

**Question One:  
How do we find  
meaning in  
life and death?**

# **QUESTION ONE:**

***How do we find meaning in life  
here and now,***

***and***

***How do we give meaning to  
death?***

**How do we find meaning  
in our lives?**

# ***MEANING***

```
graph TD; MEANING[MEANING] --- SYNCHRONIC[SYNCHRONIC]; MEANING --- DIACHRONIC[DIACHRONIC]; SYNCHRONIC --- STRUCTURE[- structure]; SYNCHRONIC --- FUNCTION[- function]; DIACHRONIC --- STORY[- story]; DIACHRONIC --- PLOT[- plot];
```

## **SYNCHRONIC**

**- structure**

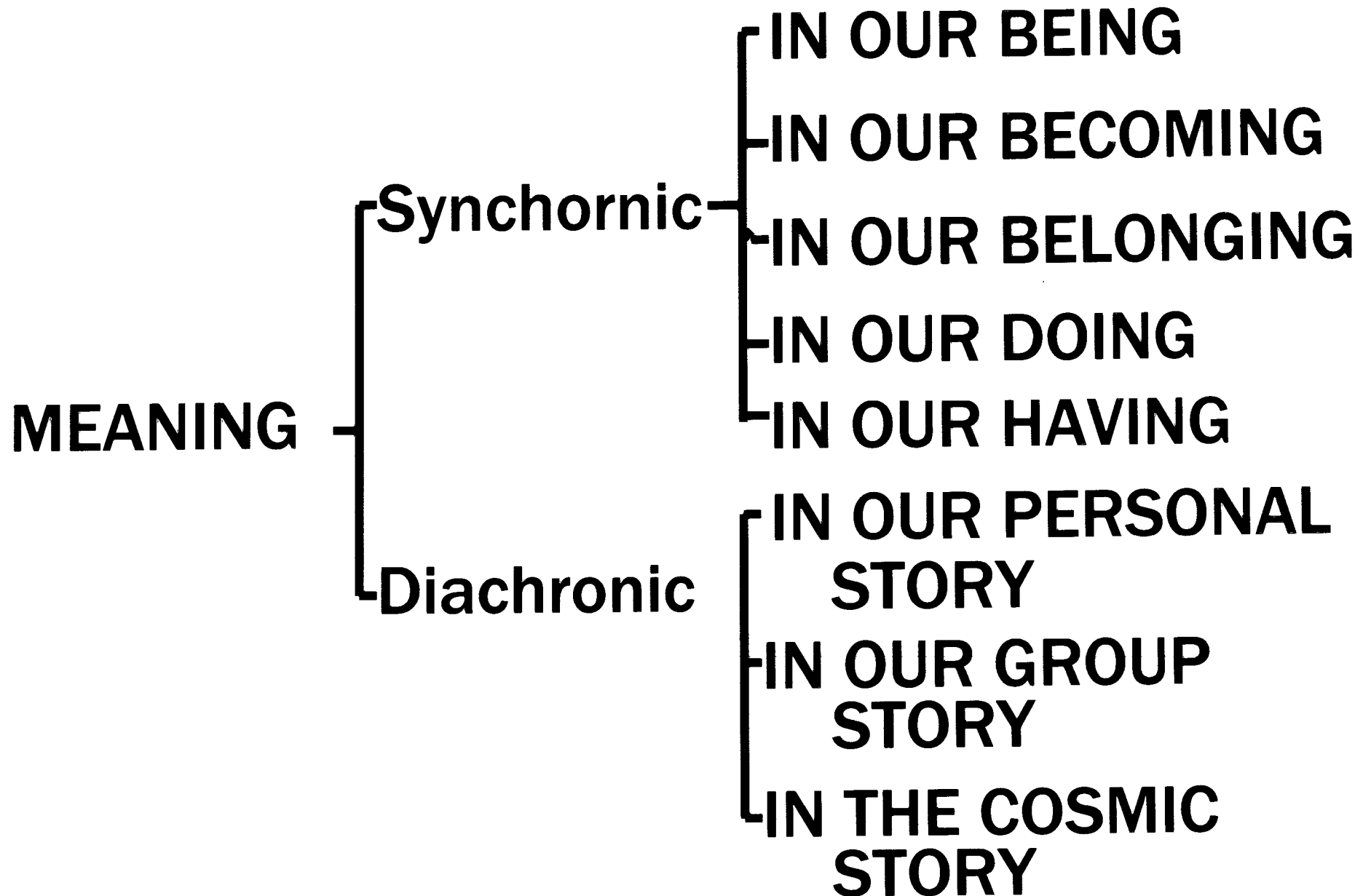
**- function**

## **DIACHRONIC**

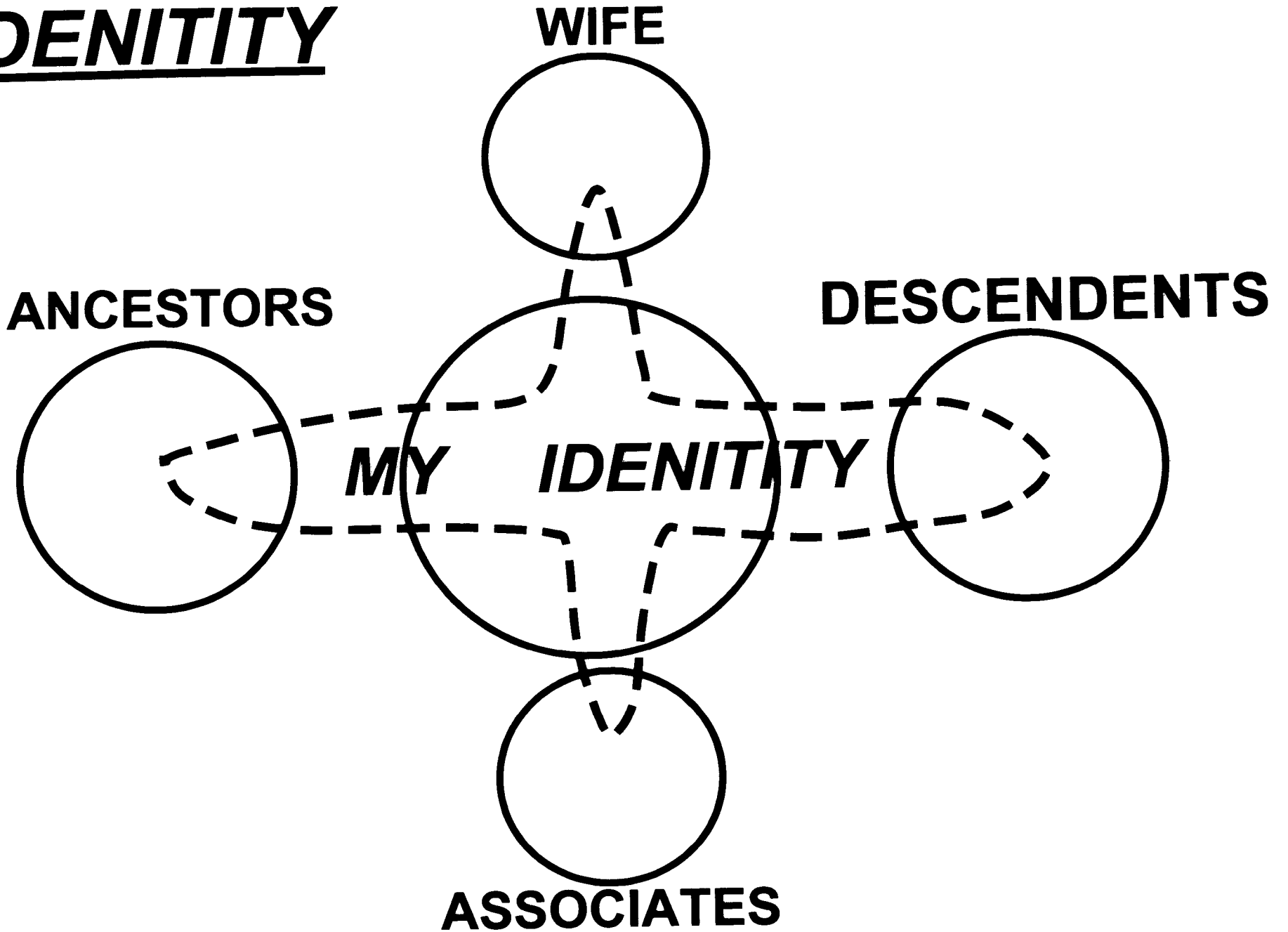
**- story**

**- plot**

# WAYS WE FIND MEANING IN LIFE



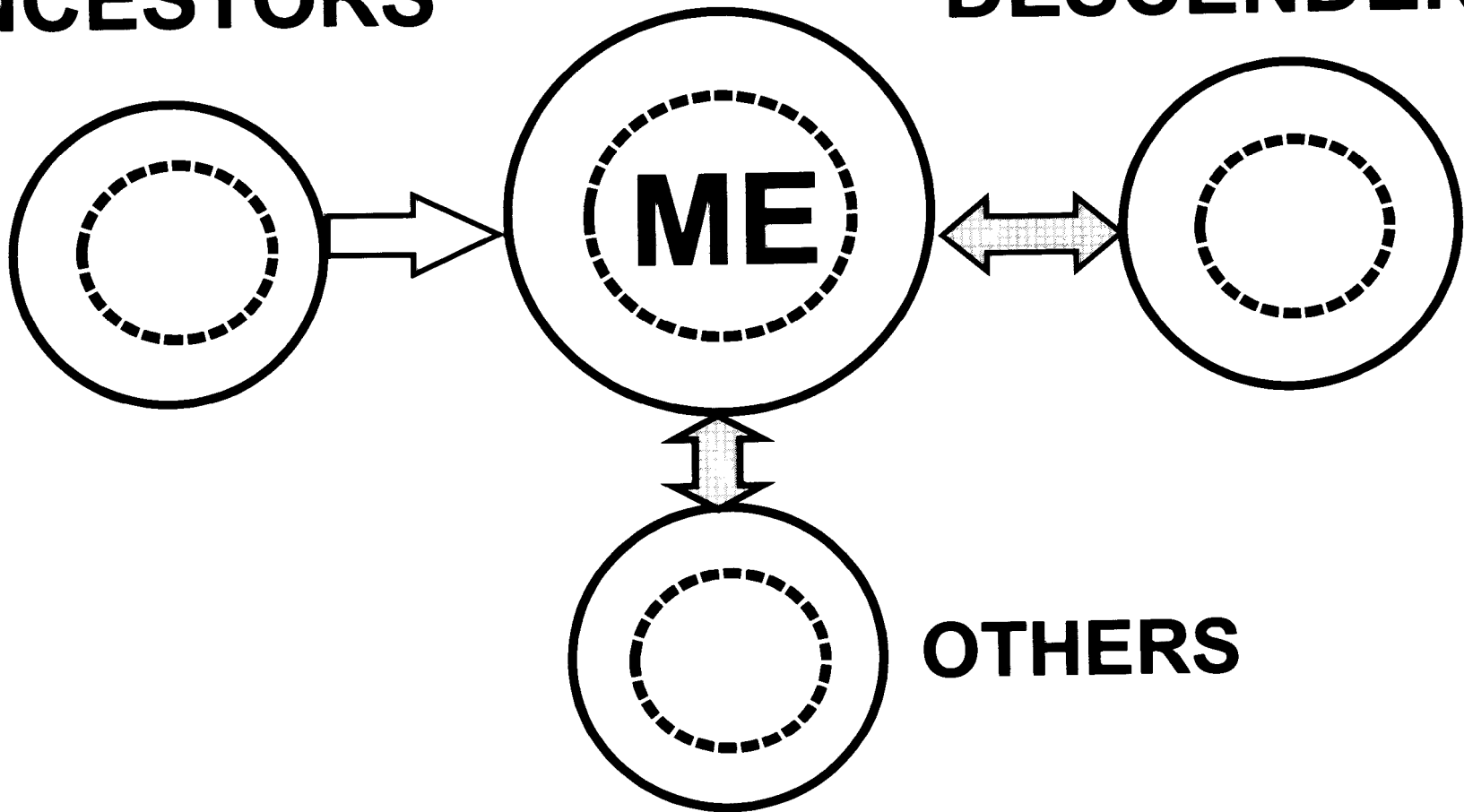
