

# “I Am Love”

Revelation and Meditation on  
the Path to *The Great Life*

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## Prelude

*“Let there be light.”* (Genesis 1:3)

I wrote this book with the primary objective of taking listeners behind the music to provide some additional context for *Sweetbird*. There is a spiritual element driving *Sweetbird* that grows stronger with each passing year, and the influence of this element is discussed in the book. It is transforming the music in ways Christine and I never imagined.

This book was created to complement the release of *Sweetbird*'s fourth record, *The Great Life*. As it went to press, Christine and I were finishing the arrangements for *The Great Life* and were looking forward to recording and releasing the record in 2009.

We hope you enjoy reading about the genesis and evolution of *Sweetbird*. If, after reading this book, you would like to provide some feedback or commentary, feel free to send us an email. We'd love to hear from you! Send your email to the following address: [steve@broadbandrecords.com](mailto:steve@broadbandrecords.com)

Christine and I thank you for listening to *Sweetbird* and for supporting the music.

Agape,

Steve

# Revelation: I Am Love

*“What’s your dream?”*

We were taking a short break during a rehearsal in the summer of 2002 when Christine asked me this simple question. Without hesitation, I said, *“To find true love.”* My answer struck her as odd, and after an awkward silence, we went back to rehearsing.

At the time, my life had become a full-blown nightmare. Love had vanished from my life, or so it seemed. Darkness and despair were haunting me and were directly related to two events that occurred in the summer of 2001. These events shattered my heart and shook me to the core.

The first was the passing of my dad, my best friend and mentor, on June 30, 2001. He died not long after being diagnosed with cancer. One day he was with me and the next he was gone. I was crushed. I felt as if *I* had died on that day.

Shortly after his funeral, the second event occurred. I witnessed the terrorist attacks on September 11th. I didn’t see the first plane hit the World Trade Center, but I saw everything after that in real time. I stood in complete shock and horror with my colleagues watching the twin towers burn and crumble like sand castles from my office window.

The months immediately following those traumatic events were consumed by intense sorrow. While grieving, I began composing and playing music, something which I had always loved to do. Music was therapeutic. I can’t remember a day in my life when I did not love to play and listen to music. It is part of my DNA.

During the fall of 2001, I wrote a couple of songs for my mom, who was struggling to get back on her feet after my dad’s passing. I was home playing my guitar when an acquaintance suggested I meet a talented singer-songwriter she knew. Not really interested, but figuring I would be courteous, I agreed.

A few weeks later, I received a call from Christine, the singer-songwriter my friend recommended. As we began talking, I asked her to hang on. I picked up my guitar and played her an instrumental version of Joni Mitchell’s “Both Sides Now.” While listening to me play, she thought to herself, “This is too good to be true.” We talked about music for a while. I asked Christine about her voice. Was it “natural/God-given” or was it “trained?” She said it was “natural.” I had performed with both types of singers in the past and always preferred those with a natural voice. I suggested we get together and play music. She agreed.

The following weekend, Christine came over to my house. I played her one of the songs I had written for my mom called “Forever.” It inspired by the love my mom and dad shared during their forty-six years of marriage. I was raised on that love, and cherished it. After listening to the song, Christine suggested that she take “Forever” home with her and practice the melody. I thought that was a good idea.

A week later, we got together and played the song again. I was touched by her sensitivity and impressed with her delivery. Her voice had an angelic quality that fit the song perfectly. She sang the melody beautifully, adding nuances to it that enhanced the overall composition. I wanted to record the song as a gift for my mom, thinking it might help her through the grieving process. I discussed this idea with Christine. She liked it. I had a little home recording studio so we made plans to record it.

During late 2001, I was composing music like never before. It was pouring out of me. The more I grieved, the more music I produced. Music was a light shining in the darkness.

Christine and I started playing music regularly in 2002. One day during a rehearsal, we began talking about dreams. She told me her life-long dream was to make a CD of the music she had composed. I mentioned that I had worked in a recording studio as a session guitarist and had played on a few records. I told her that I would be delighted to help make her dream come true. It was then that Christine turned the question back on to me, and I told her my dream was to find true love.

After that session, we agreed to collaborate and record a CD of original music each of us had composed. We decided to form a group. Joni Mitchell was one of my primary influences. Christine was a big fan as well. Joni's album, *The Hissing of Summer Lawns*, was one of my favorite records. I suggested to Christine the name "Sweetbird" for our band, which is a song from that record (actually, Joni's song is spelled "Sweet Bird"). Christine loves birds and the name resonated with her. Thus, *Sweetbird* was born. Christine's dream was about to come true. I didn't realize it at the time, but so was mine.

