—a situation that can be resolved with stricter discipline. This strict discipline is rightly understood as a form of love for their children. If you’ve heard a parent say, just before spanking a child, “This is for your own good,” you’ve seen a Knight parent in action. If, however, children become Knights like their parents, they may grow to oppose their parents’ values and rebel. This is the pattern that inspired the cliché that the most troublesome teenagers are the children of cops and ministers.



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Gardener families are more egalitarian. While parents remain the authorities in the family, power and roles in the family are assigned by talent or ability to solve the family's problems, not by gender. Within the extended family, Gardeners do not work to discern allies and enemies, but rather opportunities to grow the family by understanding its systems, dynamics, heritages, and patterns.

Discipline for Gardener parents is about providing a healthy environment rather than obedience or enforcing moral correctness. If you've heard a parent say, just before spanking a child, "This is going to hurt me more than it's going to hurt you," you've seen a Gardener parent in action.

Gardener parents see themselves as guides rather than guards. As a result, structure and opportunity are key to Gardener parenting styles. Gardener parents work to provide structure that steers children toward better futures, and provide as many opportunities for them to pursue their dreams as possible. Gardener parents are architects of their children's lives and cheerleaders for their good work.

Both Knights and Gardeners may pursue "protect the children" legislation, but for different reasons.

At the extremes, Knight parents can be too harsh; Gardener parents can be too permissive.





For Knights, authentic religion is a test of theological and moral correctness.

For Gardeners, love *is* authentic religion; love is *the proof of* theological and moral correctness.





At the end of the day, as he or she lies in bed before falling asleep, a Knight may ask “Did I live true to principle today?” And an honest Knight may answer “No” – and may feel guilty for falling short. As creatures of dichotomies, Knights ask questions of themselves based on dichotomies.

At the end of the day, as he or she lies in bed before falling asleep, a Gardener may ask “How can I better grow my loved ones tomorrow?” As problem-solving, opportunity-seeking creatures, Gardeners ask questions of themselves that emphasize problem-solving, opportunity-seeking, and divine direction or intent.



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What you perceive as heroic or virtuous behavior influences how you form and maintain your love relationships, which in turn affects how you behave in conflict situations.



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Knights find their lives' greatest fulfillment, mission, and meaning in conflict.

They seek the **Great and Holy Showdown**—the moment their entire lives have prepared them for. And they can suffer shortages of meaning in their lives without a worthy opponent. As a result, Knights seek enemies. They need them. And the greater the stakes of the conflict—and the larger the adversary—the more meaningful they find their lives and efforts. Knights envision themselves as David facing down Goliath or as a good confronting an evil.

Knights don't need a God, but must have a Devil.



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Gardeners find meaning in contributing to growth—and tend to avoid conflict that could jeopardize that contribution, scorch the earth, or set back or thwart God’s intentions. Gardeners look for challenges and opportunities, and seek partners rather than enemies.

Gardeners are not conflict-averse or non-confrontational. They will fight to protect a Garden, but not to eradicate an enemy. After all, every farmer keeps a rifle in the house for emergencies. Only when the greater vision of the Garden is kept in view will Gardeners engage in a smaller conflict against weeds, pests, or interlopers.

Gardeners must have a God—or a vision to strive toward—but need no Devils.



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Knights' central question regarding conflict is *What evil needs to be defeated, eradicated, or pushed away so the world can self-correct?* Knights assume that the removal of evil is all that is necessary to fix the world.

For example, the Bush Administration and U.S. military did not plan for reconstruction after major combat operations in the early days of the Iraq War in part because it assumed that the removal of Saddam Hussein and the Ba'ath Party would be sufficient for democracy to bloom in Iraq.

Similarly, many liberal and conservative Knights seem to believe that removal of the other will be enough to restore the culture, government and moral standing of the United States.



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*Gardeners' central question regarding conflict is **What needs to be built, planted or cultivated so the world can become better or prevent conflict that threatens Gardens?***

Gardeners assume that conflict can be minimized by, say, establishing rule of law to undermine the practice of vigilante justice, or establishing organizations like the United Nations to curb wars between nation-states. Gardeners also establish organizations that aim to grow local and global economies like stock markets or the World Trade Organization.



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When faced with long-term, seemingly intractable conflict situations, Knights tend to fight the alligators while Gardeners try to drain the swamp.



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Knights can be found among both conservatives and liberals. Liberal Knights try to eliminate the conservative Establishment while conservative Knights try to eliminate the liberal Movement. Both sides derive meaning from opposing the other. This is a reason why culture wars arise and persist.



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Knights often believe that war waged in a righteous cause—rising up to confront the forces of evil or ignorance—is a spiritual success. Gardeners, however, often believe that resorting to war—regardless of its righteousness or necessity—is a spiritual failure. This does not mean Gardeners will not participate in a war; it just means they'll never consider it a virtue.



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American Knights often perceive the United States as the greatest force *for good against evil* in the world. American Gardeners often perceive the United States as possessing the greatest systems *for making the world a better place for everyone*. **Knights see the United States as the great white Knight on the world stage; Gardeners see it as the most capable Gardener.**

Because they hold these views, some Knights believe the U.S.' war in Iraq and War on Terror are a fulfillment of the highest American values. Most Gardeners (and some Knights) see it as a betrayal of those values.



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Every U.S. President has had to function as both a Knight and a Gardener—it's the nature of the office—but most Presidents have reputations as functioning primarily as one or the other. Ronald Reagan and George W. Bush are known for their Knight orientations in domestic and foreign policy. Bill Clinton, Gerald Ford, Jimmy Carter, and Barack Obama are primarily known as Gardeners.

Several Presidents have shown great flexibility between the two modes. Abraham Lincoln fought the Civil War (a Knight's mission) then sought to bind up the nation's wounds (a Gardener mission). Franklin Delano Roosevelt was known for ending the Depression (a Gardener endeavor) and fighting World War II (a Knight campaign). Harry S Truman was known for dropping atomic bombs to end World War II (arguably one of the most Knight-like acts in human history) but also for passing the legislation necessary for the Marshall Plan, supporting the establishment of the United Nations, and early support for civil rights (all great Gardener endeavors). John F. Kennedy was known both for the New Frontier—and the Bay of Pigs and Cuban Missile Crisis.

History sometimes judges world leaders on whether their leadership style matches the needs of the time. For example, history remembers British prime minister Neville Chamberlain poorly for his Gardener approach to Nazi aggression—seeking appeasement in the name of preserving a Garden rather than confrontation to protect it. President George W. Bush may be remembered by history poorly for pursuing Knight approaches to resolve political, military and economic problems that may have required Gardener solutions instead.

Matching leadership style to the nature of pressing world problems may become more of a consideration for voters in future political elections.



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How a conflict begins, is waged, and ends depends on whether Knights or Gardeners command and control it. **Knights undertake conflict to vanquish an evil; Gardeners undertake conflict to preserve a Garden.**

When Knights control the persecution of a conflict, they ask Gardeners to lend their ingenuity to aid the war effort, as they did with the scientists who undertook the Manhattan Project during World War II. When Gardeners control the persecution of a conflict, they ask Knights to *only* defend the Garden, not completely vanquish evil, as they did when they established the Cold War foreign policy of "Containment" to curb Soviet expansion.

Religious Knights see Gardens as aids to winning the Great Cosmic War.

Religious Gardeners see conflicts as subsets or interruptions in the growth of the Great Garden.



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Knights cast a vision of victory or existential stakes to provide meaning to their struggles. For example, British prime minister Winston Churchill, on the eve of the Battle of Britain, roused the British to great valor for the nation's Great Showdown in World War II, in this, the archetypal Knight message:

Upon this battle depends the survival of Christian civilization... Hitler knows that he will have to break us in this Island or lose the war. If we can stand up to him, all Europe may be freed and the life of the world may move forward into broad, sunlit uplands. But if we fail, then the whole world, including the United States, including all that we have known and cared for, will sink into the abyss of a new Dark Age... Let us therefore brace ourselves to our duties, and so bear ourselves, that if the British Empire and its Commonwealth last for a thousand years, men will still say, "This was their finest hour."



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Gardeners cast a vision larger than victory so people remember why the struggle is important. For example, John F. Kennedy—at the height of the Cold War—cast such a vision in this, the archetypal Gardener message:

Today some would say that those struggles are all over—that all the horizons have been explored—that all the battles have been won—that there is no longer an American frontier... [w]e stand today on the edge of a New Frontier... a frontier of unknown opportunities and perils.... But the New Frontier of which I speak is not a set of promises—it is a set of challenges. It sums up not what I intend to offer the American people, but what I intend to ask of them. It appeals not to their pride, not to their pocketbook—it holds out the promise of more sacrifice instead of more security... Beyond that frontier are the uncharted areas of science and space, unsolved problems of peace and war, unconquered pockets of ignorance and prejudice... It would be easier to shrink back from that frontier, to look to the safe mediocrity of the past...

I am asking each of you to be pioneers on that New Frontier... There may be those who wish to hear... more harsh rhetoric about the men in the Kremlin... [T]he harsh facts of the matter are that we stand on this frontier at a turning point in history. We must prove all over again whether this nation—or any nation so conceived—can long endure... That is the real question. Have we the nerve and the will? Can we carry through in an age where we will witness not only new breakthroughs in weapons of destruction—but also a race for mastery of the sky and the rain, the ocean and the tides, the far side of space, and the inside of men's minds? Are we up to the task? Are we equal to the challenge? That is the question of the New Frontier. That is the choice our nation must make... All mankind waits upon our decision. A whole world looks to see what we shall do. And we cannot fail that trust, and we cannot fail to try.