**IDENTITY**



# **IDENTITY: Modern**

**ANCESTORS**

**DESCENDENTS**

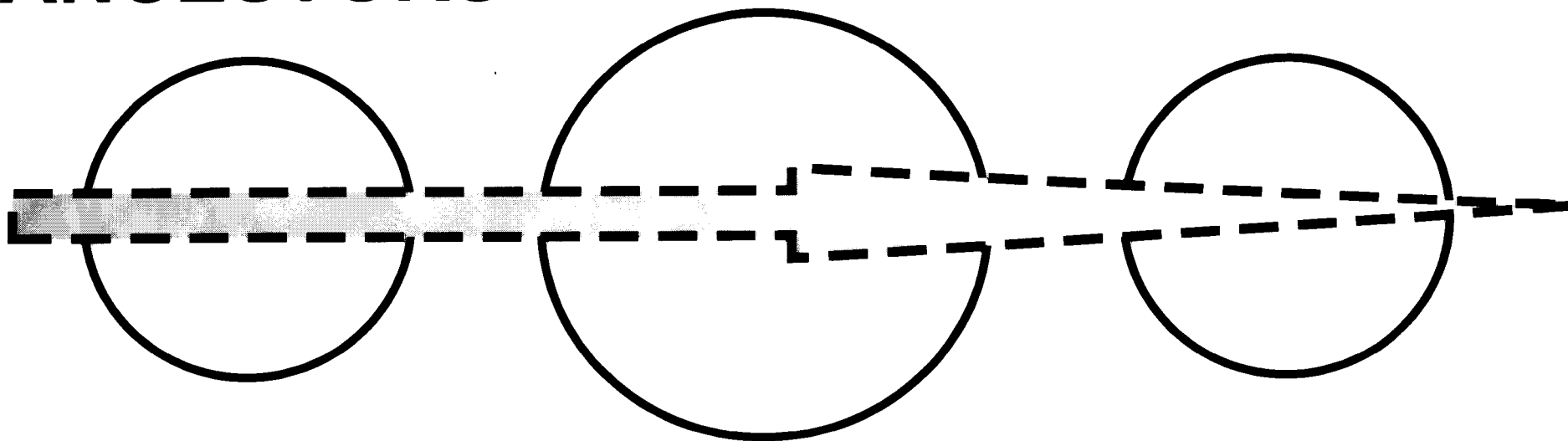


# **IDENTITY**

**ANCESTORS**

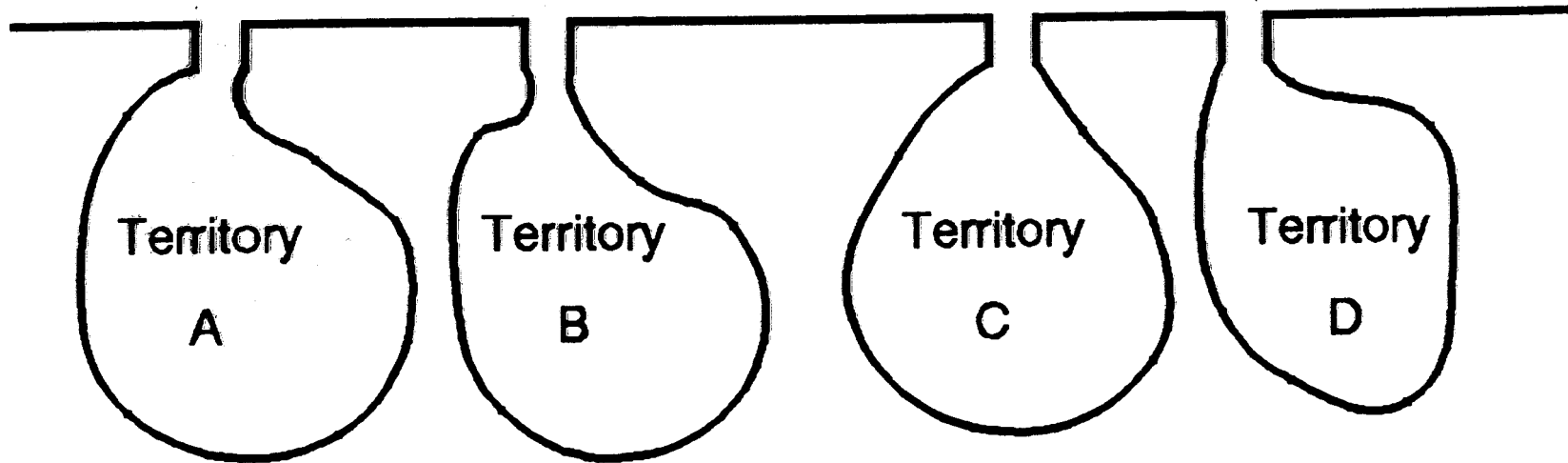
**ME**

**DESCENDENTS**

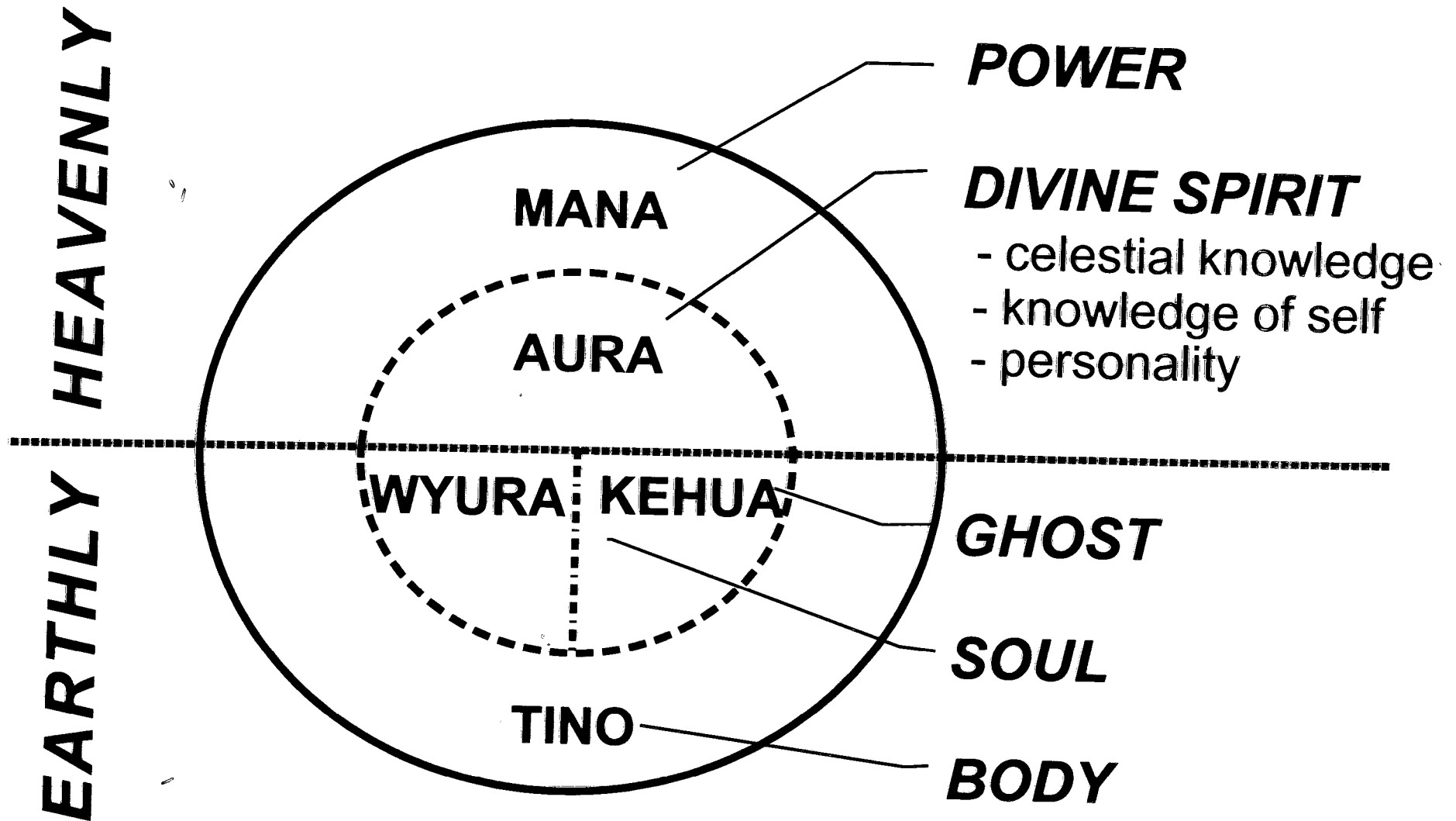




# Australian aborigine view of conception



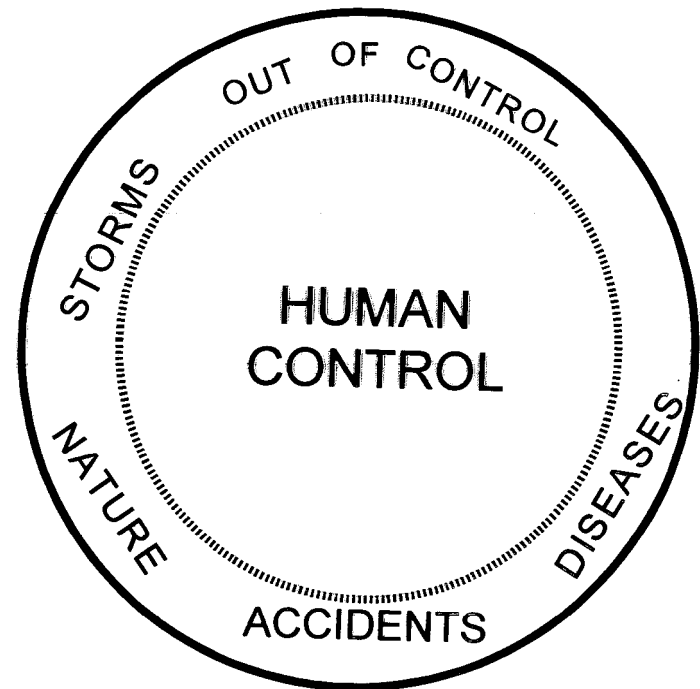
# MAORI VIEW OF LIFE



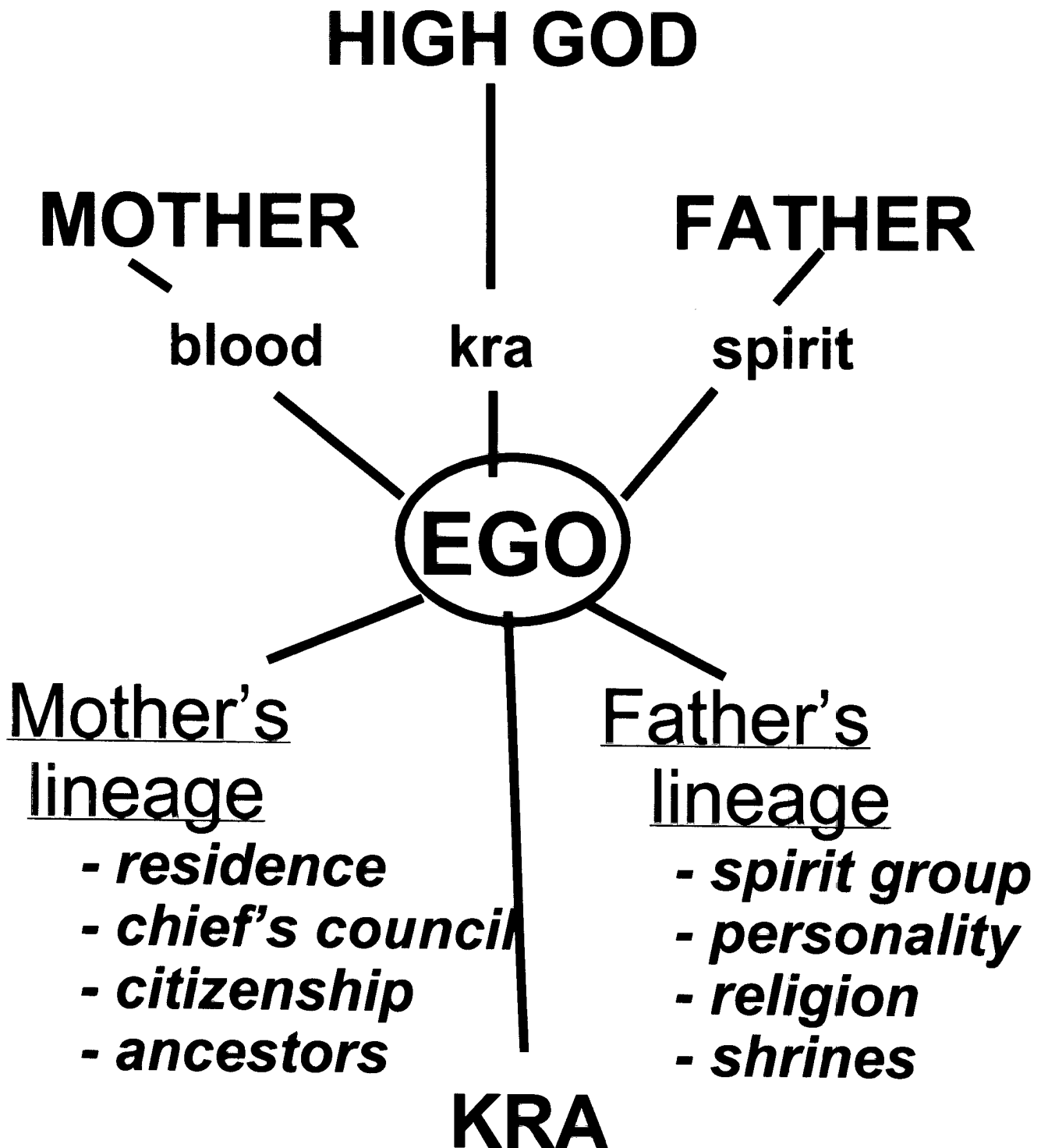
