This from the book Nothing Better Than Death by Kevin Williams.

[Linda Stewart's](mailto:el-stewart@worldnet.att.net) journey to understand God began in the rugged environment of a Texas childhood that was filled with "rattlesnakes, tornadoes, and hellfire-and-damnation." Her early concept of God was moulded by the pervasive, extremist religious community of the Bible Belt exemplified by the Southern Baptist Religion practiced by her parents. The wrathful, vengeful God, as taught by her religion, instilled in Linda a deep fear of God, death and the afterlife.

Her lifelong search for a loving God and release from the paralyzing fear of death culminated in a brief journey to heaven after a debilitating illness. The near-death experience transformed Linda, showing her that God is only a loving God, who does not judge and punish. She came to understand the Oneness of all existence which permeated her life with peace and the unfaltering knowledge of God's goodness. Her near-death experience is published in Kevin Williams' NDE book entitled, [Nothing Better Than Death](http://www.near-death.com/nothing_better_than_death.html).

**Linda Stewart's Near-Death Experience**

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When I finally gave up my will to live, relinquishing my life unto death was sublimely easy after my long illness and loss of everything that had made life worthwhile for me. The decision to leave this world hung suspended in an extended moment of absolute quiet. Passionless, I watched my spirit leave my body as a feeling of "otherness" engulfed me. I felt a strange detachment from my physical body and the life I had created. I was no longer connected to a pitiful, suffering mass of flesh. I was not that body and yet, I still existed but in a new state of being. Gone was the wrenching pain that had accompanied my every waking moment. The strain of expanding my lungs to gasp for air had disappeared. Fatigue, which had weighted my life for years, had lifted. Depression no longer drained my mind of hope. Sight and sounds did not sear my head with pain, leaving me emotionally bereft. And yet, I still existed. I felt weightless and calm.  
  
Although I knew I was not in the lifeless body lying on my bed, and that the eyes and brain I had previously identified as mine, were in that inanimate object with which I no longer identified, I was still aware of sight and thoughts and sensations. I observed my new reality with tranquility. Slowly I looked around and below me I saw a vast, endless blackness. Like a void or black hole, I was irresistibly drawn toward the darkness. Gradually, I felt myself sinking toward it. I thought, without fear or any emotional reaction, "Isn't that strange?" I had been so afraid I was going to be judged and sent to either heaven or hell. But it appeared I would simply disappear into the dark nothingness. As even my new awareness waned, I yielded to the heaviness overtaking me as darkness filled my mind. My vision became obscured as I began to merge into the blackness.  
  
Offering no resistance, I released my hold on any remaining shred of consciousness and personal identity. At the very moment I felt the last of me disappearing into nothingness, I was suddenly buffeted by a powerful, energetic force that swooped beneath and lifted me, carrying me upward.  
  
Barely conscious, my only awareness was a sensation of rising. I seemed to be traveling upward at an unimaginable speed. A clean sensation of wind rushed over my face and body with tremendous force and yet there was no discomfort. Vast distances seemed to fly by me and the higher I rose, the more my head cleared. I became aware of a deep sense of peace and warmth that permeated my senses. Confused, because the energy that had enveloped me had a definite presence, I tried to see what was happening and who was carrying me; who or what cared so deeply for me? I felt peaceful and loved immeasurably. I knew I was in the arms of a being who cherished me with perfect love and carried me from the dark void into a new reality.  
  
As my mind cleared, scoured of the remnants of mortal, past associations, I was finally able to open my being fully to spirit and my vision cleared.

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With the eyes of my soul body, I looked to see what held me in such love and I beheld a radiant, Spirit being, so magnificent and full of love that I knew I would never again feel the sense of loss. I have no way of explaining how, but I knew the Spirit was Christ. It was not a belief, perception or understanding, but my recognition of Christ came from my new perspective of spirit.  
  
I did not see the Spirit as I had seen Jesus of Nazareth depicted in paintings, but the innate knowing of my heart remembered and acknowledged Christ. The radiant Spirit was Christ, the manifestation and expression of pure love. Because of my Christian education, I knew no other name to call what I felt as I looked at him.  
  
Others might have called him Buddha, or Yahweh, or Great Spirit in the Sky, but the naming did not matter, only the recognition of absolute love and truth was important. Safe in the gentle yet powerful embrace of his love, I rested, secure that everything was okay, exactly as it was supposed to be.

Ascending ever farther, I lifted my eyes to see a great light in the vast distance. With Christ as my guide, I rapidly approached the light. Ecstasy filled my soul as I looked at the radiance, many-fold brighter than a sun.  
  
The light was everywhere and everything, the brightest I had ever seen and dazzling beyond description. Brilliant enough to blind or burn, yet I was not harmed.  
  
The light moved over and through me, washing every hidden place of my heart, removing all hurt and fear, transforming my very being into a song of joy. I had thought the love I felt from Christ was complete, yet, the light toward which we were soaring was the fulfillment of my search, the loving Source of all that exists, the God of truth and unconditional love, the origin of creation.  
  
My understanding of love was forever changed. The majesty and glory of that vision was an ineffable moment that defined forever more, the direction of my new truth. I was home and I wanted nothing more than to remain in the light of God. Christ had delivered me into the light and I stood in the presence of God. I was filled with complete knowing: The light was love and love was God. Waves of consummate love which emanated from the light obliterated every burden I carried and every thought that kept me from knowing God. I was made aware of my purity. With new clarity, I realized I had been walking through life ghostlike, wrapped in a shroud of fear, huddled against illusions. I stood like a lover, open to the liquid flow of golden light that filled my empty shell to overflowing.  
  
There was no limit to the outpouring as I came to the rapturous awareness of the infinite nature of God's love. There was no place that God did not exist and I was within God. I am an inseparable part of the light. The truth of who I am, indeed, who we all are, is perfect love as a creation of God. All of God's creation is one creation and I am one with creation. God and I are one, Creator and created.

I had spent a lifetime of fear of judgment and now, standing with God, I had been known completely and found faultless. I knew God regarded me as perfect. God loved me because love is the totality of God. God loves without limit. Finally it all made sense. God could only love me because God is only love, nothing other than love. The only reality is God; there cannot be another and GOD IS LOVE.  
  
I had reached my true home. I turned to Christ and said, "This is beautiful. I am home. This is where I want to be. I want to stay." And Christ answered, "You can stay for a little while and then you must return."