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For religious Gardeners, “risk” is the secular word for “faith,” and **playing it safe is a sin**. Ingenuity—and the courage to pursue it—are the greatest qualities a Gardener can possess. Religious Gardeners believe The Creator created us in his image to *create*—to co-create the future with him.



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When Knights oppose Knights, conflict can be great and bloody—literally, spiritually, or both. Literal wars can result—as between the United States and al-Qaeda and Iraq. These wars can be egged on by extremist Knight pastors like Jerry Falwell who advised President Bush in 2004 that the United States should “Blow them [the terrorists and Iraqi insurgents] all away in the name of the Lord.”

Knight-to-Knight conflict doesn’t always involve militaries or terrorists. The Branch Davidians of Waco, Texas, believed that the End Times, according to their interpretation of *Revelation*, would begin at their compound (which they called “Ranch Apocalypse”) when the agents of the Devil came over the horizon to attack. The Branch Davidians saw their duty as to outlast the apocalypse and lead the counteroffensive against the Devil. They interpreted the arrival of the mile-long convoy of heavily-armed U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms agents as the fulfillment of prophecy. The resulting firefight—and 51-day siege of the compound—between these two parties of principled, compromise-resistant Knights resulted in the complete immolation of the compound and many of the Branch Davidians themselves.

Years ago I was asked to investigate why a spate of churches in a specific region had split during the previous five years. (In Protestant life, congregations may “split” over irreconcilable theological or other differences—like a divorce—to form two separate congregations.) I found that most of the pastors of these churches were recent graduates of a seminary in the region that had begun training its students to be aggressive Knights. The seminary had begun teaching its students that if a church was not engaged in spiritual battle with the Devil out in the community, that meant that the Devil had infiltrated the church and made it complacent. Once these students became pastors in churches in that very “live and let live” region, they followed their Knight training to root out the Devil’s infiltrations within the churches—which split the churches.

Similarly, organizations that have long-established patterns of Knight relationships with their leaders can hire, abuse, and fire their leaders over and over again.



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Small bands of Knights—insurgents, guerillas, or terrorists—can effectively oppose or even rout large armies of Knights when they hide among the populace and lure the army-Knights into targeting or cracking down on the populace. As army-Knights raid homes, install curfews, and look suspiciously at every local they meet, insurgent-Knights gain credibility as heroes who defend the populace. Further, insurgent-Knights appear to be winning when army-Knights withdraw to hide in fortresses or travel only in armed convoys rather than mix freely with locals in the cities and marketplaces.

As army-Knights become frustrated in their efforts to defeat the ‘insurgent evil,’ they may become willing to sacrifice their principles—and the locals’ rights—in order to secure victory. Unfortunately, this also sacrifices any credibility army-Knights have of representing values of freedom, free expression—or even the claim that they side with the populace. Army-Knights, however, may believe that these sacrifices are necessary to vanquish the enemy. This army-Knight strategy was used by the British military in Northern Ireland, and the United States in Vietnam and Iraq early on—except by its commanders and soldiers who used counterinsurgency tactics.

Insurgent-Knights are more often defeated by Gardeners than army-Knights. Gardeners work to win the hearts and minds of the populace—the source of insurgents’ credibility, strength, and hiding places. Like any Gardener courting another, the more contributions Gardeners make to the local populace—in roads, water, schools, infrastructure and economy—the more likely they are to win the locals’ hearts and minds because they can outcompete what insurgents have to offer. And when Gardeners paint the insurgent-Knights as obstacles to the establishment and growth of a new local Garden—such as the construction of new businesses, bridges, or utilities—the less tolerant locals may become of the insurgents hiding among them. Then the people may root out the insurgents on their own.

As counterinsurgency expert T. X. Hammes once wrote, **“You don’t outfight the insurgent. You outgovern him.” Put another way, you “out-friend”—make more friends than—the insurgent to defeat him.** Insurgencies can be thwarted from forming in the first place by employing this Gardener strategy early on.



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Knights often interpret problems as requiring Knight solutions; Gardeners often interpret problems as requiring Gardener solutions. Flexibility, however, is often required.

Gardeners often realize that Knight approaches are necessary to guard a Garden, like the structures and rules provided by 12-step programs to treat alcohol or drug addictions, or classroom discipline techniques needed to facilitate education. Knights often realize that Gardener approaches are necessary to win a military campaign, like the medical, counseling, and family services soldiers need.

Gardeners will also act as a Knight for short periods in order to grow or protect a larger Garden. In 1898, construction of a bridge over the Tsavo River as part of the Kenya-Uganda Railway was halted while the construction crew was being hunted by two man-eating lions the crew nicknamed "The Ghost" and "The Darkness." The two lions, each over nine feet long, killed a total of about 135 workers. After months of attempts, bridge architect Lt. Col. John Henry Paterson killed the two lions, narrowly escaping death during the second hunt. Paterson, a professional architect, remained a Gardener through the ordeal because his main motive was not to kill the lions, but to *build the railroad*.



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**Knights and Gardeners view diplomacy with totalitarian states differently.**

Gardeners sometimes view diplomacy as efforts to keep the peace, encourage reform, and set a good example through principled behavior and deal-making. Knights sometimes believe diplomacy rewards evil or surrenders or buckles under to the demands of a bad actor. In extreme situations Gardeners view engaging in diplomacy as a virtue or necessary evil; Knights view it as a failure of character, appeasement, and a sorry substitute for confronting evil.

Knights and Gardeners also view trade relationships with states like China differently. Knights—liberal and conservative—view China’s military buildup and poor human rights record as a threat to good people. Gardeners—liberal and conservative—encourage robust trade with China partly in hopes that China will grow an economy strong enough that the nation’s leaders will not want to jeopardize its booming economy (its own Garden) by engaging in military aggression against others. Knights see this economic encouragement as buckling under to or rewarding evil.



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When Gardeners oppose Gardeners, what results is an argument over which of two “good” options is better rather than between “good” and “bad” options. The “good” that wins out is often dependent upon the quality of the idea, the ability of the organization to enact it, and the levels of earned trust of the party that promotes it.





During times of panic—even manufactured panic—Knights steamroll Gardeners in public arguments and policymaking. When the panic ends, Gardeners defeat Knights in public arguments and policymaking. Who controls the level of fear in a populace can control that populace. Knights ramp up fear by implying an enemy is at the gates. Gardeners ramp down fear to keep the creative process on track. This was President Franklin Delano Roosevelt’s goal during the Depression when he said “The only thing we have to fear is fear itself.”



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When Knights oppose Gardeners, Knights often win in the short term because they are more aggressive, find great meaning in conflict, and resist compromise because—like Galahad—they believe compromise pollutes one’s integrity or prevents a decisive defeat of evil. Gardeners often do not help their case when they seek mediation or compromise with Knights in an effort to minimize the devastation.

Sometimes Gardeners tell each other not to worry about Knights, that the Knights will burn themselves out in time—not realizing that Knights left unchecked may burn down the world in the meantime.



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Gardeners win against Knights when they (1) have already long established their credibility with the majority of people as constructive forces, (2) build things that are helpful and that people want, and (3) can paint Knights as small bands of extremists who endanger that progress. **Gardeners succeed against Knights when they can argue *We—you and I together—build; they thwart. Let us not allow them to thwart our great endeavors.***



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Sometimes Gardeners win by default when the next generation sees the damage caused by a culture war between Knights and decides it will brook no further nonsense that risks further devastation or could reignite conflict. In the spirit of Winston Churchill, these new Gardeners understand that to continue a quarrel between the present and the past endangers the future. This is how culture wars often end.



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Knights may be willing to sacrifice an entire world, endeavor, or relationship—completely razing it—in order to secure victory, or at least prevent an enemy from winning.



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Knights can switch to a Gardener's approach to resolve a conflict, but other Knights will accuse them of being weak, pursuing surrender, betraying core Knight values, or failing a spiritual test—unless the Knight already possesses unimpeachable credibility as a Knight. After all, only Nixon could go to China, and only Reagan could call on Gorbachev to tear down the Berlin Wall.

President Harry S Truman, whose Knight credentials were cemented in the wake of dropping atomic bombs on Japan at the close of World War II, acted as a Gardener after the war was over, aiding the establishment of the Marshall Plan, United Nations, and state of Israel. He also transferred nuclear technology from military to civilian hands for peaceful purposes, and racially integrated the U.S. Army. These actions—seen as betrayals of Knight principles—nearly cost him the 1948 presidential election.

President Ronald Reagan began arms control talks with the Soviet Union in 1984 in the wake of a near nuclear exchange with the Soviets in 1983 when the Soviets mistook the "Able Archer" military exercises for a NATO first strike and almost launched their nuclear arsenal. Reagan's Gardener intentions to limit or roll back the U.S.' nuclear arsenal were seen as so out of character for Reagan—by then the Knight's Knight—that they were doubted by even his closest confidantes, and seen as madness by his political allies.



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Similarly, Gardeners can switch to a Knight's approach to resolve a conflict, but other Gardeners will accuse them of being vicious, cruel, betraying core Gardener values, or failing a spiritual test—unless the Gardener already possesses unimpeachable credibility as a Gardener.