## ***AFRICAN WORLDVIEW***



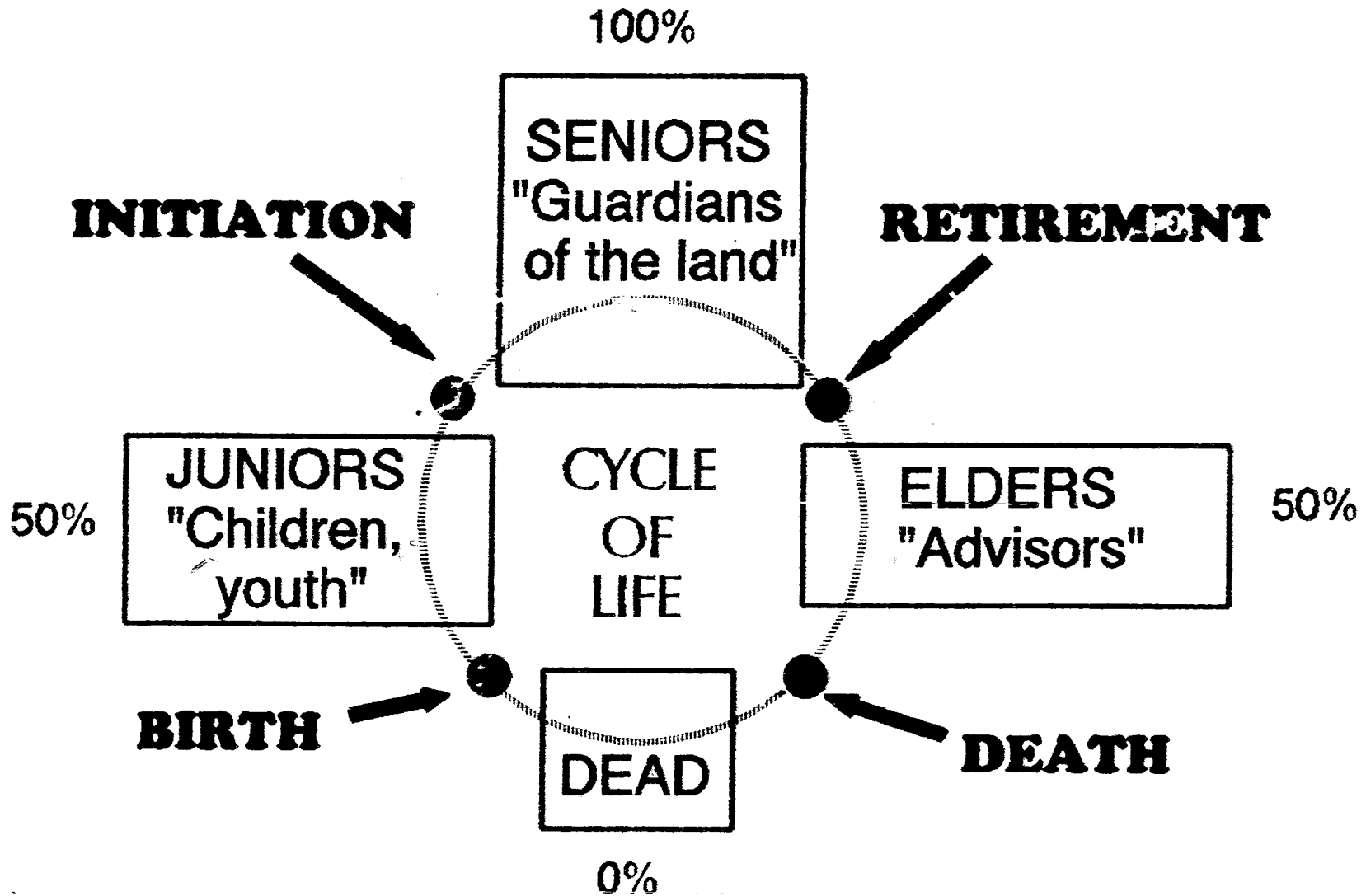
## ***AMERICAN WORLDVIEW***



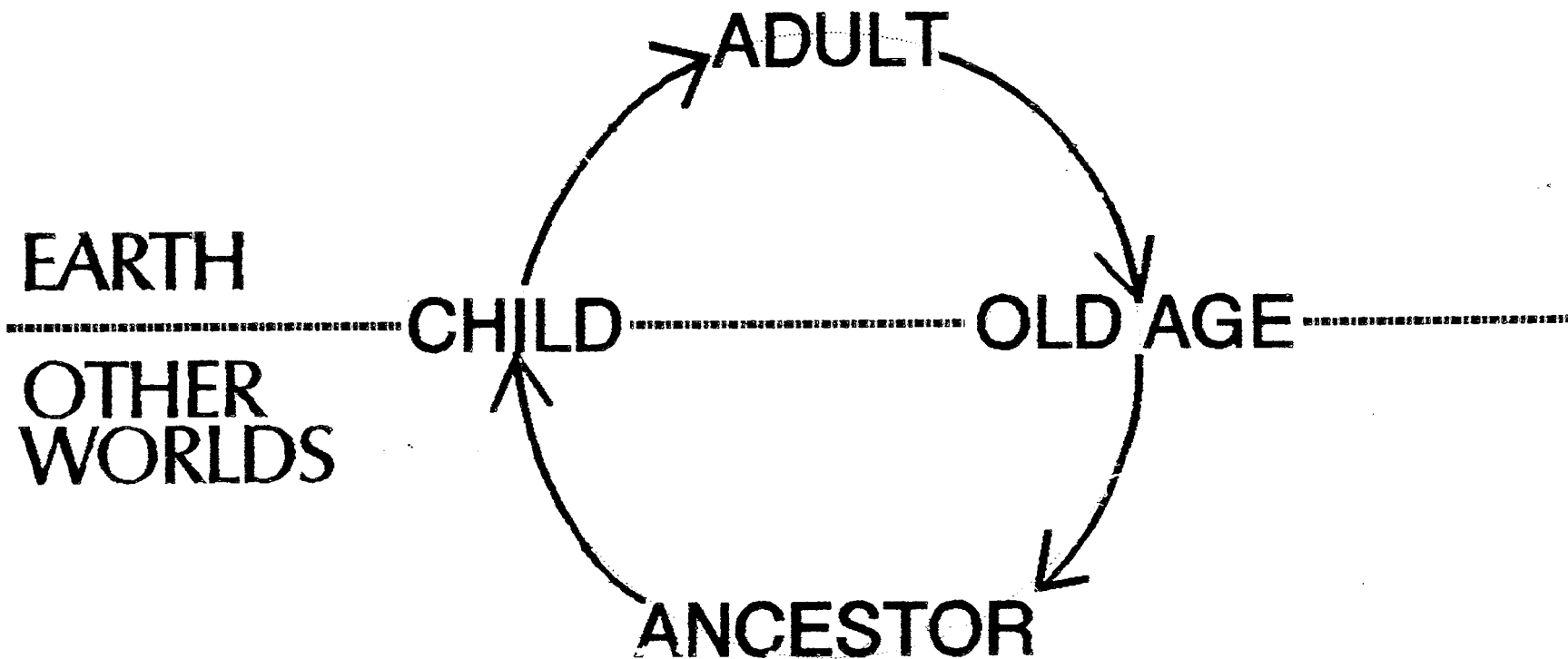
# ASHANTI PERSONHOOD



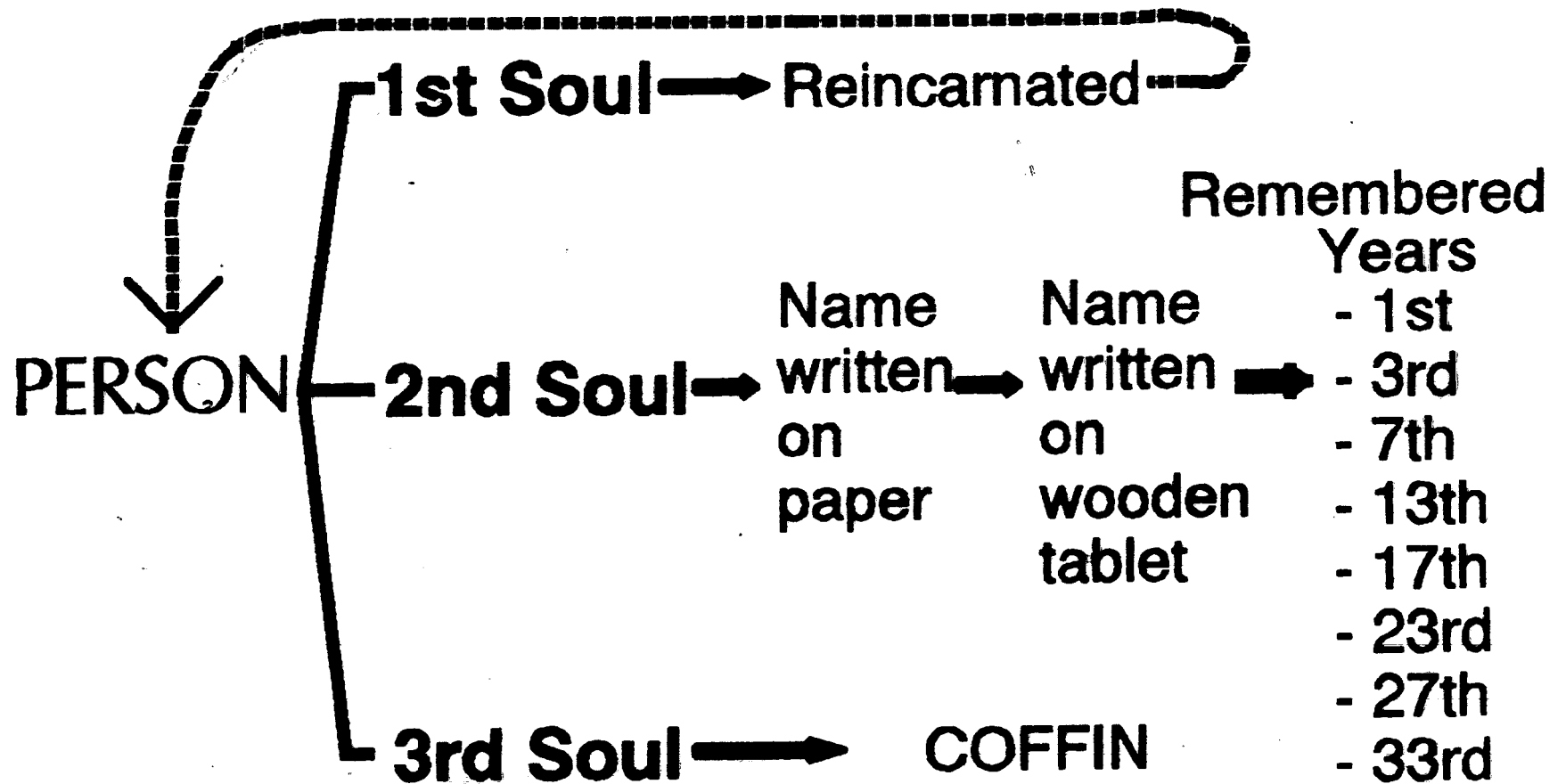
# KARIMOJONG OF EAST AFRICA



# CYCLICAL VIEW OF LIFE

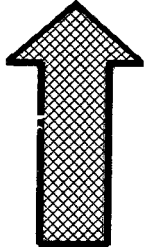


# CHINESE BELIEFS ABOUT SOULS



# Bantu African Stages of Life

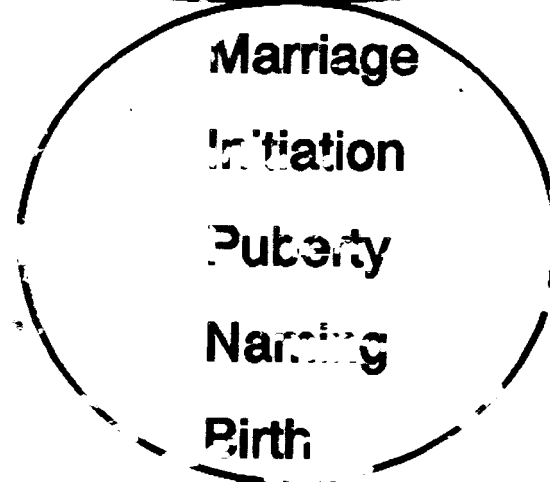