I continued grieving heavily going into the spring of 2002. I missed my dad terribly. I was working on a book dedicated to him that would be published professionally later that year. I had no desire to work in New York any longer. I used to love working in Manhattan, but had lost the desire after the terrorist attacks.

By the summer of 2002, my life was crashing down, just like the twin towers on September 11th. I sought refuge in the music. It was soothing. It seemed to provide relief to the intense sorrow I was experiencing. That relief, however, was only temporary. I continued to be dragged down by darkness. The more I searched for true love to fill the gigantic hole in my heart, the more darkness seemed to envelop me. I was falling deeper into a black hole.

Summer turned to fall. Thanksgiving passed and Christmas was approaching. Before I went to bed on December 6th, I felt compelled to do an Internet search on the word "love." After a few seconds, some links came up. I quickly scanned them, clicked on one that looked interesting, and printed out a few pages. I stapled the pages together and left them on my desk. I was tired and didn't feel like reading. I figured I would read them when I was more alert. I walked upstairs to get ready for bed, having no clue what was going to happen next. It was the eve of my revelation. My life-long dream was about to come true.

At 3:45 the next morning, I opened my eyes and sensed *something*. Everybody in the house was sound asleep. Barely awake, I made my way down stairs in the dark. I felt as if I was being guided down the steps, around the corner and into my study where I left the papers I had printed out from the evening before. I picked them up and made my way quietly into the family room. I turned the lights on low and sat on the couch. Rubbing my eyes, I sat seemingly alone. It was then that I looked down at the papers in my hand and began to read slowly:

*"And now I will show you the most excellent way.*

1 Corinthians 13

*If I speak in the tongues of men and angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing."*

An unfamiliar sensation came upon me, like I was blanketed in warmth. I continued to read:

*“Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs.”*

After reading this passage, I began to cry. The heat around me intensified. Through the tears, I continued to read:

*“Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.*

*Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when perfection comes, the imperfect disappears. When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put childish ways behind me. Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.*

*And now these things remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.”*

The last sentence sent me reeling. I began to sob uncontrollably. My whole body was shaking and I could not stop. I sensed the presence of an extremely powerful energy. Basking in this presence, I picked up a pen and began to write. The words came effortlessly:

*I am stronger than you know  
I can make the rivers flow  
I can lift you when you're down  
I can turn your world around  
I can brighten every day  
I can guide you on your way*

While writing, with tears streaming down my face, I heard a gentle voice:

*“I Am Love”*

“What was that?” I murmured. And, then again, I heard:

*“I Am Love”*

These three words reverberated through my entire being. I suddenly stopped crying. In the deepest silence I had ever known, I realized I was in the presence of love. I had found *true love!* Tears of indescribable joy flowed freely. I felt a peace I had never known before. Glancing down at what I had written, I noticed that the lines resembled lyrics to a song. I closed my eyes and did something I had rarely done in my life. I prayed solemnly:

*“If this is a song, please give me the music.”*

I picked up my guitar, held it tightly, closed my eyes, and tried to hear the music. Within a few minutes, my fingers began moving on the fretboard. Chord shapes I had never played before appeared before my eyes. I had no idea what I was playing, but the sound was beautiful! Melody emerged from harmony. I was *receiving* music. Within fifteen or twenty minutes I had the lyrics, melody and harmony to a new song. “I Am Love” was born:

*I wander through these streets alone  
Never looking for you*

*I see like a child sees  
I am love*

*I am patient and I am kind  
I'm never jealous, never selfish  
I am love*

*I'm not touchy  
I delight in the truth  
I am ready to excuse  
I am never rude  
I am love*

*I am hope  
Eager to trust  
I endure all these things  
I am everywhere  
I am love, love, love*

*I am stronger than you know  
I can make the rivers flow  
I can lift you when you're down  
I can turn your world around  
I can brighten every day  
I can guide you on your way  
I am love*

*Stormy seas I sail through  
May I always be with you  
I am love, love, love  
May I always be with you  
I am love  
I am love  
I am love*

**“I Am Love”**

Words and Music received by Steve Waite  
December 7, 2002; 3:45 am – 4:45 am

*(Note: A copy of the original song is included in a CD at the back of this book)*

I never went back to sleep that morning. I was exhausted from the experience, but knew something extremely special had happened. True love was revealed to me in the most remarkable fashion I had ever experienced in my life.

Later that morning, I asked Christine to come to the house. We sat on the stairs in the foyer and I played her the song. I asked her to sing the melody. She sang the song as if she had heard it before. It was amazing.

Afterwards, she commented that something about me looked different – that I had an aura around me. She said that my eyes were a vibrant aqua color. I told her about what had taken place earlier that morning. She listened intently. Something *was* different. There was no doubt about it.