Inventors Thomas Edison and Nikola Tesla—both Gardener heroes—pursued conflict with each other in the “War of the Currents.” By the late 1880s, Edison had developed a viable means to power homes and cities using his proprietary “direct current” electrical system—and the system had become the standard in parts of New York City. Direct current, however, had drawbacks—namely, the energy would occasionally build up and discharge bolts of electricity within homes or apartment or commercial buildings, burning them to the ground. The system was also used to power electric streetcars in Brooklyn. With alarming frequency, streetcar riders would hear the power buildup occurring (via an increasingly loud hum and crackle) and would flee the streetcar to avoid of the lightning bolt that would soon fly off the streetcar and ground itself into whatever was nearby. (This is how the local baseball team got the name “the Brooklyn Dodgers.”)

Nikola Tesla's alternating current electrical system did not suffer these buildups. Tesla convinced industrialist George Westinghouse that his system was much safer. Westinghouse promoted Tesla's system to businesses and governments, but Edison—unwilling to sacrifice the profits from his range of patents based on direct current—struck back via a publicity campaign. Edison created a road show that spread false information claiming alternating current was deadlier than direct current—a show that featured the electrocution of cats, and in one case, a circus elephant. (Of course, both forms of electrical power were equally fatal—Tesla's was just safer to use as a power source.) Edison also tried to replace the term “electrocuted” with “Westinghoused” in public discourse. And though he opposed the death penalty, he helped invent the electric chair for the state of New York to demonstrate the lethality of alternating current electricity.

(continued)



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The “War of the Currents” was resolved when Westinghouse convinced the state of New York that the proposed Niagara Falls power production facility should be based on alternating current—and when the power the facility generated was successfully transmitted over a long distance to power the city of Buffalo, something that was beyond direct current’s capacities.

Despite both inventors’ Knight-like behavior during the “War of the Currents” both retained their reputations primarily as Gardeners.



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After a conflict, Knights celebrate the victory, then look for their next enemy and the next war to fight. They do not reintegrate the defeated enemy in order to prevent that enemy from threatening what is good ever again. They may, however, try to convert the enemy to their point of view to eliminate threatening ideas.

After a conflict, Gardeners move to heal rifts, reintegrate the defeated enemy, and establish platforms for new growth. These were the intentions behind the Marshall Plan to rebuild Western Europe after World War II, and President Abraham Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address when the end of the Civil War was within sight. "With malice toward none; with charity for all; with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right," Lincoln said, "[L]et us strive on to finish the work we are in; to bind up the nation's wounds... to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace, among ourselves, and with all nations."



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Religious Knights believe God created enemies—or allows them to exist—to provide opportunities for Knights to demonstrate their virtue and glorify God. **Religious Gardeners believe Satan created the concept of “the enemy” in the first place.**

In the early Sixties, Bobby Kennedy opposed the Civil Rights Movement. During a strategy meeting presided over by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., other Civil Rights leaders disparaged Bobby Kennedy until King slammed his hand down on the table and ended the meeting until someone could say something good about Bobby Kennedy. The next day, when the meeting reconvened, someone told the group that Bobby Kennedy listened to the counsel of his bishop. King and other Civil Rights leaders then swayed the bishop to their cause, and the bishop swayed Bobby Kennedy, who swayed President John F. Kennedy, which began the brothers’ careers as Civil Rights’ advocates.

Martin Luther King waged a Gardener rather than a Knight campaign of persuasion—he never treated segregationists as enemies.



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During conflicts, particularly culture wars, Knights sometimes do not understand why they scare people. “We are pure and virtuous,” Knights sometimes think to themselves. “God is on our side. Why can’t other people see this? How can people doubt us? How can people not like us?” And then later, as they become more frustrated, “Those who oppose us, in their heart of hearts, must know we are right—they must be deliberately choosing to do evil. Woe be unto them as they stand in the way of our efforts to do God’s Will. God will show them the error of their ways later.”

Knights do not understand how they can be perceived from the outside—as people with a hymn on their lips and blood on their hands.



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Gardeners sometimes do not understand why they are sometimes accused of being relativists, or living without principle when they change tactics or faith expressions to better grow the Garden in front of them. "After all," Gardeners conclude, "I retain my integrity to do as God commanded—to love God and my neighbor—the *how* should change to meet the needs of the time and place."

Gardeners do not understand how they can be perceived from the outside—as spineless.



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Judging Knights and Gardeners by their negative extremists would be unfair. Most Knights are not like Adolf Hitler and Osama Bin Laden. Most Gardeners do not appease malevolent parties, as British prime minister Neville Chamberlain did with the Nazis.



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Knights are ill-equipped to handle situations that require Gardener strategies, like the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, where there were no enemies to fight.

The war in Iraq and Hurricane Katrina provided a one-two punch to the Bush Administration in 2005. The Bush Administration lost its credibility with Knights when it could not definitively win the war in Iraq—and with Gardeners when it could not construct a functioning democracy in the invasion's wake.

And the Bush Administration's failures to anticipate or respond to the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans demonstrated its inability to respond to challenges that are inherently Gardener in nature. These failures alienated Gardeners among Democrats and Republicans alike.

Gardeners are ill-equipped to handle situations that require Knight strategies, like when a gang of drug dealers move to take over a neighborhood and tough "weed prevention" measures are needed. Similarly, Gardener businesses or churches sometimes fail to stand up to bullies within their organizations who harass the leaders or derail the organization's efforts to fulfill their missions.

Knights and Gardeners need each other.



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Politics is a Knight's game.

Policymaking is a Gardener's game.



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Knights sometimes fall prey to paranoia and conspiracy theory. Knights, in an effort to find greater meaning in their efforts by conflating the size of their enemy, may come to believe that all parties who oppose them—or even show apathy toward their position—*must be in league against them*. Some religious Knights may even conclude that the Devil has perceived the Knights' threat to his agenda, and has enacted a master strategy to defeat them.

After the attacks of 9/11, Jerry Falwell insinuated that his opponents were in league with al-Qaeda, "I really believe that the pagans, and the abortionists, and the feminists, and the gays and the lesbians who are actively trying to make that an alternative lifestyle, the ACLU, People For the American Way, all of them who have tried to secularize America. I point the finger in their face and say 'you helped make this happen.'" (He later apologized for these remarks.)

Al-Qaeda senior leaders, including Osama Bin Laden, Ayman al-Zawahiri, and Abu Yahya al-Libi, routinely claim that a "world war against Islam" is under way. They say this war is being waged by Crusaders (Christians), Zionists (Jews), Middle Eastern rulers who ally or dialogue with Western powers—and even other Sunni Muslims who fail to side with al-Qaeda. Deceased al-Qaeda in Iraq leader Abu Mus`ab al-Zarqawi frequently claimed that Shia Islam is a false religion created by Crusaders and Zionists to lure good Muslims away from the true (meaning the Salafi brand of Sunni) Islam.

Gardeners sometimes fall prey to "pronoia," the belief that the universe—or God—conspires to aid them. This can make Gardeners vulnerable to being blindsided or sabotaged by the malevolent.



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Can a Gardener serve in the military, police, or intelligence services? Yes, by working to end, limit, or head off conflict before it starts.

For example, defense strategist Thomas Barnett in his books *The Pentagon's New Map* and *Blueprint for Action* recommends the U.S. should field two militaries—a 'knock-down' military like the one it currently has to destroy enemy militaries and facilities, and a 'build-up' military to aid in the recovery of postwar nations and disaster-stricken areas. This 'build-up' military—which he jokingly refers to as a "pistol-packing Peace Corps"—would combine the best of police and counterinsurgency tactics to keep the peace in war-torn areas, negotiate peace deals with insurgents, and arrest or eliminate insurgents who interfere with the rebuilding process.

A retired CIA officer once told me that on the day the Soviet Union collapsed, there was rejoicing in the halls at Langley—not because their main adversary had been defeated, but the CIA's espionage and covert acts had successfully helped prevent the Cold War from becoming a hot, world-ending war.

Can Knights serve in a societal growth environments like cities? Yes, by ensuring the fair play necessary for the Garden to grow by working as police, judges, policy enforcers, or referees.



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Business competition is a Knight's game. Building an industry or regulating capitalism is a Gardener's game. Regulations create boundaries to prevent Knights' competition from running the nation's economy off the rails.

Also, since Knights believe that removal of an enemy is all that is needed for the world to self-correct, Knights can believe that lowering of taxes—and deregulation of industries—is sufficient to allow an economy to thrive.



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Olympic competitions are Knights' games; the Olympics as an endeavor—a peaceable place for nations to meet, regardless of animosity—is one of the great Gardener accomplishments of history.



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Knights run societies, organizations, or churches well while a conflict is under way, but not as well afterwards. Gardeners run societies, organizations, or churches well during times not defined by conflict.

Put another way, both Knights and Gardeners understand that every city needs a police force—Knights who can protect the city's growth and well-being—but that the police shouldn't govern the city. When Knights run a Garden such as a city, they often focus so completely on thwarting or combating crime that they stunt the freedom of the citizens, crash the local economy, thwart its free market, and create police states.

To use another image, stoplights serve road systems; road systems don't serve stoplights.

Similarly, Knights within the law enforcement arms of the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service and the Transportation Security Administration in recent years have given visitors, immigrants, or refugees to the United States the impression that our nation—the mightiest in the world—is militant, afraid, and suspicious of them. The actions of these security-minded agencies appear to violate the Gardener sentiment carved into the base of the Statue of Liberty, which asks the world to "Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free."

Afghanistan under the Taliban—another police state—is another example. The Taliban spent so much time and energy trying to determine which was the most theologically correct way to execute homosexuals—by throwing them off of a high wall or pulling the wall down on top of them—that they didn't build an economy, or any medical schools.