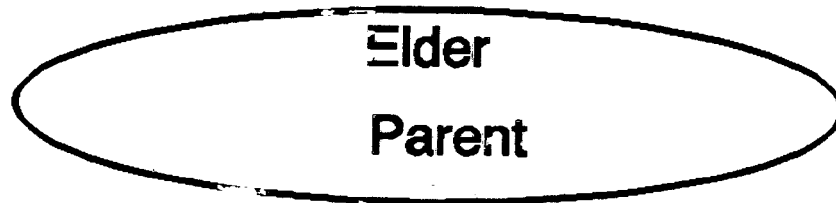
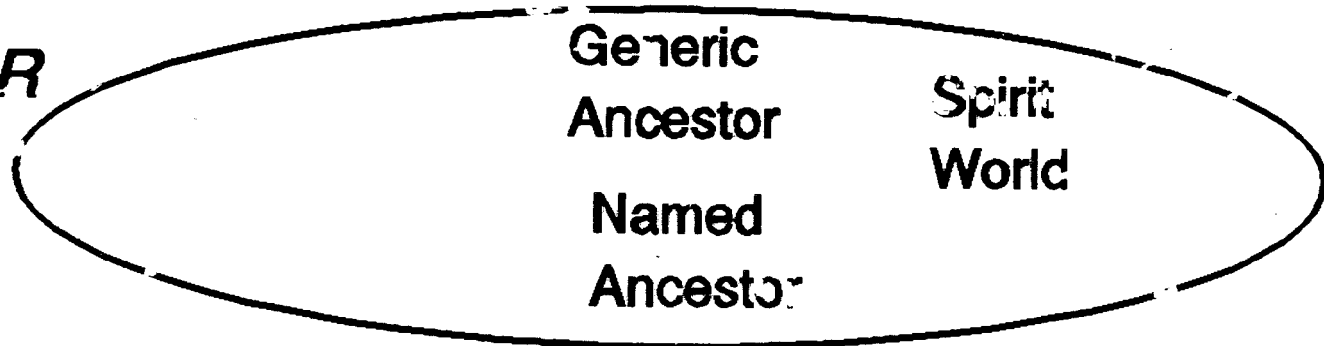
**ANCESTOR**



**FULL HUMAN  
BEING**



**FORMING HUMAN  
BEING**

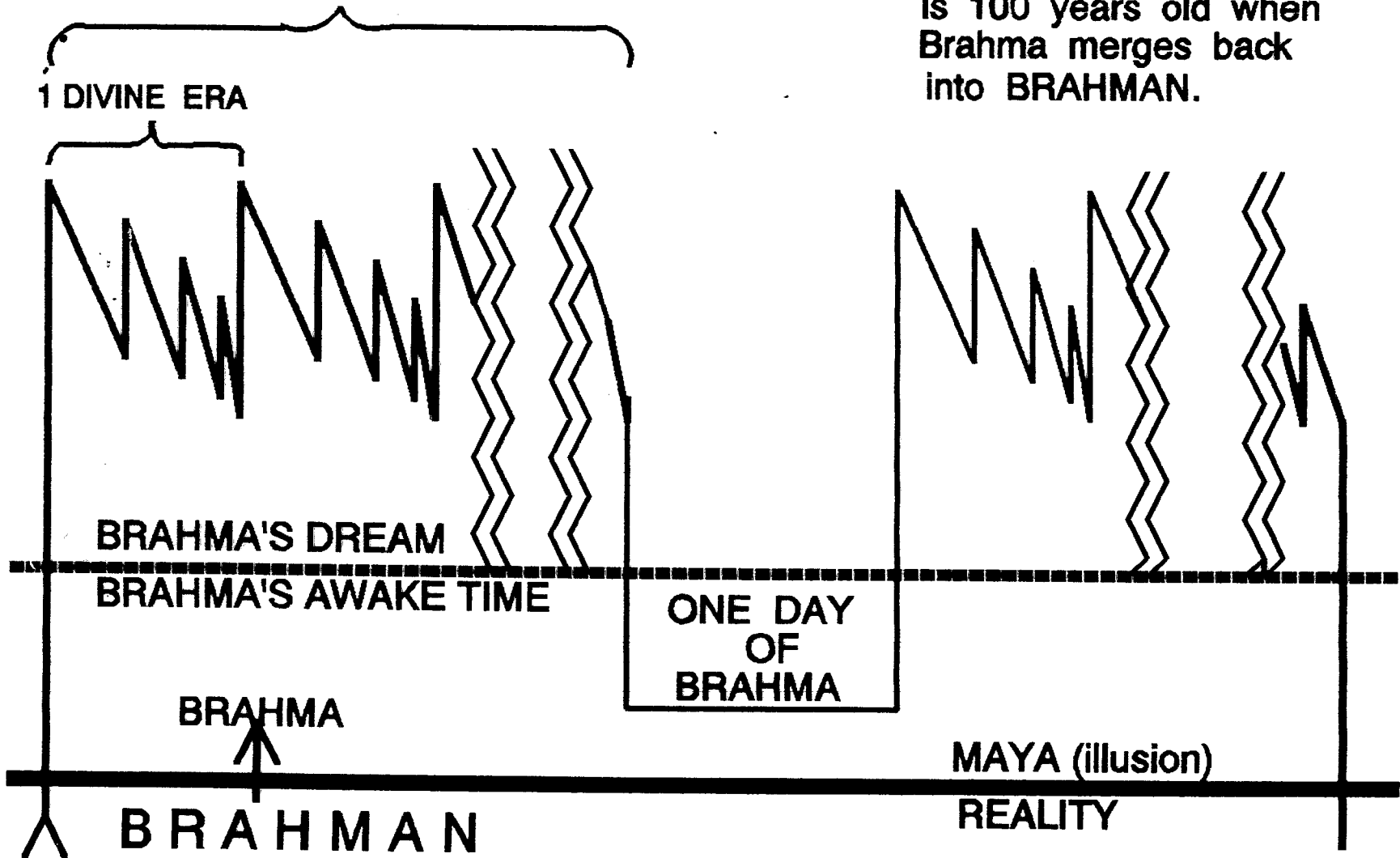




# INDIAN VIEW OF TIME

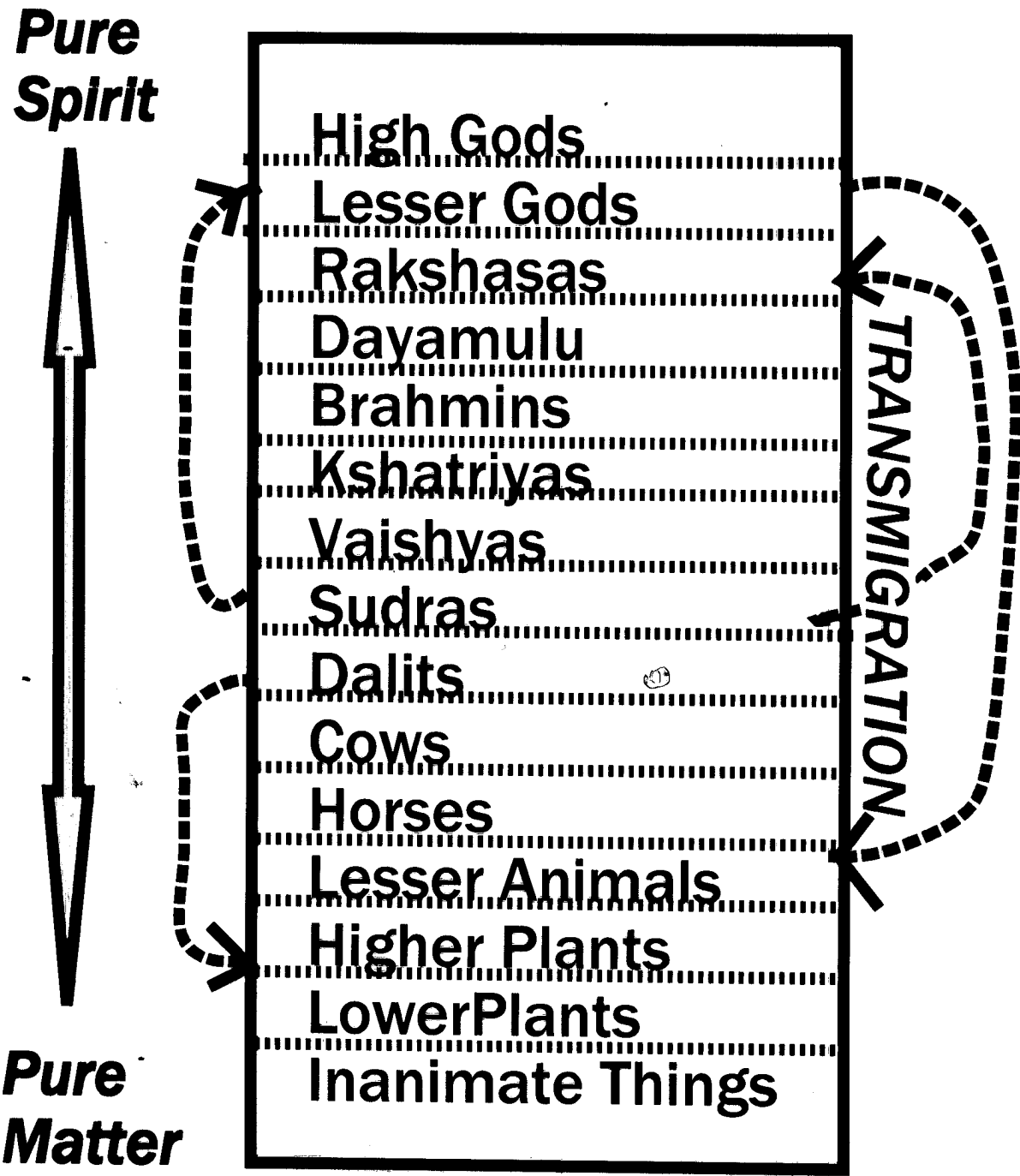
- 1000 DIVINE ERAS = 1 NIGHT OF BRAHMA

Continues until Brahma is 100 years old when Brahma merges back into BRAHMAN.