But the difference Christine saw on the outside was nothing compared to what had happened on the inside. The transformation of my heart would become very clear in due time.

A few months later, in the spring of 2003, Christine and I arranged to record “I Am Love” at Paul Avgerinos’ *Studio Unicorn*, set in the woods of Redding, Connecticut. It was our first experience working with Paul. He is a Grammy-nominated composer, talented musician, and producer. He has performed and worked with major music talent during his career. *Studio Unicorn* and “I Am Love” seemed like a fine fit.

Recording at *Studio Unicorn* was a pleasure. After we finished the song, Paul called us both into the control room. He had a serious look on his face. I remember wondering if something was wrong. After a long pause, Paul looked at us and said: “I may be a fool, but I’m no idiot. That’s a smash hit record!”

Christine and I were taken aback. I didn’t know what to say. At the time of the recording, Paul did not know anything about the revelation that gave birth to “I Am Love.” He immediately connected with it and thought it was special. We listened intently to Paul as he explained what he wanted to do with the song. He wanted to preserve the initial form, and believed it was destined to be heard around the world.

“I Am Love” appeared on Sweetbird’s first CD, *Free Spirit Reflection*, which was released in the summer of 2003. Both of our dreams had come true. *Sweetbird* had taken flight. We had no idea where we were headed, but our path soon would be illuminated.

## Meditation: God is Love

*“I was sought by those who did not ask for Me; I was found by those who did not seek Me. I said, ‘Here I am. Here I am.’” (Isaiah 65:1)*

God is love.

You will find this eternal truth in any Bible. It is located near the end, in 1 John, chapter 4, verse 8. I didn’t own a copy of the Bible at the time of my revelation. All I had was a print out of 1 Corinthians 13 from the Internet. It wasn’t until a couple of years later, in the winter of 2005 while on vacation, that I came across John’s first letter. When I stumbled upon 1 John 4:8, my heart sang. I realized at that moment that the voice I heard was God’s:

*“I Am Love”*

My mind reeled at the realization. I never thought my dream to find true love was, in reality, a quest to find God. No one ever told me God is love.

During vacation, I spent several evenings pouring through the Bible. The Scriptures were speaking to my heart. I would read a passage and know, intuitively, that I understood. It was as if I had a new faculty – one that gave me the ability to understand the Scriptures.

Returning home from vacation, I felt a burning desire to read more Scripture. I heard the voice of God and wanted to know more about Love. The Bible was a natural starting place, so I purchased one. Around the same time, I had found some spiritual writings on the Internet that also resonated with my heart. I began to read and meditate intensely.

Easter Sunday came early in 2005. Waking up, it felt like just another Sunday morning to me. I was sitting alone at the kitchen table, immersed in Scripture and other spiritual writings. I was meditating deeply when I heard the same voice that spoke to me during my revelation:

*“Give Me the music.”*

“What?” I had the same reaction as I had the morning of December 7, 2002. Once again, the voice spoke to me: *“Give Me the music.”*

It was amazingly gentle and loving – not demanding. I started to cry. I knew the voice. It was God. I had no doubt about it. He was asking me to give up something I loved dearly – my music. He spoke to my heart in such a way that all I could say was, “Yes, Lord. The music is yours now.”

At the time, I did not realize I was keeping something in my heart for myself. Music had always been a huge part of my life, and I guess over the years, it became something I possessed for myself. The fact that God had to ask me for something I loved dearly is still difficult to comprehend, but I now understand that He required my whole heart.

I willingly surrendered the music on Easter Sunday, 2005. *Sweetbird* was about to dramatically change course. From that point onward, the music would be guided by Love alone.

## Revelation: Love

*“It seems to me at length that the master-key to the whole Bible is in our hands when we come to this. The master-key to everything is love.”*

–T. Austin Sparks

Spring 2005 was a watershed for *Sweetbird*. Christine and I were in the process of finishing *Soul Fire*, our second record. Not long after its release, I began receiving a veritable flood of new music.

During the summer and fall of 2005, I spent a lot of time reading, praying, and meditating. I was not familiar with the spiritual realm and did not understand anything about revelation. It was foreign to me. Spiritually speaking, I was an infant. I had so much to learn. With so many questions and very few answers, I asked the Spirit for guidance.

The guidance came slowly. I found myself spending a great deal of time pouring through the New Testament. If you examine these Scriptures carefully, you will see that revelation is a very important dynamic in the way God operates. Perhaps the best example of the transformational power of revelation is seen in Saul of Tarsus.

Saul was an earnestly religious man who viewed followers of Christ as enemies of God and presided over their stonings as a means of destroying them. (The great mathematician, Blaise Pascal, who also received a powerful revelation, once noted that men never do evil so completely and cheerfully as when they do it from religious conviction.) While en route to continue his persecution of them, Christ revealed Himself to Saul. That event profoundly changed Saul’s heart and fundamentally transformed his life.