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What you perceive as heroic or virtuous behavior influences how you form and maintain your loving relationships, which in turn affects how you behave in conflict situations. All of these **influence how you approach matters of the soul.**



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In recent decades the United States has been caught in a culture war between three parties of Knights—fundamentalist Knights, atheist Knights, and liberal Knights—about the role of religion in society, and the nature of religion itself.



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Knights pursue absolute truth to ensure that their crusades are on firm foundation. **Knights must be fully and absolutely certain** of this truth—and free of doubt—to be willing to sacrifice themselves or others in the cause of righteousness. This is true for fundamentalist, liberal, and atheist Knights. **One cannot kill in the name of ambiguity.**



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Gardeners pursue the deepest spiritual well to ensure that their Garden is grown from a place of profound vision, true divine compassion, and fertility.



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Knights and Gardeners differ over the origin of religion. Knights tend to argue that religion is *revealed*—that it was handed down in an already-perfect form from heaven. Gardeners tend to argue that religion is a *device*—produced through a mysterious interaction of divine inspiration and human ingenuity, the way art is—to help humans understand the spiritual experiences they have, and to inspire human communion with the divine. **Both believe that true religion is provided by God.**

Atheist Knights, however, in true Knight “either/or” fashion, conclude that if the claims of a religion cannot be proven or are not completely true, then they are completely false.



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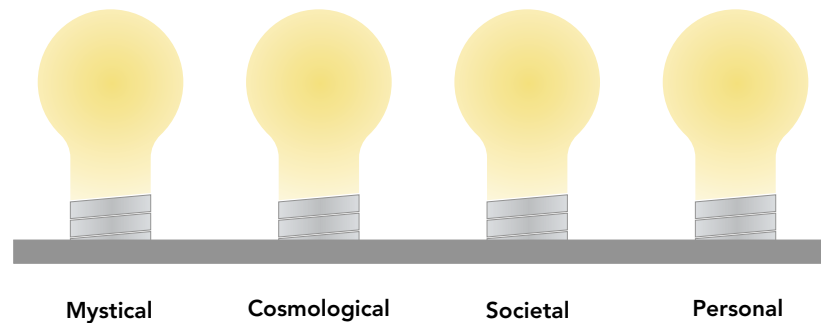
BLOG THIS



Different aspects of religion are important for Knights and Gardeners.

World religions expert Joseph Campbell often claimed that religions serve four functions for humans—and for human societies. When they function properly, religions should (1) invoke an awareness and awe of the divine—the *mystical* function, (2) explain how the divine has ordered the universe—the *cosmological* function, (3) show that human society should be ordered like a miniature version of that divinely-mandated cosmological order—the *societal* function, and (4) help people move through the joys and difficulties of the individual human life—the *personal* function.

Imagine these functions as four light bulbs mounted to a board, all in a row. For Knights, the cosmological and societal “bulbs” are most important. For Gardeners, the mystical and personal “bulbs” are most important.



Knights and Gardeners react differently to the loss of a light bulb. Knights defend or try to revive the dead bulb; Gardeners replace it.

How are light bulbs lost? From time to time, cultural, historical, or scientific changes in the world challenges one or more of a religion’s light bulbs so severely those bulbs blow out. When a bulb blows out, that means a reasonable person has trouble believing that the claims of that bulb are valid any more.

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Here are two examples. The cosmological and societal bulbs in American Christianity blew out during the 20th century.

- As science (including the theory of evolution) became the primary means Americans understood how the universe is ordered, it fatally challenged American Christianity's *cosmological* ("Creationist" or "intelligent design") claims that the universe was created in a literal seven days as depicted in *Genesis*.
- Late 20th century developments like the Sexual Revolution, the birth control pill, and decisions by more Americans to delay marriage fatally challenged American Christianity's *societal* taboo banning premarital sex.

Today the societal bulbs in other religions are being challenged as well. For example, the caste system—Hinduism's societal bulb—is in decline in India.

Religions die when their mystical bulbs go out. However, the mystical bulb does not appear to be in jeopardy in any of the major world religions today.

The loss of a religion's light bulbs does not necessarily mean the death of a religion. As Joseph Campbell also often said, just because a light bulb goes out does not mean there is no electricity.



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Gardeners do not feel threatened when one of the four light bulbs blows out. They conclude that, since the bulb is merely a device—and a self-contained one at that—*only the device failed*, not the religion. **Gardeners seek to replace the bulb with another that retains integrity to the religion's original or core tenets.**

- Some American Christian Gardeners have reconciled the *Genesis* account of the universe's creation with science through broad assertions such as that God created the universe to operate by scientific rules—not all of which we understand yet.
- And some American Christian Gardeners are quietly concluding that, in the wake of the death of the taboo banning premarital sex, God intends a broader sexual ethic. This ethic argues that sexual relationships—between married or unmarried couples—are intended by God to be taken seriously, to be committed and long-term, and dedicated to the mutual care and growth of the couple. (This ethic would also apply to homosexual relationships, especially since homosexuals are not legally permitted to marry in most of the United States.)



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Knights often conclude that the loss of one of the four light bulbs must be the result of an attack on the bulb by outside forces. Often Knights assert that these attacking outside forces are motivated by self-interest or have been deceived by Satan or a malevolent ideology designed to destroy society.

Knights conclude that nothing is wrong with the device—after all, God created it perfectly—therefore outside forces must have broken the bulb’s connection to its electrical power source. In response, some Knights remove the bulb and probe the socket with pliers. But since the divine “electricity” cannot be turned off, these efforts to restore the connection can shock the user and short out the rest of the bulbs—and the religion’s credibility.

For example, the two bulbs most important to Knights—the cosmological and societal—have largely gone dark in American Christianity today. As a result, fundamentalist Christian Knights have gone to great lengths to repair or defend those dead bulbs. Those efforts, however, can make Christians—and Christianity—appear ludicrous to secular American society.

- A group of fundamentalist Christian Knights, “Answers in Genesis,” resist American society’s use of the theory of evolution to understand natural history. The organization has founded the “Creation Museum” to argue that humans and dinosaurs coexisted. To do this, the museum includes displays of dinosaurs wearing saddles for human riders.
- Some conservative Christian Knights, in an effort to restore the societal bulb (or rather, the taboo on premarital sex) call on unmarried believers to resist all sexual urges, including toward masturbation, in books like *Every Young Man’s Battle* and programs like “True Love Waits” which requires a pledge of sexual abstinence until marriage.
- Some Christian Knights opposition to divorce and homosexual marriage are efforts to defend or revive the failing societal bulb that represented the heterosexual, nuclear family.



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Some liberal and atheist Knights claim religions are designed by the powerful as mechanisms of social control. While this has sometimes been the case, efforts to control human behavior this way are more rightly understood as abuses of a religion's societal bulbs. **Religions are meant to invoke divine awe, not enforce divine order.** These Knights also overemphasize the importance and role of the societal bulb in relation to the other three bulbs of religion.



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Christian theologian Bernard Loomer once said “We are born into mystery, we live in mystery, and we die in mystery.” He meant that **religion will always be insufficient to render the divine and individual human existence fully understandable**—they are too vast, deep, and diverse to explain rationally.

This sentiment frightens religious Knights because they fear it means that the presence of mystery means that God is not sufficiently known, that God’s moral rules are not sufficiently known, and therefore the mapped-out steps to reach heaven are untrustworthy. These conclusions cause Knights great anxiety since they fear ambiguity. As a result, Knights resist mystery within their own faiths—and don’t like it in others’ faiths, either.

This resistance to mystery is not limited to religious Knights. Religious or atheist, conservative or liberal, Knights see mysticism as irrational, unfounded, or dangerously naive. Furthermore, atheist Knights’ beliefs are often upended if or when they have spiritual experiences—their absolute certainty in the absence of a divine, or even something beyond the tangible, is shaken.

Loomer’s sentiment, however, **consoles Gardeners, who see religious mystery as evidence of the unending robust ineffability of God**—that God is far bigger than our theologies. For Gardeners, far more at ease with ambiguity, the presence of mystery indicates the presence of God.

As our rational approaches to religion continue to break down—and no rational explanation about the divine will ever be sufficient—we become far more aware that there is a deep mystery within the tangible, understandable world. For some this invokes a great dread; for others it invokes a staggering sense of wonder.



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Today the mystery of the divine and the individual human life is more apparent to more people than ever before. Why? It's the fault of the anthropologists. Anthropology, in practice, is the study of *someone else's* culture. For over a century, university anthropology departments have sent one of their own to study, say, an isolated tribe living in a far part of the world. These anthropologists would admire the tribe's explanations of why the rain falls, who God is, and how families and societies should be arranged. The anthropologist would say to themselves, "How quaint. They've created this entire worldview and religion for themselves that is really quite beautiful. It's not true, though—what we believe is true—what this tribe believes they made up."

Later, this anthropologist would return to the university lecture hall and describe the tribe's beautifully-crafted explanations of how the world works, who God is, and the rest. Afterwards the anthropologist, while walking to lunch, would smack himself on the forehead and think, "Oh my gosh—maybe we created our culture and religion, too."

Everyone who has access to global media or the Internet has the potential to encounter the same realization as anthropologists have been having for decades. As a result, **people are increasingly concluding—not that *all beliefs are relative or all beliefs have equal value—but that our beliefs and cultures—and partially our religions as well—are created by people.***

More precisely, people today are concluding that religions have layers—and that the "surface" layers are created by people, but the sources of each religion are not.