# THE HIERARCHY OF LIFE

[*eka jivam*—all life is one]



**I AM . . . .**

**(list ten nouns defining yourself)**

# ***HOW DO WE AS CHRISTIANS PROVIDE PEOPLE WITH NEW MEANING IN LIFE?***

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## **SYNCHRONIC:**

- their being
- their becoming
- their belonging
- their behaving

## **DIACHRONIC:**

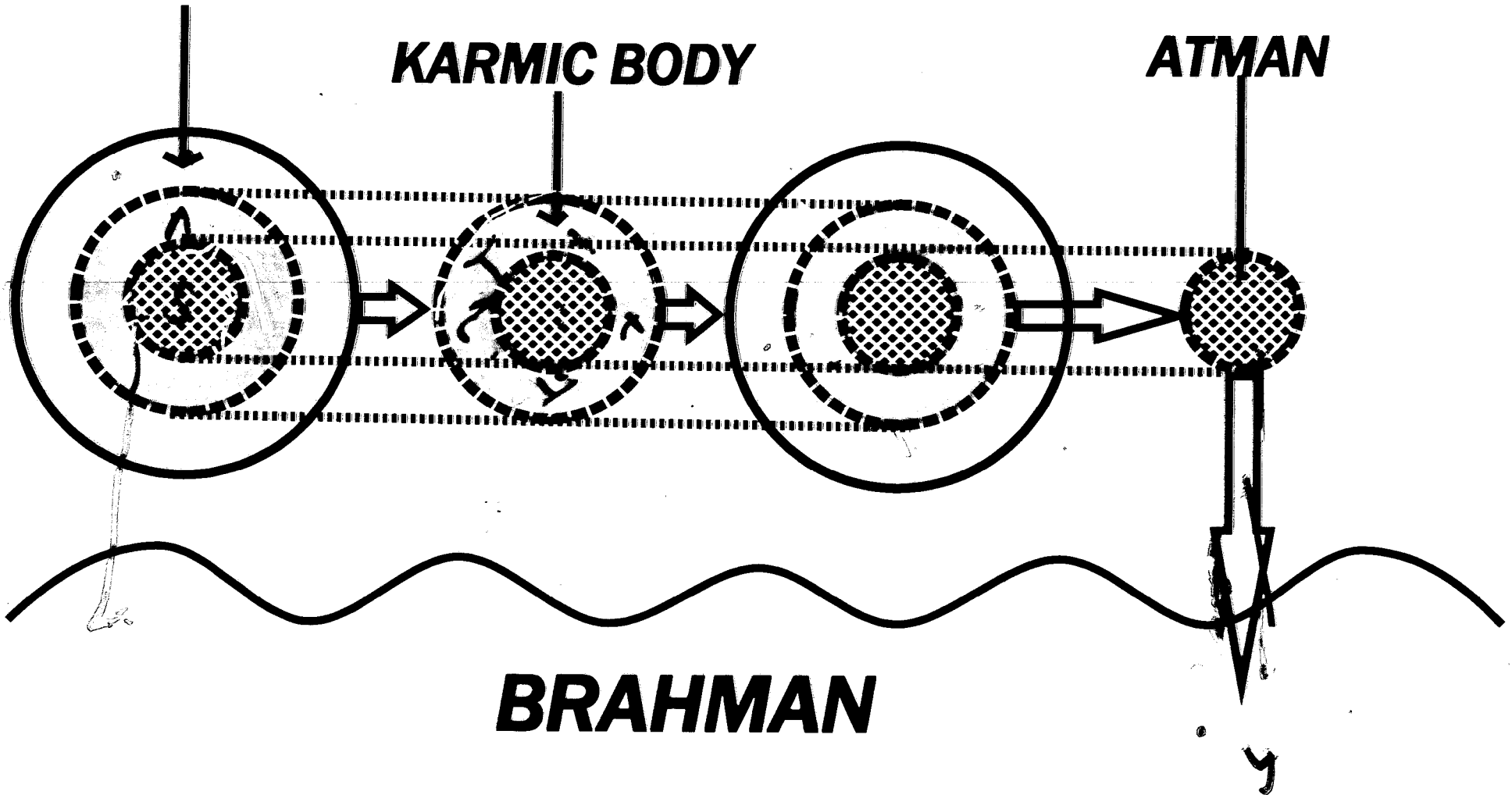
- their personal story
- their community story
- their cosmic story