After his revelation, Saul became a new creation and would be known as Paul, one of the greatest lovers, spiritually speaking, the world has ever known. Here is what Paul had to say about his revelation:

*“I want you to know, brothers that the gospel I preached is not something that man made up. I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it; rather, I received it by revelation from Jesus Christ.”* (Galatians 1:11-12)

Note that Paul said he wasn’t taught what he knew. Rather, he *received* the knowledge he now possessed through revelation. As a Pharisee, he was an expert in Judaic law, but he stressed that his knowledge did not emanate from his religious pedigree, but rather from the Spirit. After all, God is Spirit (John 4:24).

Saul of Tarsus was zealous for God. He also had great faith in God. But there was one very important thing missing from Saul’s heart prior to his revelation - love. And without love, he was nothing.

Paul received many blessings from God. Perhaps the greatest was 1 Corinthians 13. This Scripture is the finest description of love that has ever been recorded in history. It is eternal truth.

Listen to the Spirit pouring through Paul’s heart:

*“If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.”* (1 Corinthians 13:2)

Here is a man, who after revelation, now knows that without love, he is nothing. Nothing! Revelation changes everything. It has the remarkable power of transforming darkness into light.

When I began to glimpse the significance of revelation in all things spiritual, I went through Paul's letters in the New Testament carefully. Love is central and is everywhere:

*"And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love."* (1 Corinthians 13:13)

*"The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love."* (Galatians 5:6)

*"Love does no harm to a neighbor. Love, therefore, is the fulfillment of the law."* (Romans 13:10)

*"Therefore be followers of God as dear children. And walk in love."* (Ephesians 5:1-2)

*"That Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love."* (Ephesians 3:17)

*"That their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love."* (Colossians 2:2)

*"But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection."* (Colossians 3:14)

Through revelation, love became central to Paul's heart. And that is as it should be, since love is the foundation on which God builds all things. God is love (1 John 4:8).

It wasn't surprising for me to learn that Paul prayed frequently, for those who were earnestly seeking the Lord, to receive revelation. He knew that revelation is the gateway to Love. Speaking to the Ephesians, Paul prayed:

*"That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, the eyes of your heart being enlightened."* (Ephesians 1:17-18)

Revelation produces knowledge and connects hearts with God. It is the gateway to God's *true expression* of love – Christ.

## Meditation: Light

*"I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have light of life."*  
(John 8:12)

Four years after my revelation I was beginning to understand what really happened on the morning of December 7, 2002. The revelation I had was a life-altering event. It completely transformed my heart. There was no turning back. My past life was fading away rapidly in the rear view mirror. I was receiving music like never before. It was astonishing. Much of it would eventually be recorded for *Sweetbird's* third CD, *Shine*, which was released in April 2007. The title track described the revelation I had experienced. It connected *Sweetbird* back to Love.

This progression made perfect sense. "I Am Love," and the revelation that produced it, was the foundation for *Sweetbird*. God was using this foundation to reveal more about Christ, His true expression of love. That is the whole purpose of revelation - to reveal more of Christ. It has been that way since the dawn of man.

Christine was receiving inspired music as well during this period. My encounters with God were having a profound effect on her heart. It took a great deal of effort and patience to work through all the changes we were experiencing. There was a lot of pain and many tears associated with the transformation of our hearts.

Christine's life-long dream was to put out a CD of her music. She also had a yearning to know God. This became very apparent to me while we were working on *Shine*.

There are two things Christine has always loved.. One is nature, and the other is evidence of God in man. Christine sees God in nature. She marvels at the beauty of Creation. Her dad took a picture of her when she was a little girl, holding an acorn and examining it curiously. You could see in that picture the fascination Christine had with the details of nature. She sees God in those details.

As for evidence of God in man, Christine treasures seeing the Holy Spirit shine through people. She loves the thought of basking in the presence of the Spirit and there was increasing evidence of the Holy Spirit in *Sweetbird*.

By Christmas 2005, Christine's desire to see God through revelation had greatly intensified. This was expressed through her song "Eclipsed:"

*"I'm sorry, please forgive me  
It takes so long to learn it's not about me  
Please let me truly see myself in You  
Yourself in me"*

"The Call" is another song she wrote that spoke of revelation:

*"Your eyes are open  
See more than you could before  
Becoming one with the Son"*

The music I was receiving for *Shine* complemented the songs Christine was receiving. For example, the opening verse of "Live to Love" resembles the chorus from "Eclipsed:"

*“It’s not about you  
It’s not about me  
It’s not about all the flesh we see”*

*Shine* was *Sweetbird’s* first all inspirational record. Each original song was inspired and led by the Spirit. Leslie Duncan’s “Love Song,” which appeared on Elton John’s, *Tumbleweed Connection*, was a fitting cover tune.