The three layers are:



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Mysticism, the deepest layer, represents the origin of human religious experience and source of human religions. The experience of the love of God and movements of the Holy Spirit resides at this level, as does the muse of inspiration for artists, poets, musicians, writers, theologians, and intuition for scientists. Unnamable, undefinable, and utterly intangible, this is the experience of the Beyond in our midst.

The founders of each of the major world religions had an encounter with the divine—an experience of true Mysticism. These founders—Jesus, Moses, the Buddha, Mohammed, and others—attempted to share these profound mysterious revelations with followers who were slow to understand. Jesus, unable to define or intellectually describe what God revealed to him, chose artistic means—parables about the nature of the divine, and way of God—to communicate those spiritual truths. The Buddha, in what is considered the founding sermon of Zen, simply held up a flower and said nothing. Only one of the Buddha’s followers understood what the silent sermon meant. To a lesser degree, music, art, and literature—regardless of whether it tries to render a religious “point”—attempts to illuminate a mysterious, perhaps Mystical aspect of human experience or existence.

Some of these founders’ early followers created rituals in an attempt to help others emulate the initial Mystical experiences of their religion’s founders, and have experiences of their own. Early Christians, for example, created rituals of baptism and communion to emulate—and hopefully invoke a fraction of—the spiritual experiences of Jesus’ baptism and the disciples’ communion with God during the Last Supper.

Again, Knights are uncomfortable with the free-form spirituality at this level; Gardeners welcome it.

The **Theology** layer is next closest to the surface. The Theology layer ties those early rituals and beliefs about God into narratives or other contexts to make the Mysticism more tangible and more easily understood by believers. The Theology layer contains all our beliefs about God rather than our experiences of God.

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Some Knight theologians create long logic trains to “prove” their arguments about how God works, and how the divine relates to humanity. The broadest efforts to formalize these arguments are referred to in Christianity as “systematic theology”—a study required by clergy-in-training in seminaries. The narrowest version of these efforts is called “apologetics.”

Knights today—both liberal and fundamentalist—clash over whose Theology is finally and absolutely correct. This clash has partly driven the culture wars of recent decades.

Gardener theologians also craft organized views of how God relates to humanity, but these views are less concrete and feature fewer “non-negotiables”—they allow for more mystery. Gardeners are often less attached to the Theology layer—and do not fight over it—because they believe there is Mysticism beneath. They understand that the map is not the territory.

The **Practice** layer consists of all the ways we live out these beliefs about God. This layer includes how we design our church buildings, arrange the pews, what times we hold worship services, and all our criteria for what we consider morally and spiritually acceptable.

Put another way, **Mysticism is the pure water of God’s Spirit. Theology congeals or gels Mysticism to make it more “grasp-able” for people. Practice freezes the Mysticism into ice, making it solid, easily understood, and free from uncertainty.**

Reformations happen in religions when they revisit the Mysticism layer of the religion, and question the foundations of the religion’s reigning ideology in the Theology layer. Surface changes, such as embracing “contemporary worship” styles in Christian churches, do not a Reformation make—they are merely like changing the hub caps on a car.



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There are two ways of being religious today—the exoteric way and the esoteric way, according to Walter Truett Anderson in *Reality Isn't What It Used to Be*. Knights tend to pursue the exoteric way. Gardeners tend to pursue the esoteric way.

The **exoteric** way asserts that God can be found via the absolute truths of doctrine and dogma. The exoteric way asserts religion is a pursuit akin to science—a search for a hidden, provable, unassailable, objective truth. The extremes of the exoteric way can be found among the world's religious fundamentalisms.

The **esoteric** way, by contrast, asserts that God can be found via mysticism—a communion with God. The esoteric way asserts religion is a pursuit akin to art—a search for something that serves as a mysterious window to or resonant expression of the divine. After all, the Spirit moves in mysterious ways. The extremes of the esoteric way can be found among the contemplative and celebratory religious traditions such as the Christian monastic orders, Zen Buddhism, Sufi traditions within Islam, and among spirituality-driven artists of all sorts.

In short, the exoteric way finds divine truth via dogma while the esoteric way finds it via mysticism. **If the exoteric pursues the "law of God," the esoteric way pursues the "awe of God."**

Of course, practitioners of each way can misunderstand and misrepresent the other. Exoteric practitioners often say esoteric practitioners have built the house of their belief on unstable foundations, and esoteric practitioners often say that exoterics are like diners who go to a restaurant and eat the menu, as Joseph Campbell often said.

Every religion contains both the exoteric and esoteric ways but emphasizes one or the other. Highly esoteric Christian and Buddhist contemplative orders adhere to exoteric disciplines, and exoteric fundamentalists still sing esoteric hymns.

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In exoteric religious practice, dogma rules—spirituality serves the dogma. Since the exoteric way is a search for perfect dogma (absolute truth), esoteric mystical spirituality is only considered valid or trustworthy if it leads someone to believe in that perfect dogma. If it does not, that esoteric spirituality runs the risk of being condemned as dangerous or heretical. This was part of the Pharisees' problem with Jesus—the spirituality he sparked in his followers did not reinforce the validity of the dogma of the day. In many exoteric Christian worship services today, "praise choruses" (new hymns that sound like rock music) are popular. Though the music is esoteric, the lyrics tend to be very exoteric, and designed to reinforce particular dogmatic faith beliefs.

In esoteric religious practice, spirituality rules—dogma serves the spirituality. Since the esoteric way is a search for revelatory art—ways to express or understand something about the divine, or human relationship with the divine—dogma is only useful and trustworthy if it provides conceptual devices that spark or guide a spiritual journey. If dogma fails to do this, it is abandoned as ineffective. For example, Christian, Buddhist, and Sufi Islamic contemplative orders often adhere to very strict religious practices, but the goal of those exoteric practices is to spark and guide esoteric spiritual journeys in their practitioners.

The exoteric/esoteric difference helps explain why Americans do not attend churches in the numbers they once did. ***Most Christian churches in the United States emphasize the exoteric way, but Americans increasingly seek an esoteric relationship with God, and cannot find a path to that relationship through churches.*** Instead, they often turn to music, art, nature, and books. Often they go to bookstores to seek spiritual help before they consider visiting a church. Sometimes they conclude churches don't have much to do with God any more—if they ever did in the first place.

Theological and artistic movements that successfully renegotiate the balance between the exoteric and esoteric emphases in their religions likely will pioneer their religion's growth in the 21st century. However, highly exoteric believers will

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assert that emphasizing the exoteric *even further* is the most appropriate way to respond to 21st century challenges, and highly esoteric believers will say the same about emphasizing the esoteric.

Both the exoteric and esoteric ways are necessary for a religion to remain healthy. A religion that becomes too exoteric becomes rigid, shallow, and cruel to believers and unbelievers. A religion that becomes too esoteric lacks the focus necessary to generate spiritual maturity or wisdom.

Both ways are necessary for another reason. The span of a human life will require both spiritual ways at different times. **Imagine the individual life as like a long attempt to cross a river. Each person will need the (esoteric) skill to swim through sometimes chaotic water—and will need the occasional (exoteric) stone upon which to rest.**



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While moderns search for facts and absolute truths—quests of a Knight—“postmodern” people search for mysticism, adventure, and community—Gardener quests. Some Knights claim “postmodern” thinking and new ideas and cultural shifts are departures from the absolute truths they believe they have already discerned accurately and perfectly.

The Search for Mysticism: Because postmoderns find the Theology layer to be mostly a human creation, they seek instead the Mysticism that inspired those Theologies in the first place. Rather than being satisfied with possessing an absolute truth, postmoderns find the Mysticism layer to be more trustworthy, and spiritually fulfilling. Postmoderns pursue communion with God rather than beliefs about God.

The Search for Adventure: Because postmoderns find the world too big, too complex, and too wonderful and mysterious to explain through rational means, they seek stories that help them grasp the ineffable, as well as their place in the world. On this point, Christianity is well-positioned to offer spiritual wisdom and solace to postmoderns because over 80% of the Bible’s contents are stories.

Postmoderns seek several kinds of stories, (1) narratives that open them up to the Mysticism layer, and (2) narratives that help them understand where they came from (tradition-stories), where they are today situationally and spiritually (map-stories), and where they are going (vision-stories).

The Search for Community: Because many postmoderns live in a world where institutions, political priorities, social crusades and even family relationships come and go, they do not become too attached to them. Rather, they search for other places to invest their loyalty and energy. Simply put, *postmoderns are not loyal to what they can outlive*. Instead, postmoderns invest themselves in their community, friends, and family (however defined)—the things they find most immune to change. Postmoderns stick with the people who will be with them through all of the world’s changes rather than with the things or ideas that change. For postmoderns, “family” is who loves you, not necessarily who you are related to.



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Knights find mysticism dangerous—intellectually and spiritually. Knights seek “laws of God”—timeless, unchanging facts about God to prove God’s existence, order society, and that lay out a reliable path to heaven. Knights often work to codify and arrange those “laws of God” into systematic theologies—canons of absolute truths, correctly understood and interlocked—and defend those systems using a form of argumentation called “apologetics.” Put another way, religious Knights design their theological arguments like engineers and architects design buildings.

