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## Non-Stop

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## Non-Stop

Airline flights between the Hawaiian Islands and the U.S. mainland are non-stop; there are no fueling places along the way, and the planes cannot land in the water. The Kōlea, a golden plover, flies non-stop from Hawai'i to Alaska for the summer, and makes a return flight in the fall; a land-bird, it is incapable of resting on the ocean.

While we admire the feats of planes and birds that can travel thousands of miles without pause, we acknowledge that we are only capable of travelling short distances by foot, and for brief lengths of time. Most of us get up in the morning, and usually retire in the evening: a day's rather brief journey in life. But we might want to reflect on another journey, the one we began at birth, which does not end.

Some of our present experiences have a never-ending aspect to them; some of what we do and what we learn is really about "always," and not in a merely romantic or hyperbolic understanding of the word. Material things are not as important to us as people, nor are non-material "possessions" such as power, prestige and honors more important than honest, sincere relationships. More deeply, anything that we can keep and control is temporary, while all forms of positive relationships in which we participate change us irrevocably, and remain with us always. All the negative things of which we humans are capable are, like physical, material qualities, temporary. But our love continues through death, non-stop.

Some of our friends are life-long and other friendships do not continue to grow during our time on earth. But each and every relationship – comprised of those mysterious bonds of caring of which we are capable – does not stop, even with the death of someone. Once we have loved, in any way, the spiritual motion that we initiated moves on as an ever-living participation in the essence of God, who is Love. The love that we manifest in thoughts, words, decisions and deeds is expressed in momentary ways within our time-centered present perspective, but the movement within us is without end. Real love – not merely a feeling, but a decision – can only continue right on through death, for it is not just something we "do" but who we are as persons who are created in God's image and likeness.

We do not stop growing with physical death; far from ceasing to grow, we will continue, but without the limitations of time and space. At present, we can be only partially in close contact with a small number of persons. But, every instance of our relatedness and orientation toward others will continue; our past and present instances of loving and relating will go unendingly forward with us.

If we reflect on our desires, we can recognize another non-stop aspect of our lives. We always want to do and to learn more. Our deepest desires reveal the kind of creatures we are – not just physical, but spiritual as well. Our desire for more keeps us going, and will continue to keep us going after we pass through death. We will always be interested in learning more, in doing more, for love is endlessly outreaching, and thereby endlessly fulfilling.

Love is the “fuel” for our truly non-stop journey.