Several spiritual themes are present on *Shine*:

- The importance of revelation
- Putting Love front and center
- Surrendering everything to Love
- Having faith and trust in Love
- Always expressing faith through Love

It is natural for people to put themselves first, ahead of Love. They say they have to “look out for Number 1” and frequently ask, “What about me?” While natural, this is not the correct order of things in the spiritual realm. In this realm, it is not about us at all, but rather it is all about God’s true expression of love - Christ.

Revelation produces the correct order of all things in the spiritual realm. That is why it is so powerful and why God uses it to reveal more about His true expression of love. As T. Austin-Sparks said:

*“Our testimony must be, not, I was brought up in a Christian home, and sent to Sunday School and taken to church, and instructed in these things of the Lord, and given a sound Bible teaching; not that - that may all be receiving it through or of men, or a man. There has to be something more than that. We have to be able to say, ‘God that said, Light shall shine out of darkness, hath shined into our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.’” (2 Corinthians 4:6)*

Sparks is speaking of revelation. Revelation changes our hearts and allows us to receive light that shines in the darkness. The light that emanates from our hearts is God’s love – vibrations of powerful energy that have no rival in the universe. If we have not this love, we are indeed nothing.

Love produces light. And where there is light, there is life.

## Meditation: Life

*“For whoever finds Me finds life.”* (Proverbs 8:35)

It was early morning on September 11, 2008 – the seventh anniversary of 9/11, nearly a year and a half after *Shine* was released. I was getting ready to read and meditate, which is how I love to begin my day. Before I began, I thought back to the morning of 9/11. The images of the explosions and the twin towers collapsing were still vivid in my mind. My thoughts then shifted to my dad. I missed him. A big part of me died during the summer of 2001. Since then, I have spent a great deal of time burying the past.

On this particular bright and sunny morning, I was immersed in a book written by T. Austin-Sparks. I was introduced to Sparks through a kindred spirit in the spring of 2007, shortly after the release of *Shine*. Since then, I have become extremely fond of his writings. They resonate strongly with my new heart. As I began reading, I came across something that leaped off the page:

*“The Holy Spirit does not come save on the ground of death, burial and resurrection.”*

I re-read that sentence a few times. It was tugging at my heart. I couldn't let go of it. I began the day thinking about death and burial, and here, Sparks is saying they are related to the Holy Spirit and resurrection. After a few more minutes of reflection, an equation popped into my head:

*Death + Burial + Resurrection = Eternal Life*

This equation linked the Holy Spirit to eternal life. I recalled something that Paul told the Galatians:

*“He that soweth unto the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap eternal life.”* (Galatians 6:8)

That is a powerful piece of Scripture. Paul is telling the Galatians that the Spirit is the gateway to eternal life. It is through the Holy Spirit that we find the narrow gate and road to life about which Jesus spoke:

*“Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.”* (Matthew 7:13-14)

I have read this Scripture many times and always wondered why the Lord said only few find the road to life. Why few? Isn't religion the road to life? As I meditated, I began to see more clearly that it was wrong to confuse religion with the Spirit that connects our hearts with Love. This is a common mistake, even among brilliant scientists. When you think about the subject deeply, you see that religion is actually an impediment to the Spirit. God views religion as a form of idolatry – an obstacle to Love. It is a barrier that stands in the way of the narrow gate and road to life.

There is an abundance of religion in the world. When we are born, names and religion come just after date of birth. I asked two questions during meditation: If religion illuminated the path to life, wouldn't Jesus have told us, and wouldn't we observe much more love than we do in the world today? I think the answers to these questions are obvious: yes and yes.

When I examined the Scriptures carefully, I noticed something very interesting: *Jesus was outside of religion*. The Scriptures are ripe with passages that indicate God's Spirit has little tolerance for religious hearts. In Matthew 23 and John 8, the Lord has harsh words for the scribes and the

Pharisees. He calls them “fools,” “blind guides,” “hypocrites,” “Serpents,” and “brood of vipers.” He equates them to “whitewashed tombs...full of dead men’s bones,” and stated: “You are of *your* father the devil.” After his revelation and receiving the Holy Spirit, Paul considered his former religious credentials “rubbish.” The Spirit was the guiding force of his heart and religious things were garbage in the light of Love. The Spirit connects hearts directly with Love and has no need for religion.

I began to meditate more deeply on the link between Matthew 7:13-14 and what Sparks said in his book. I could now see that the narrow road to life was related to three deeply spiritual things - death, burial and resurrection. Without these spiritual things, there is no ground for the Holy Spirit to guide our hearts.