Imagine this process as like the construction of the naked superstructure of a skyscraper reaching up to heaven. Knights lay a strong concrete foundation based on the fundamentals of their form of faith, and then select steel girders based on their most sound theological arguments to build the superstructure. As the superstructure reinforces itself and reaches higher toward heaven, Knights feel safer and more confident they have discerned absolute truth correctly. However, if a new factor appears on the scene that points out flaws in the arguments that give those foundations and girders strength, Knights panic because they conclude their understanding of God must be flawed—and they fear that means that they cannot reach heaven. Like a flawed building, if a Knight doubts his or her faith superstructure, his or her faith in God can utterly collapse.

This phenomenon is not limited to religious Knights—Knights within the scientific community do it as well. However, since science is a process of inquiry *it has flexibility*—“absolute truth” about how the universe works changes every few years as new evidence comes to light and new theories are developed. The superstructures of science are designed to be replaced and repaired; superstructures based on religious fundamentals are not. Because of this, superstructures built by religious Knights can be fragile.

Further, religious Knights are prone to a particular form of self-deception called *reification*. Reification is the human tendency to invent a notion about God—then forget that they invented it—and conclude it is an absolute truth

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about God. A small example is the Sunday morning worship service in many Christian churches. These churches sometimes say that worship services should take place at 11 a.m. on Sunday mornings, as if that were God's holy intent. This practice is a human creation designed to make churches more available to people. Years ago American churches began holding worship services at that time because it was *between the times farmers milked their cows*. Today, many churches mistake an old practice based on convenience for an actual intent of God. All people are vulnerable to this phenomenon. Knights' superstructures often consist of many foundational beliefs and theological arguments that are *reified* items rather than actual absolute truths.

Knights will go to extremes to defend their faith superstructure from other faith-based or secular challenges. If possible, Knights may simply ignore the challenges, new information, or changing world, or say these new aspects are not relevant. However, when Knights cannot ignore the new challenge they will attempt to counter the threat with superior argumentation. This is the goal of the practice of apologetics.

When Knights encounter an onslaught of threats to their faith superstructure, they may withdraw from society, retreat inside their superstructure, and fortify themselves against the world. In conservative American Christianity in recent decades this has resulted in, for example, the establishment of Christian schools and contemporary Christian music market as an alternative to their "sinful" counterparts. It is also the reason why many Knights fear their children will learn to challenge their faith superstructure in public, secular schools and thus become victims of "too much schooling" or "bad education."

If Knights can't fit an aspect of the world into their faith superstructure, they find it threatening or "wrong." Since Knights perceive the world as a battlefield between divine good and demonic evil, they associate anything outside their faith superstructure as part of that demonic evil. Some Knights simply fear the world.

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Many Knights can become anxious and exhausted as they try to believe the entire contents of their faith superstructure—hundreds of rules and dozens of arguments—and believe it perfectly, without a shadow of a doubt. They fear that if they fail, even a little, God will not allow them into heaven. Similarly, they fear that if society does not perfectly conform to God’s requirements, it will collapse into selfishness, lawlessness, and Satanic rule. For some Knights, holding the correct beliefs in your heart, and defending one’s heart from evil thoughts *requires constant vigilance*.

- Some Knights’ faiths do not survive challenges to their faith superstructure. Dr. Bart Ehrman, a scholar of early Christianity and author of *Misquoting Jesus*, was raised a fundamentalist Christian, and graduated from Moody Bible Institute—a prominent fundamentalist college. Taught to revere the Bible, Ehrman continued his education into how the Bible was written, recorded, and passed down through the ages. As his education and research progressed, Ehrman was exposed to evidence that overwhelmed and destroyed his belief that the biblical text was factually inerrant. Without that foundational belief—the most critical aspect of the faith superstructure he was raised to believe—Ehrman’s faith collapsed. In true Knight “either/or” fashion, Ehrman concluded that *if Christianity was not completely true, then it was completely false*. Though Ehrman lost his faith, he remained a Knight in worldview and perspective. He now considers himself an agnostic. Ehrman’s early faith superstructure was inadequate to cope with the challenges of the world around him.
- Al-Qaeda found challenges to its faith superstructure so threatening, it decided to go to war with the world—meaning the West, Israel, and any other form of Islam. They see so many threats around them that they claim there is a “world war against Islam.”

Most al-Qaeda senior and operational leaders were trained not in madrassas (Islamic religious schools) but in the sciences. Again, religious Knights design their theological arguments like engineers design buildings, and al-Qaeda

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senior leaders reflect that pattern. Osama Bin Ladin was an executive in his family's engineering company. Ayman al-Zawahiri was a medical doctor. Mohammed Atta, leader of the 9/11 cell, was a civil engineer. Atta's faith superstructure was so rigid (and the man so unlikable) that Atta's roommate in Hamburg, Germany put up a poster of the Muppet "Miss Piggy" in their kitchen. The roommate knew Atta would find the image of a woman—and an assertive one made of pork—deeply objectionable.

Al-Qaeda is engaged in a war with the world because they believe an Islamic world rooted in a faith superstructure other than their own is incorrect and will be doomed to subservience to the West and Israel.

(It's worth noting here that al-Qaeda's version of Islam is nothing like the Islam practiced almost everywhere in the world. Most al-Qaeda members have a very rudimentary understanding of their own faith. Even al-Qaeda's most publicly prominent "religious scholar," Abu Yahya al-Libi—first trained as a chemist—possesses Islamic theological training perhaps only equal to a bachelor's degree.)

- By contrast, psychiatrist Walker Percy's faith in science collapsed when his own superstructure based on empirical science failed. During the 1950s, as Percy finished medical school at Columbia University, he contracted tuberculosis from a cadaver. During those days, the treatment for the disease included complete bed rest in a sanitarium retreat setting. During one of his sanitarium stays, Percy and the Catholic patient in the next hospital bed engaged in long debates over the adequacies of empirical science, including psychological theory, to understand the human creature—or God. Percy, unable to defend his secular superstructure, became a Catholic philosopher and novelist. One of the main themes in his writing was the limits of human understanding—in either faith or science—to apprehend the mystery and scale of the divine or the ordinary human existence. His first novel, *The Moviegoer*, won the National Book Award in 1962.

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Percy's life as a Knight broke down, and he became a Gardener. But no matter how many accolades Percy received, and how many Christians found Percy's writing helpful spiritually, he was dogged his entire life by complaints from religious Knights who said that if he were a true Christian he would write comforting, uplifting, superstructure-confirming novels like the *Left Behind* series.

Knights find mysticism—and anything that might lead to it—spiritually threatening. Gardeners do not. For Knights, iconoclasm (or postmodern deconstruction, which is similar) leads to nihilism—it destroys faith. For Gardeners, iconoclasm and postmodern deconstruction leads to mysticism because it breaks through the human creations of the Theology layer—it simplifies faith.

Knights fear the loss of their superstructure; they worry they will lose their faith as a result. Gardeners do not. Gardeners understand that superstructures are human creations just as light bulbs are.



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Gardeners believe mysticism aids one's communion with God. Most Gardeners do not need an elaborate faith superstructure to believe in God or get to heaven—merely a few spiritual and theological “seeds” to grow on. They are not anti-superstructure; they just understand superstructures as devices or tools rather than absolute truths.

Gardeners understand that the spiritual truth of a situation can be larger than its literal truth. For example, many of us have seen a teenager ask a combat veteran what war is like, and the veteran finding himself utterly unable to express the *truth* of what war is. The veteran often simply says nothing. Spirituality can be like that, too.

Novelist Tim O’Brien tried to express the veteran’s dilemma in his short story “How to Tell a True War Story.” In the story he tells the tale of two buddies in his platoon in Vietnam—Curt Lemon and “Rat” Kiley. One day on patrol, Curt Lemon stepped on a land mine and was blasted into a tree. He was killed instantly. The next day the platoon entered a village, and in the middle of the village there was a baby water buffalo tied to a stake. Rat Kiley walked over to the baby water buffalo, stared at it for a moment, then shot its ears off, then its nose, and tail. Then he shot out its knees and it fell to the ground in agony. He continued to pick off flesh with each shot, but the beast would not die. So Rat and several other soldiers threw it down the village well where it finally passed away.

Often, when Tim O’Brien tells this story at author signings, an elderly lady will come up to him afterwards and tell him what a sad story it was, how badly she felt for the baby water buffalo, and what an awful war story it was. O’Brien says he never has the heart to tell these ladies that it’s not a war story; it’s a *love* story. It’s the story of how Rat Kiley loved Curt Lemon *so much* that he could not handle it when Curt died. The loss was so great that Rat behaved horrifically.

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In reality, O'Brien writes, Rat did not maim a baby water buffalo—there was no water buffalo. Rat was simply very quiet for a few days. O'Brien knew, though, that writing *what literally happened* would not convey the depth of Rat's mourning, so O'Brien created the baby water buffalo story to express the truth of what Rat was going through. In essence, O'Brien created a fiction—a literal untruth—to express a spiritual truth.

Gardeners do not believe something has to be literally true for it to be spiritually true. This means that Gardeners do not become too attached to particular faith superstructures—they know that God resides beyond them all, and that when one light bulb (superstructure) blows out, God will shine through via another one. Because of this, Gardeners tend to be more comfortable with uncertainty and ambiguity when it comes to faith—they know it keeps them spiritually advancing rather than remaining merely spiritually advanced.

Frederick Buechner once wrote that the most useless faith-related phrase today is "There is God in the highest," asserting that "There is mystery and meaning in the deepest" is better for beginning conversations about faith. He meant that rather than presenting a faith superstructure for people to accept or reject, Christians should invoke in others a sense of mystery, of mysticism, because the subsequent journey leads to communion with the divine.