# HINDU CYCLE OF LIFE

**PHYSICAL BODY**

**KARMIC BODY**

**ATMAN**



# INDIVIDUAL — GROUP

**INDIVIDUAL**



**GROUP**

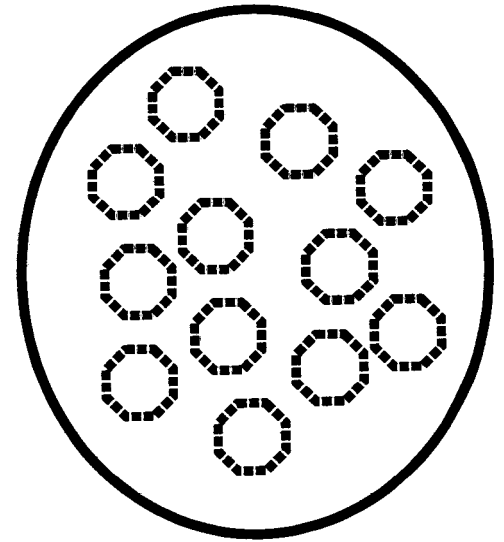
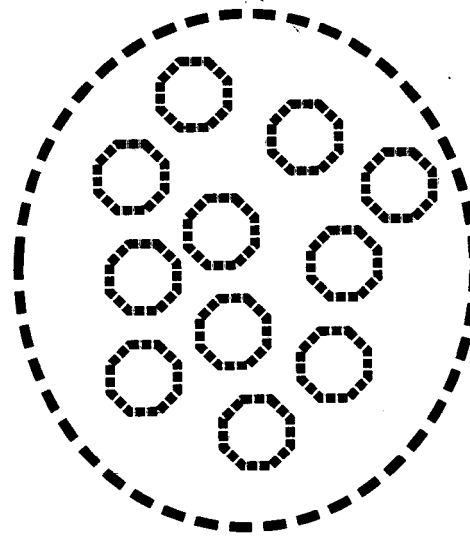
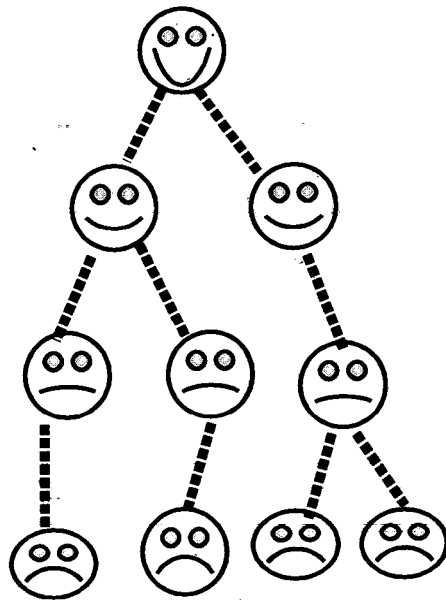
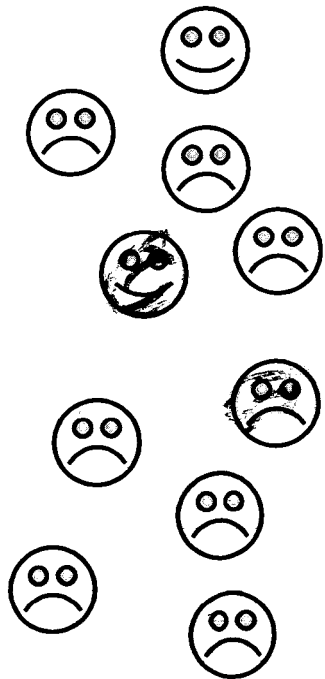
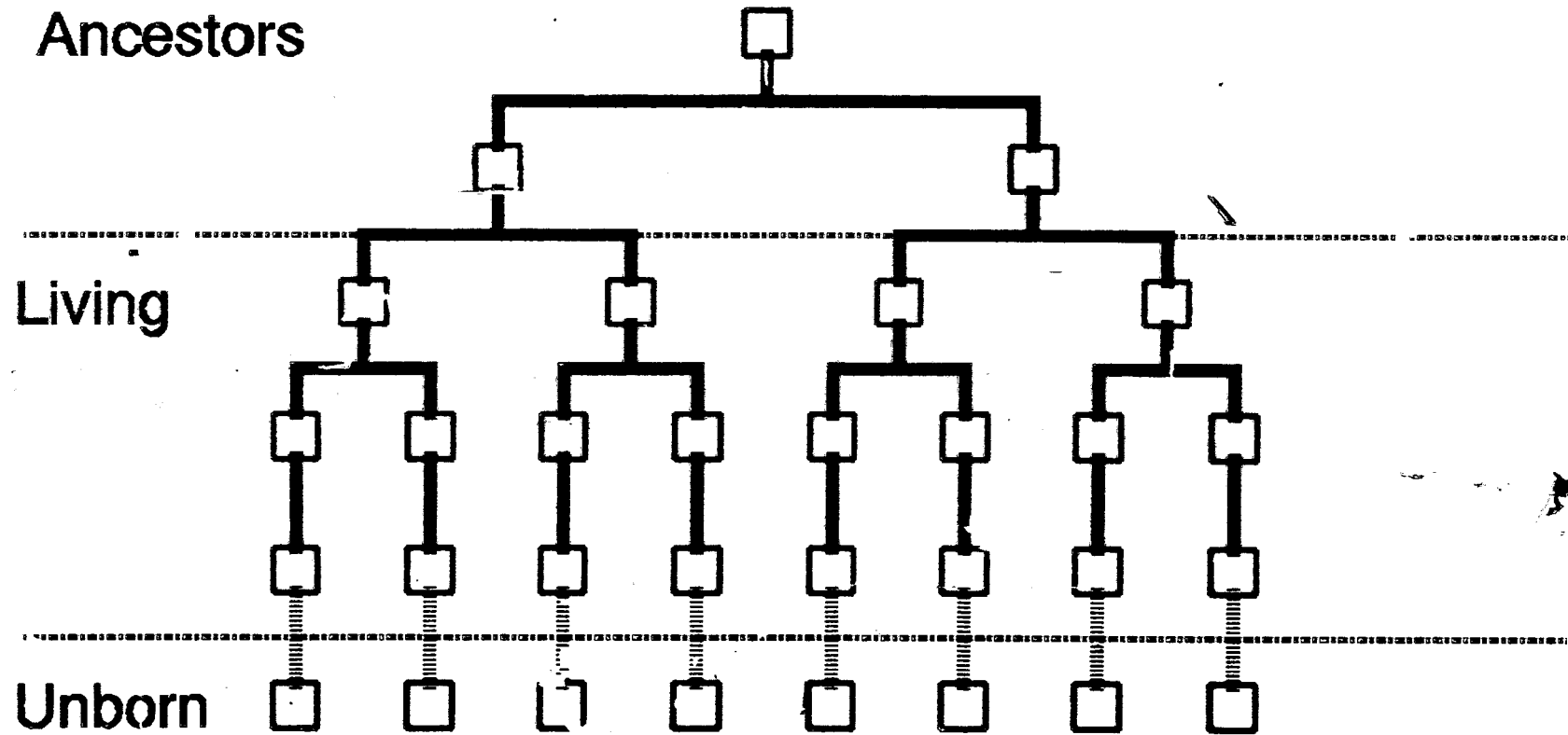
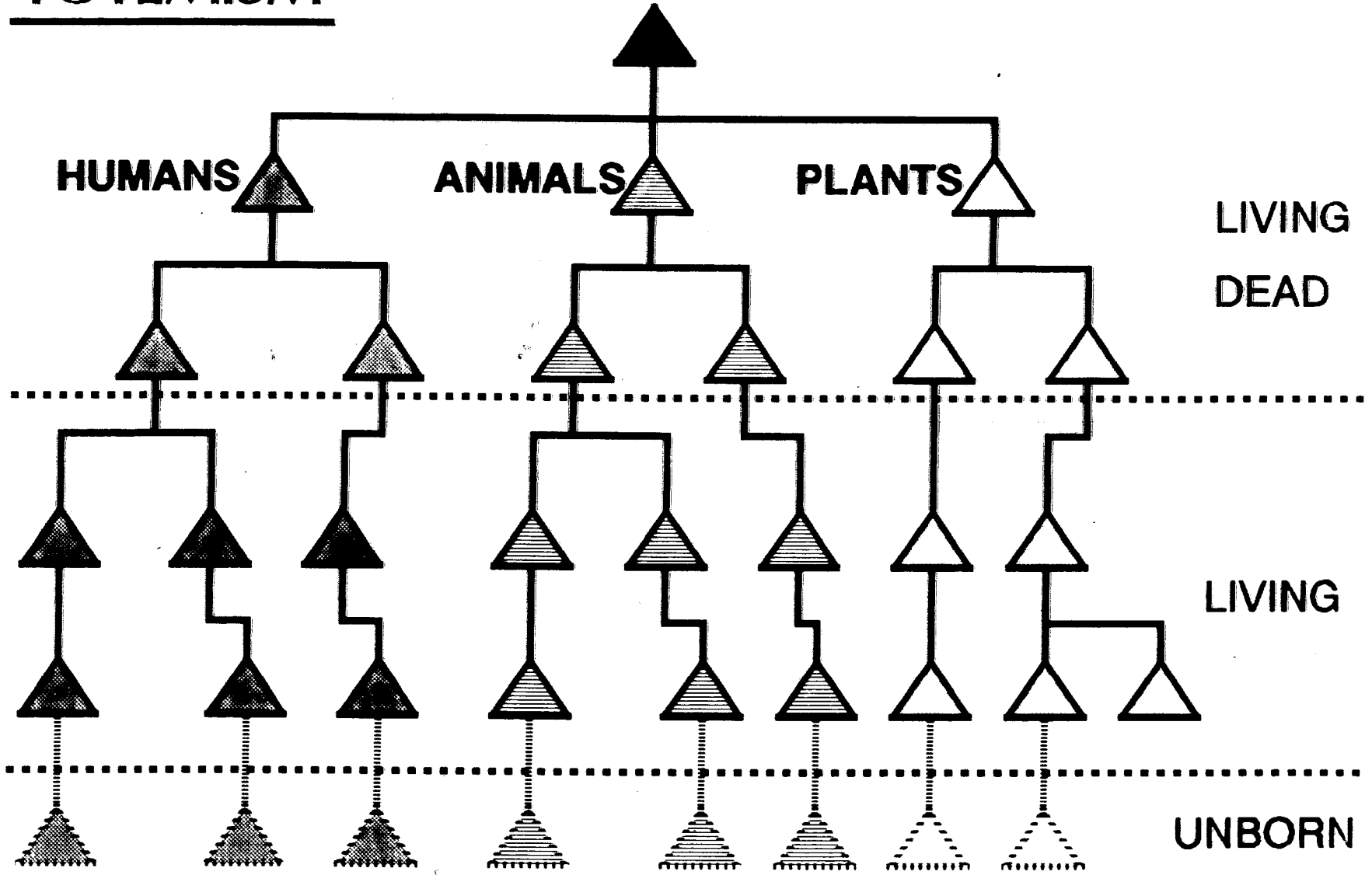


Figure 22  
Linkage in the Flow of Life



TOTEMISM

MYTHICAL ANCESTOR





# **ANCESTORS**

## **1. HAVE PRIORITY OF PARENTHOOD**

- *wiser, can give advice*
- *have ancient knowledge*

## **2. HAVE EXISTENCE IN AFTERLIFE**

- *have knowledge of afterlife*
- *deal with spirit beings*

## **3. HAVE GREAT ACHIEVEMENTS**

- *example: "God of Abraham"*

**4. HAVE THE WELL BEING OF THE  
FAMILY AT HEART**

- *guardians who reward good and  
punish evil*
- *give guidance*

**5. TAKE DIFFERENT FORMS**

- *most are benevolent*
- *some are malevolent or  
capricious*

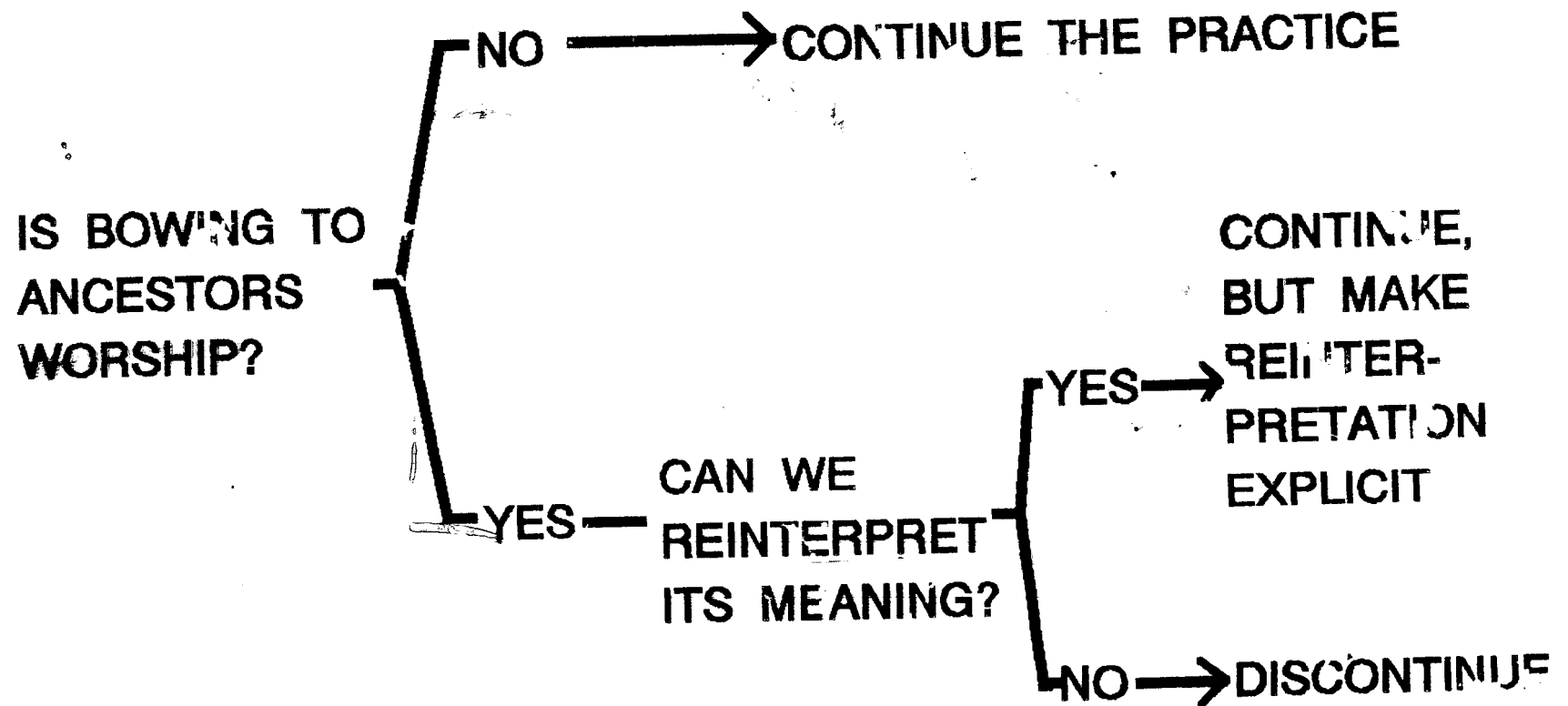
# rites controversy

1. Jesuites: Matteo Ricci
2. Dominicans: Jean-Baptista Morales
  - 1645 Innocent X condemned the rites.
3. Jesuites: Martin
  - 1656 Alexander VII approved the rites.
4. Dominicans:
  - 1669 Clement IX said the the rites had to be judged in each setting.