During my meditation, I recalled some Scripture I have always treasured from the Gospel of John. Jesus was speaking to the Pharisees:

*“Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM.”* (John 8:58)

After this was spoken, we are told the Pharisees picked up stones in disgust and hurled them at Jesus. The religious leaders could not understand how a man so young – in his early 30s – could be “older” than Abraham, the father of Israel. It made no sense to them. Jesus was radiating the Spirit, who *is* Eternal Life. The Lord was in a wholly different realm. The religious leaders could not see or hear the Spirit coming through Him. They were spiritually blind and deaf.

The eternal, life-generating Spirit has long encountered difficulties with religious hearts. One only has to study the Scriptures associated with the Prophets, such as Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Jeremiah, to see how time and time again the Spirit was rejected by religious leaders. Love has a brilliant solution for dealing with religious hearts. Through the prophet Ezekiel, the Lord said:

*“I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them.”* (Ezekiel 36:26-27)

God’s solution for those who sought Him, but could not see and hear Him, was to give them a new heart and spirit through revelation. Love would provide all that was needed to follow the Spirit.

Think back for a moment to the Pharisee, Saul of Tarsus. He was on the receiving end of what God had promised through the prophet Ezekiel. God, through revelation, gave Saul a new heart and new spirit. After Saul received his new heart and new spirit, he was transformed into a man that powerfully radiated love!

As I continued to meditate, I came up with another way of saying what Sparks said in his book: *In order to live we must first die and allow the past to be buried.* This may sound paradoxical, but dying is the only way to find the narrow road to life. And the only way to eternal life is, as Jesus clearly showed, through the Cross.

# Meditation: The Cross

*“The Cross is a Reality, not a symbol.”*

- Oswald Chambers

As I continued to meditate the morning of September 11, 2008, I found myself standing at the foot of the Cross. The Cross is central to God’s true expression of love. Understanding the nature and function of the Cross allows us to see the importance of dying to live. In order to comprehend what this means, we must first understand what death is, spiritually speaking. It does not mean a physical death. It means the demise of our wills and egos. Or put simply, the death of self.

Love rests on sacred ground, and there is no room for our wills and egos in God’s kingdom. Self eclipses Love. This has been true since the time of Adam and Eve. When we insist on getting our way and letting our egos determine who we are and what we do with our lives, we become independent of Love. This independence obstructs the Spirit-to-spirit connection that is essential to following Love.

A human being can be viewed as consisting of three basic parts: spirit, soul and body. The soul is mind, will and emotion. The body is flesh and blood. Spiritually speaking, the heart is defined as the conscience in a person’s spirit plus the mind of the soul. The spirit, or intuition, is the organ for communicating with God, for being intimate with God, for understanding the will of God, and for knowing God. The heart is the administrator of the spirit. It expresses everything that is in the spirit.

There is an order to these three basic parts that needs to be intact before one can follow Love:

- spirit
- soul
- body

A heart that radiates God’s love - true love - is one that is Spirit-driven. That is why the spirit is first. It is our spirit that connects with Love. Severe problems crop up when the spirit becomes subservient to the soul and body. What frequently happens to people as they progress from infancy to adulthood is that their hearts become messed up and fall out of line with the correct order of things in the spiritual realm. When this happens, hearts, in effect, fall out of tune with Love. The soul and body take precedence over the spirit. Mind, will, emotion and body dominate the spirit. The spirit becomes a third-class citizen, so to speak. Flesh is the primary focus of many people, especially in the media, but this is completely misguided from Love’s perspective.

The soul and body act as a wall to impede or eclipse the Spirit-to-spirit connection that is essential in order to radiate God’s love and light. This wall is a big problem. It must be broken down if a person desires to walk in love. As long as soul and body are the driving forces of a person’s life, it is impossible to follow God and walk in love. The Spirit must be in full control, which means Love’s will *always* takes precedence over our will.

Demolishing the wall through the Cross can be and is often extremely painful. I did not understand any of this before my revelation. However, over time as I studied and meditated through the Spirit, I could clearly see that the darkness and despair I experienced had a specific purpose. It was designed to utterly break me and change my heart. Its purpose was to destroy the wall that was preventing me from finding true love. True love was on the other side. Until that

wall was destroyed, I could not realize my life-long dream and find true love. Like Jericho, the wall I had erected to protect myself had to fall.

The darkness and despair we encounter is not designed to make us angry, although that is what it does frequently. How many times did I encounter darkness in my life and instead of breaking, I got angry? I would yell, scream, swear and cry.

