

# The Hand

By Dean Meredith

Look at my hand and what do you see?

If I raise it, palm outward, fingers toward the sky, and you stand directly in front of me, if your back is turned, then you will not see my hand. If your eyes are closed, you will see nothing except darkness. But if you turn around and face me, and open your eyes, you will see my hand, and if I asked you to describe it, what would you say? You might say it has four fingers and a thumb, it has a palm, it is smooth except for straight lines marking joints on the fingers and thumb, and curved lines intersecting and branching off one another on the palm, and I might say is that all you see? And you might say yes, and if I were to ask, what do you think I see? You might say, a hand, the same hand, but if I were to describe what I see, then I would say, I see four fingers and a thumb, and you might say, I told you so, but I would say, that's not all I see. On each finger and thumb there are shiny nails, and there are knuckles, wrinkles, raised veins and black hairs.

My description is similar but different to yours, and yet it is the same hand, and if you had never seen a hand before, and only went on what you could see, you might call me a liar, but if I were to turn that same hand around and show you, then you would see what I saw, and I would see what you saw, and we would both know that each other were telling the truth. If two other people stood, one to my left and the other to my right, and I asked the same questions about what they see, one person would only see my little finger and the tips of two others, and the other person would only see my thumb and the tips of two fingers. Both would see parts of palms, knuckles, nails and hair, but neither would describe my hand exactly the same way. If others looked at my hand from above and below, they too would offer very different descriptions, and yet, all along, it is the very same hand.

So what is the point of my story?

Imagine that the hand represents God, and the different people and points of view represent the various religions. Is it possible that so many religions are looking at the same God, but from different perspectives? Could it be that those with backs turned or eyes shut represent non-believers? Mine is not the hand of God, this is just a parable, and the hope is to open our minds to possibilities. If we look in such a way at the world's religions, then we might notice many more similarities than differences, and realize how much we all have in common, then unity is more than possible.

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