Gardeners do not root their faith in beliefs about God, or a perfect superstructure—or even in a mere feeling about God—but rather in an unspeakable sense of God.



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Knights' adventure stories—and organizational mission statements—cast Knights as participants in political or spiritual war campaigns, business competitions, showdowns with evil, last-ditch survival efforts, or missions to slay a political or cultural dragon. They pursue visions of victory—or the safety for Knights and their loved ones—that results from vanquishing a foe or a threatening trend.

Gardeners' adventure stories—and organizational mission statements—cast Gardeners as participants in construction of something new, on a journey to a new spiritual place, or aiding the creation or rebirth of a community. Sometimes these are stories of transformation of individuals (making “born again people”), places (making “born again communities”), or churches (making “born again churches”).



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Knights often cast their communities—and churches—as Noah's arks (providing safety from a dissolving world), lighthouses (serving as symbols of hope that the entire world is not yet lost to evil), firebases (from which to launch spiritual warfare campaigns), or military academies (for preparing Knights for lives of spiritual combat). Knight communities—and churches—are usually hierarchical and consist of two classes—champions and those who support (or aspire to be) the champions. The purpose of Knight churches is to rescue people from evil. Knight churches can show world-changing initiative, be aggressive, or be aggressively paranoid.

Gardeners often cast their communities—and churches—as architects, construction crews, hospitals, nonjudgmental resting places, salve, liberators from guilt, schools, platform builders, or spiritual seed beds (which is what the word "seminary" means). Gardener churches can also show world-changing initiative, but may emphasize education over action when focused too inwardly.



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For Christian Knights, God is the Great, High King whose glory is vast and strikes awe into the believer. For Knights, God's greatest attributes are strength, power, and knowledge of perfect righteousness. For Knights, the power of the Kingdom is found in the strength of the righteous. Blessings of creativity from God are meant to be used to help win the conflict against evil.

Knights idolize Jesus, who was martyred, the Apostle Paul, who was persecuted and imprisoned by an evil world for his beliefs, and Stephen, who was stoned to death for refusing to recant his Christian beliefs. They also idolize the warrior Christ facing down shrieking demons in *Revelation*.

For Knights, religion is intended to reveal the existence of God to an ignorant world, and to provide a pathway to proper devotion, moral living, and life after death.

Knights sometimes pray, "Lord, give me the strength to resist or overcome evil," or "Please, Lord, make me as steadfast as a stone."

Among Knights' favorite hymns are "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God," "Onward Christian Soldiers," and "Lead On, O King Eternal." Most "Christian rock" and "praise choruses" used in worship services are Knight songs.



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For Gardeners, God is the Great Spirit, the Ground of Being, the Beyond in our midst, the Source of all breath, life, and joy.

For Gardeners, God's greatest attributes are infinite imagination and creativity. Human creativity represents mere shadows of God's infinite creativity, and are meant to be used to grow God's Garden ever more. For Gardeners, the power of the Kingdom of God is that of fertility, not of control.

All "seven signs" of Jesus' divinity in John's Gospel are those of a Gardener. In this gospel, Jesus (1) furthered a celebration of life by turning water into wine at the wedding in Cana, (2) healed a nobleman's son, (3) healed a crippled man, (4) fed the five thousand, (5) calmed his disciples' fears by walking on water, (6) restored the blind man's sight, and (7) raised Lazarus from the dead.

For Gardeners, religion is the proverbial finger pointing toward the moon, something that points toward the true divine Spirit, not an absolute truth in and of itself.

Gardeners sometimes pray, "Let God's love energies fall on me," "Show me what Garden needs to be grown here," and "What is your mystery and meaning here?"

Every U2 song is a Gardening song.



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"Amazing Grace" is a favorite of both Christian Knights and Christian Gardeners.



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For Christian Knights, the purpose of salvation is to rescue sinners from sin. Knights spread the Gospel to rescue sinners from the clutches of evil and spread the rule of virtue throughout the world. Once saved, these new believers are expected to participate in the crusade. Knights interpret their perceived enemy's actions as malevolent and aggressive and conclude they have no choice but to defend themselves—and save the innocent and the entire world from that aggression.

For Gardeners, the purpose of salvation is to restore sinners to the spiritual growth process.



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THE GARDENER**

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When a Knight's faith is shaken, he or she wonders *Was the truth... wrong? What am I fighting for? Am I on the right side?*

When a Gardener's faith is shaken, he or she wonders *Am I doing the best thing? Have I grown an unneeded or wrong crop? Have I built the wrong thing? Have I wasted my time? Have I grown a monster?*





Knights breathe easy—and yearn for the day—when the war is over, all foes have been defeated, and the world has been made safe. They dream of kicking back in a rocking chair on their front porch, putting their feet up, and looking out over a quiet, green meadow in the evening cool.

Gardeners breathe easy—and yearn for the day—when the garden is growing, the rain is coming, and the day's honest work is done. Just as Knights do, they dream of kicking back in a rocking chair on their front porch, putting their feet up, and looking out over a quiet, green garden in the evening cool.



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THE KNIGHT &
THE GARDENER

INTRO
HEROES
LOVE
CONFLICT
■ SOUL

BLOG THIS



There are more Gardeners in the world than Knights.



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There are many wars; there is one Garden.



WHAT NOW?

AFTERWORD

THE KNIGHT & THE GARDENER

INTRO
HEROES
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BLOG THIS

Every futurist has a master plan to change the world for the better. This book is part of mine. This book is a building block I am providing toward the creation of a better future. It's a training tool to help you think like a futurist. The world needs better futurists—and more of them. You can help.

The future is the realm of the Gardener. The more long term one thinks and behaves, the more one functions as a Gardener. Thinking about the future, enabling it, and planning for it are always Gardener endeavors. The future cannot be "won" for any one party, group, nation, or religion. Instead, the longer term we think, the more we realize we can only *enable good futures to emerge by building robust capacities for people to solve problems we cannot yet foresee*. My hope is that this book creates a future-enabling capacity in people's minds by drawing the distinction between dualistic and problem-solving orientations in a way that produces a "meme" (a contagious idea) or a "metaidea" (an idea that enables other ideas to arise).

Other futurists work to build capacities to create better futures. For example, there's a group of futurists that are building a clock that will keep time for 10,000 years, what they call "The Clock of the Long Now." Figuratively speaking, the Clock will "tick" once per year, "bong" once per century, and the "cuckoo" will only come out once every millennium. (You can learn more at www.longnow.org or in Stewart Brand's superb book *The Clock of the Long Now: Time and Responsibility*, Basic Books, 1999.)

One of the project's members has joked that he wants the group to sell wristwatch-sized versions of the Clock because the Clock changes how you think about the passage of time. He says he plans to wear the Clock wristwatch on the opposite hand from his normal wristwatch. Put simply, on your normal wristwatch, *time belongs to you*—you decide what you will do with this hour, this day, this year. On the Clock wristwatch, however, *you belong to time*. And that realization sparks a more profound life question, *What will be my contribution to the 10,000 years?* In this book's parlance, the question is *What will be my contribution to the Garden?*

What's yours?



ENDNOTES

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- [11] This kind of dualism in the Old and New Testaments—and depictions of angelic good and demonic evil—is the product of Zoroastrian influence on the writers. This influence is most clear in the books of *Daniel* and *Revelation*. These books follow the basic Zoroastrian religious narrative that the physical universe is the site of a great war between a God of Light and God of Darkness and their followers—the Sons of Light and Sons of Darkness. In this religion, Zoroaster is the savior figure, who dies and returns—now named Zarathustra—at the end of time to lead the Sons of Light in a great final battle against the forces of darkness. A Zoroastrian text was found among the Dead Sea Scrolls.
- [12] The at-one-ment notion is Joseph Campbell's. While he uses this idea throughout his many works, I'm drawing from many places within *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (Pantheon Books, 1949), *Myths to Live By* (Penguin Compass, 1972, pp. 30, 154), and *Reflections on the Art of Living: A Joseph Campbell Companion* (edited by Diane K. Osbon, HarperPerennial, 1991, pp. 29-32).
- [15-17] Here I am drawing from Joseph Campbell's telling of the Galahad and Parzival stories from *The Masks of God: Creative Mythology* (Penguin Compass, 1968, p. 428-570).
- [22] Joseph Campbell often said that George Lucas was his greatest student. Lucas used Campbell's *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* as the structure for all six *Star Wars* films. This structure is rendered in a more readable form in Christopher Vogler's fantastic screenwriting guide *The Writer's Journey: Mythic Structure for Writers 3rd Edition* (Michael Wiese Productions, 2007). The classic set of interviews with Campbell on the major patterns that repeat across all the major world religions, *The Power of Myth* (Anchor, 1991), was filmed in the library at Lucas' Skywalker Ranch. Journalist and ordained Southern Baptist minister Bill Moyers conducted these interviews during the late 1980s, shortly before Campbell's death. The Wachowski Brothers, creators of *The Matrix* series, also drew very heavily from Campbell's insights. Both film series—their main plotlines and most subplots—are modern retellings of stories from the major world religions.
- [23] *Watchmen* by Alan Moore and Dave Gibbons (DC Comics, 1986) is the masterwork of the graphic novel (comic book) storytelling form. The book deconstructs practically every superhero trope, but also serves as a serious existentialist work. *Time* magazine once cited *Watchmen* as one of the best English-language novels published since the magazine's inception in 1923. Simply brilliant.
- [24] James Ellroy, author of *L. A. Confidential* (Mysterious Press, 1990), the novel on which the film is based, is a quintessential Knight author. His major themes include the difficulties of doing good without doing evil along the way, and vice versa. Called "The Demon Dog of American Literature," Ellroy has redefined hardboiled noir writing in recent years. His novels are not for the faint of heart, but impossible to put down.
- [27] The best books on what al-Qaeda really wants include *Through Our Enemies' Eyes* by Michael Scheuer (Potomac Books, 2007), *The Osama Bin Laden I Know* (Free Press, 2006) by Peter Bergen, and *The Looming Tower: Al Qaeda and the Road to 9/11* (Vintage, 2007) by Lawrence Wright. Wright is also the screenwriter of the movie *The Siege* (1998). While there are many other good books on al-Qaeda, these are usually the three I recommend people start with.
- [33] Daniel Craig is my favorite Bond, and *Casino Royale* (2006) is my favorite Bond film. In case you were wondering.
- [45] Why do I characterize Mulder and Scully in *The X-Files* as Gardeners rather than Knights when they are FBI agents—the closest thing American civilian life has to real-life knights in shining armor? The answer is simple—they almost never draw their guns or move into direct conflict mode. They are seekers of truth, not warriors for righteousness. A quick way to tell whether a heroic character in fiction is a Knight or a Gardener is to ask how central that character's weapons are to his or her quest.
- [47] Johnny Cash claimed in a song to have once "shot a man in Reno just to watch him die." Subsequent studies have shown that a shot to the Reno is rarely fatal.
- [48] *The Upanishad* and *Symposium* stories are drawn from Campbell's telling in *Reflections on the Art of Living: A Joseph Campbell Companion* (pp. 29-32).