People react to darkness in many different ways. Some do what I did. Others become insulated and introverted and use food to pacify themselves. Others find refuge in alcohol and drugs, which then leads to more darkness. These things erect a bigger wall which becomes more difficult to destroy.

Whatever the response to darkness, many people don't seem to understand its purpose. For a long time, I was one of them. What I learned after my revelation is that God uses darkness to break us down and change our hearts. He uses, in effect, a black chalk board – darkness – so that we can see the writing, which is light. The darkness provides contrast to the light. Without it, we simply could not see anything of the Spirit. When we are broken and the wall is torn down, our spirit can connect with God's Spirit. We are then, and only then, in a position to follow God and walk in love.

The Cross depicts a Reality of utter brokenness, where we, our selves, are dead and buried, and Christ, God's true expression of love, takes over and becomes all. The Cross is not optional. It is on the Cross that we experience death of self. Our wills and egos become unimportant. Love becomes pre-eminent. It is at the Cross where we bury our past. Nothing from our past can transcend the Cross. It is through the Cross where we receive the Holy Spirit, become new creations, and find the path to life. Death, burial, and resurrection are all related to the Cross. *The Holy Spirit is received on the ground of the Cross.* This is important to understand. It explains why Jesus said to His disciples:

*“If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it.”* (Matthew 16:24-25)

Until we are utterly broken, there is no ground for the Holy Spirit to connect with our spirits and transform our selfish hearts into loving hearts. Jesus spoke of brokenness:

*“And whoever falls on this stone will be broken; but on whomever it falls, it will grind him to powder.”* (Matthew 21:44)

Falling on the stone - what powerful imagery! Either we fall on the stone and are broken or the stone falls on us and grinds us to dust. God gives us a free will to choose either path. After all, love can only exist in freedom.

We die to live. It is a paradox, but it is the only way to find the narrow path to life. All of this was brought home strongly to me in relation to *Sweetbird* on the evening of September 11, 2008.

I was sitting on the couch in the recording studio relaxing after dinner. I happened to glance up at the three picture frames perched on top of the book cases. The first holds a copy of *Sweetbird's* debut CD, *Free Spirit Reflection*, the second, *Soul Fire*, and the third, *Shine*. As I sat looking at them, I had a revelation. I saw the spiritual evolution of *Sweetbird*. In the three records, I saw the three things that Sparks discussed in his book. *Free Spirit Reflection* represented death. *Soul Fire* equaled burial. *Shine* symbolized resurrection.

The songs on *Free Spirit Reflection* were written during a period of extreme darkness directly related to death. *Soul Fire* was recorded during a time when Christine and I were burying our past. *Shine* was recorded after we surrendered the music to Love. When I looked at the three *Sweetbird* CDs collectively, I could see the guiding hand of the Holy Spirit.

I recalled the equation I wrote down earlier that day. What comes after death, burial and resurrection? Life! Life emerges out of death and burial. It is the natural progression of things in the spiritual realm. We die to live. I envisioned the new CD Christine and I had been working on, titled *The Great Life*, along with the others. The fourth *Sweetbird* CD is about life. The progression of the music made perfect sense from a spiritual perspective.

Before retiring to bed, after a day of intense meditation, I recalled a comment we had received, about *Free Spirit Reflection*, from a listener whom we had never met, named Bruce Lomet:

*“Sweetbird’s songs fill your heart with love and hope for humanity. How many artists can make you feel like that?”*

“What a wonderful comment,” I thought. From a spiritual perspective, there could be no higher calling for the music. My mind drifted back to the time when Jesus went to the Cross to battle death and emerged victorious. That great victory paved the way for all of humanity to discover true love and find the narrow road to life. The Lord showed us the way to life through the Cross. The Cross is the place where we die and are buried, and Christ is resurrected in us and shines through us. As the Spirit said through Paul:

*“For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.”* (Colossians 3:3)

Until our selves are put to death and are buried - that is, until we fall on the stone and are utterly broken - the Spirit has no ground on which to operate. It is through the Cross, and only through the Cross, that we can say what Paul told the Galatians:

*“I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me.”* (Galatians 2:20)

There is no greater love and hope for humanity than Christ, God’s true expression of love.

# Finale

*“Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.”* (Revelation 19:10)

The Bible is the best selling book in history. To me, it is far more than a book. When I read the Scriptures, I see *a Person who is Love*. Many people think love is simply an emotion or a feeling, but it is far greater. Love is a magnificent and unique *Being*. It is not religious — it is *Spiritual*. God is Spirit. Compare Love to those things that comprise a typical human heart:

Many people are impatient, but Love is patient.

Many people are not kind, but Love is kind.

Many people are envious, but Love does not envy.

Many people boast, but Love never boasts. It is not proud.

Many people are rude, but Love is never rude.