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- [49] A good book on this is *The Song of Songs: A New Translation* by Ariel and Chana Bloch (Modern Library Classics, 2006).
- [51] Much of this is drawn from controversial Episcopal priest Matthew Fox's thinking. I don't subscribe to all of Fox's ideas, but I agree with his basic orientation. Fox's best-known books are *Original Blessing* (Tarcher, 2000), and *The Coming of the Cosmic Christ* (HarperOne, 1988). Famously long-winded, but intriguing, the best distillation of his basic orientation is found in the interview with Fox in *The Future of God* by Samantha Trenoweth (Morehouse Group, 1995, p. 237-260). Fox uses the Meister Eckhart quote here as well.
- [55] Martin Buber's *I and Thou* (Charles Scribners and Sons, 1958) should not be missed. It's a classic ethical, religious, and existential work.
- [61] The original line is "Fundamentalists don't need a God, but must have a Devil," frequently spoken by Dr. Martin Marty, professor emeritus from University of Chicago's Divinity School and co-editor of *The Fundamentalism Project* series (with Dr. Scott Appleby). Marty is paraphrasing philosopher Eric Hoffer's line that to have a militant movement you need no God, but must have a Devil. See http://cslr.law.emory.edu/fileadmin/media/PDFs/Journal_Articles_and_Book_Chapters/20_ELLR.Marty.pdf for this and more. I also strongly recommend *The Fundamentalism Project* series. It's the definitive work on fundamentalism theologies and movements across the major world religions. When you have about two years to read the whole thing, it's worth it. If you don't, the "User's Guide" at the beginning of *Fundamentalisms Observed* (University of Chicago Press, 1994) explains fundamentalism as a human pattern that repeats regardless of religion, and identifies the "family traits" shared by all fundamentalisms.
- [63] This puts into context Vice President Dick Cheney's famous line that U.S. forces would be greeted by Iraqis as liberators. It also puts into context former Ambassador John Bolton's quip to BBC's Jeremy Paxman on March 25, 2007 that if it were up to him, he would have conquered the country, handed the Iraqis a copy of *The Federalist Papers*, and left.
- [71] This is from Churchill's speech to the House of Commons on June 18, 1940. The full text can be found at The Churchill Centre's website www.winstonchurchill.org.
- [72] The full text of Senator John F. Kennedy's acceptance of the Democratic Party's nomination for the Presidency of the United States from July 15, 1960 can be found at www.jfklibrary.org.
- [73] "'Risk' is the secular word for 'faith'" is something my father, Dr. Robert D. Dale, has said to me many times.
- [74] I walked the ruins of the Branch Davidian compound outside Waco, Texas in the summer of 1996, before the compound was rebuilt. The Davidians had left the site in state. The Reverend Jerry Falwell said these words on CNN on the program CNN Debate on October 24, 2004.
- [75] This is my attempt to summarize counterinsurgency doctrine as found in the *U.S. Army/Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Field Manual* and elsewhere. T.X. Hammes is a retired Marine colonel and author of *The Sling and the Stone: On War in the 21st Century* (Zenith Press, 2004). The "outgovern" line is from his *Washington Post* article "The Way to Win a Guerilla War" from November 26, 2006, page B2. Another good book on counterinsurgency strategy is *The Accidental Guerilla: Fighting Small Wars in the Midst of a Big One* by David Kilcullen (Oxford University Press, 2009).
- [76] This story can be found in *The Man-Eaters of Tsavo* by John Henry Paterson (1907) and dramatized in the 1996 film *The Ghost and the Darkness* starring Val Kilmer and Michael Douglas. The reconstructed lions are currently on display in the Field Museum in Chicago, Illinois.
- [77] This Knight orientation toward diplomacy is reflected, for example, in the title of former United States Ambassador to the United Nations John Bolton's book *Surrender Is Not an Option: Defending America at the United Nations* (Threshold Editions, 2007).



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- [84] The “Able Archer” story can be found in J. Peter Scoblic’s *U.S. Vs. Them: How a Half Century of Conservatism Has Undermined America’s Security* (Viking Press, 2008) pp. 135ff.
- [85] Monologist Mike Daisey’s rendering of the “War of the Currents” story—from which I draw—can be found at Public Radio International’s Studio 360’s Show #904, “Nikola Tesla: Strange Genius,” January 25, 2008, www.studio360.org.
- [87] U2 frontman Bono tells this story in *Bono: In Conversation with Michka Assayas* (Riverhead Books, 2005), p. 86-87.
- [93] Falwell said this on Pat Robertson’s television program *The 700 Club* two days after the 9/11 attacks on September 13, 2001. The full text can be found at www.beliefnet.com/story/87/story_8770_1.html. He apologized the next day. His apology can be found <http://archives.cnn.com/2001/US/09/14/Falwell.apology/index.html>. John Perry Barlow used the term “pronoia” in this manner first in *Wired*’s May 1994 issue in the article “Zippie!” which can be found at <http://www.wired.com/wired/archive/2.05/zippies.html>.
- [97] I’m being snarky about the Taliban here, but see “Execution By Taliban: Crushed Under a Wall,” *New York Times*, January 16, 1999, <http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9A03E4D81E31F935A25752C0A96F958260>.
- [103] Joseph Campbell discusses these four functions of religion in *Thou Art That: Transforming Religious Metaphor* (New World Library, 2001, p. 2-5) but describing those functions as light bulbs is my own.
- [107] Bernard Loomer’s “mystery” line can be found in *Reality Isn’t What It Used to Be: Theatrical Politics, Ready-to-wear Religion, Global Myths, Primitive Chic and Other Wonders of the Postmodern World* by Walter Truett Anderson (HarperCollins, 1992), p. 210-211.
- [108] This section is my plain-language explanation of several themes from postmodern philosophy and theology. A very good, clear introduction to postmodernism as a philosophical orientation is Walter Truett Anderson’s *The Truth About the Truth: De-confusing and Re-constructing the Postmodern World* (Tarcher Putnam, 1995).
- [109] The exoteric and esoteric distinction is drawn in *Reality Isn’t What It Used to Be: Theatrical Politics, Ready-to-wear Religion, Global Myths, Primitive Chic and Other Wonders of the Postmodern World* by Walter Truett Anderson (HarperCollins, 1992), p. 212-227.
- [111] Bart Ehrman tells his story in his introduction to *Misquoting Jesus: The Story Behind Who Changed the Bible and Why* (HarperSanFrancisco, 2005). The Mohammed Atta and Miss Piggy story can be found in *The Cell: Inside the 9/11 Plot, and Why the FBI and CIA Failed to Stop It* (Hyperion, 2002) by John Miller, Michael Stone and Chris Mitchell. The stories about Walker Percy are from *Pilgrim in the Ruins: A Life of Walker Percy* (University of North Carolina Press, 1992) by Jay Tolson. The ‘iconoclasm leads to nihilism’ bit is from Walter Truett Anderson’s essay “Four Different Ways to Be Absolutely Right” in *The Truth About the Truth*.
- [112] “How to Tell a True War Story” can be found in Tim O’Brien’s collection of short stories *The Things They Carried* (Bantam, 1999).
- [113] These are my roots as an evangelical Christian showing. Evangelical Christian churches refer to a person as “born again” when he or she has made a decision—as a mature, self-determining adult—to become a Christian. This decision often is due to—or sparks—transformation in a person for the better.
- [116] Three good books on U2 and the themes in their music are *Walk On: The Spiritual Journey of U2* by Steve Stockman (Relevant Books, 2005), *Into the Heart: The Stories Behind Every U2 Song* by Niall Stokes (Thunder’s Mouth Press, 2005), and *U2 at the End of the World* by Bill Flanagan (Delta, 1996). The “finger pointing toward the moon” line is from the 17th century samurai-poet Masahide.