Many people are self-seeking, but Love never seeks its' own.

Many people are easily angered, but Love is slow to anger.

Many people keep records of wrongs, but Love does not keep any such records.

Many people frequently lie, but Love never lies. It rejoices always with the truth.

Love always protects, always trusts, always hopes, and always perseveres.

How many people do you know with a pure heart filled with this kind of love? This is perfect love — *true love*. It is the most powerful force in the universe. Its power casts out all fear and knows no bounds. Once you discover this love through revelation, there is no turning back. You have found the way to life.

In his letter to the Philippians, as he was nearing the end of his earthly life, Paul wrote something very special and profound. It speaks volumes about the power of revelation and of the Spirit:

*“Have no confidence in the flesh, though I also might have confidence in the flesh. If anyone else thinks he may have confidence in the flesh, I more so: circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; concerning the law, a Pharisee; concerning zeal, persecuting the church; concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.*

*But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith; that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.”* (Philippians 3:4-11)

Paul tells us that his religious pedigree was impeccable and that everything looked right on the outside. In the flesh, Paul was a model “man of God.” After his revelation, his view completely changed. He considered his religion, and everything that came with it, “rubbish.” His new heart and spirit had no need for religious things. It radiated Love, Light and Life, the three great forces associated with Christ.

Is that not remarkable? Revelation fundamentally transformed Saul’s heart. Instead of wanting to kill followers of Christ, he only desired to become one with Christ. The Prophet’s message is clear: Love isn’t about religious rituals, feasts, traditions and going through the motions. It is all about Spiritual fruit – love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Galatians 5:22-23).

When you encounter a spiritual man, woman or child, the fruit of the Spirit is evident in their heart. You can sense it. It is palpable. The fruit of the Spirit is proof that Love is in control, not self. Religious hearts do not radiate Spiritual fruit. Mahatma Gandhi, a spiritual man, once remarked that God has no religion. That is wisdom. Another spiritual man, Paramahansa Yogananda, concluded his autobiography by stating: “God is Love; His plan for creation can be rooted only in love.” Mother Teresa noted that God has created us to love and to be loved. The Dalai Lama says love is a necessity for humanity to survive. Amen!

The Spirit transcends man-made religions and lifts us to higher levels of consciousness. It is *the* unifying force that always guides hearts toward Love. Jesus did not go to the Cross to start another religion called “Christianity.” No, beloved, He went to the Cross to show us the way to Love, Light and Life. He demonstrated to the world that death is no match for Love. The Spirit possesses mighty power that cannot be extinguished by humans, religious or otherwise. It elevates hearts to the highest levels of consciousness where love, joy, and peace reign supreme.

Oswald Chambers summarized the basic thesis of this book succinctly when he said:

*“That God is love, is a revelation. Unless I am born from above, what is the use of telling me God is love? To me He is not love. Where is the love of God in war? In suffering? In all the inevitable inequalities of life? No one who faces facts as they are could ever prove that God is love unless he accepts the revelation of His love made by Jesus Christ.”*

Yes, it is true that it does little use to tell somebody that God is love. That is something they will have to discover for themselves through revelation, as the apostle John did:

*“Dear friends, let us love one another, because love is from God, and everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. The one who does not love does not know God, because God is love.”* (1 John 4:7-8)

The voice that spoke to me on December 7, 2002, was the voice of God, who is Love. He is everything that was revealed to me that morning: He is stronger than we know. He makes the rivers of living water flow. He can lift us when we are down. He can turn our world around. He can brighten each and every day.

Yes, dear friends. God is love. Love is the greatest. Love’s Spirit can guide us all on our way – in a fashion that extends beyond dreams and imagination. It sails through the stormiest of seas. May Love always be with you, and may you find the road to life — Great Life!

## Sweetbird Discography

*Free Spirit Reflection* (2003, Broadband Records)

*Soul Fire* (2005, Broadband Records)

*Shine* (2007, Broadband Records)

*The Great Life* (expected release, 2009, Broadband Records)

For more information about *Sweetbird*, please visit:

[www.sweetbirdmusic.com](http://www.sweetbirdmusic.com)

[www.myspace.com/sweetbirdmusic](http://www.myspace.com/sweetbirdmusic)

“I Am Love” can be downloaded with iTunes at the following link:

<http://itunes.apple.com/WebObjects/MZStore.woa/wa/viewAlbum?i=4465477&id=4465493&s=143441>

Additional copies of this book can be obtained free of charge by sending your name and address via email to: [steve@broadbandrecords.com](mailto:steve@broadbandrecords.com)

*“Freely you have received, freely give.”*  
(Matthew 10:8)

*“Love never fails.”*  
(1 Corinthians 13:8)

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