# **A THEOLOGY OF ANCESTORS**

- 1. Question of linkage**
- 2. Question of nature and ecology**
- 3. Question of living-dead and the unborn**
- 4. Question of worship vs. respect**
- 5. Question of Christology - relationship of Christ to the human race**

# ANCESTOR VENERATION



# **The Gospel give meaning:**

- ***in becoming:*** we are becoming saints and rulers. Good news to those who feel stuck in life.
- ***in doing:*** we are stewards in God's work, soldiers in his army, farmers in his field. Good news to those who find work meaningless.

# **The Gospel give meaning:**

- ***in being***: we are created in the image of God. Good news to the slave, untouchable, oppressed, fallen.
- ***in belonging***: we belong to a new local and global people—a new ethnic group who care for one another. Good news to the lonely, forgotten, marginal.

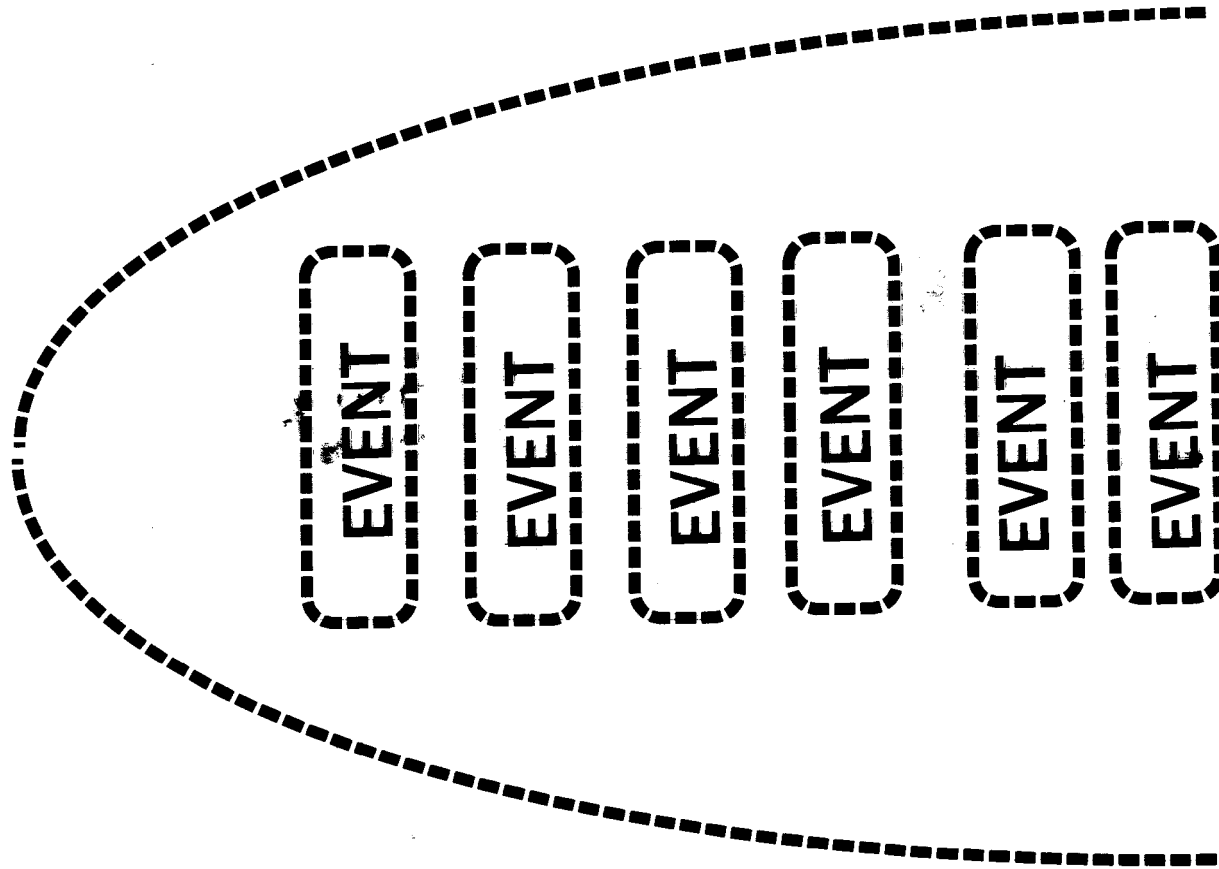
# **The Gospel give meaning:**

- ***in the story of our lives:***
  - our lives are part of a much greater cosmic story. What we do and how we live **matters.**
  - we live in a time when the Kingdom of God is already here but not yet in its fullness.
  - our stories are not yet finished. We won't know their full meaning until the last chapter is written.



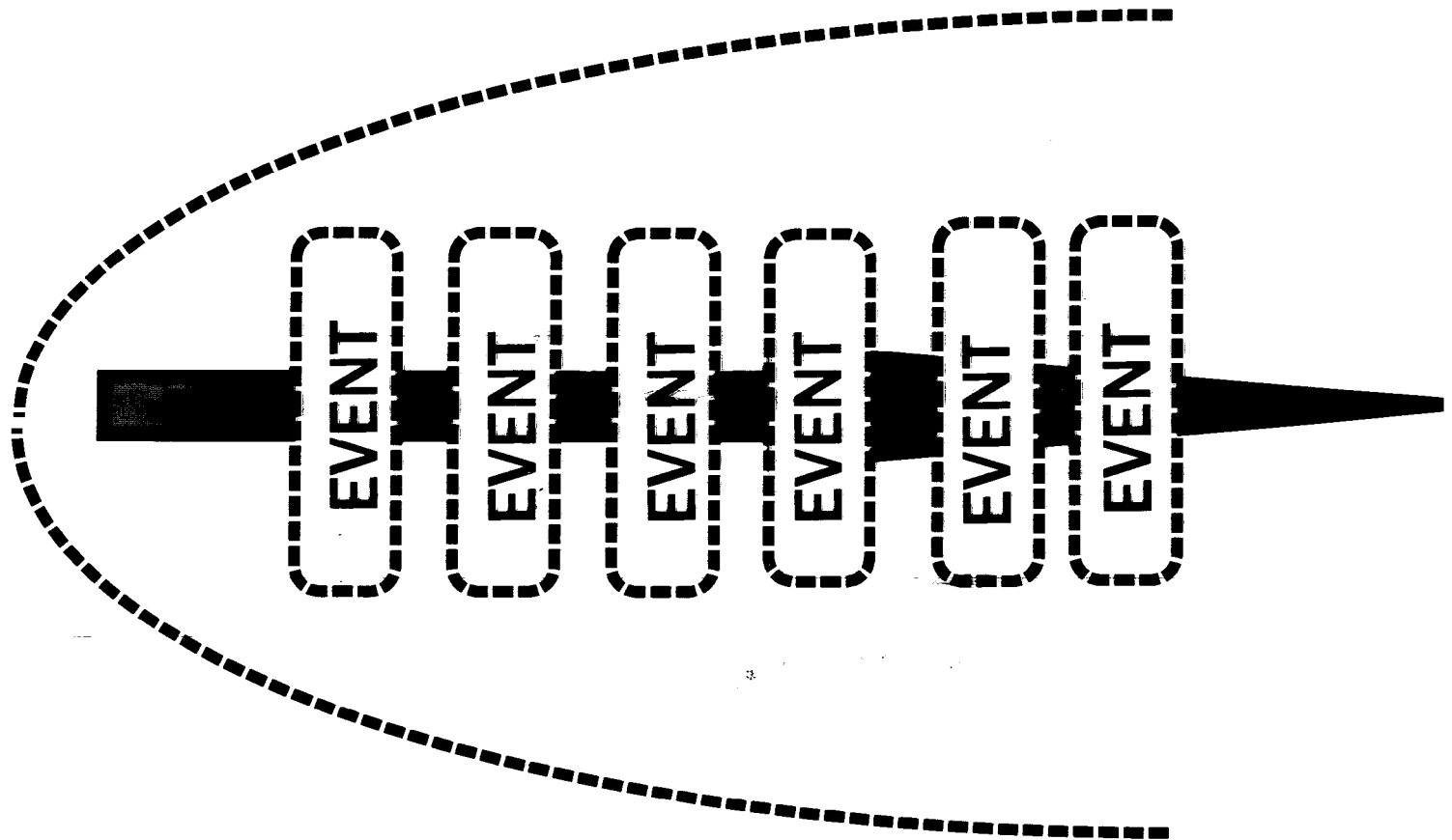
# **FINDING MEANING IN LIFE**

**Life is a series of events . . .**



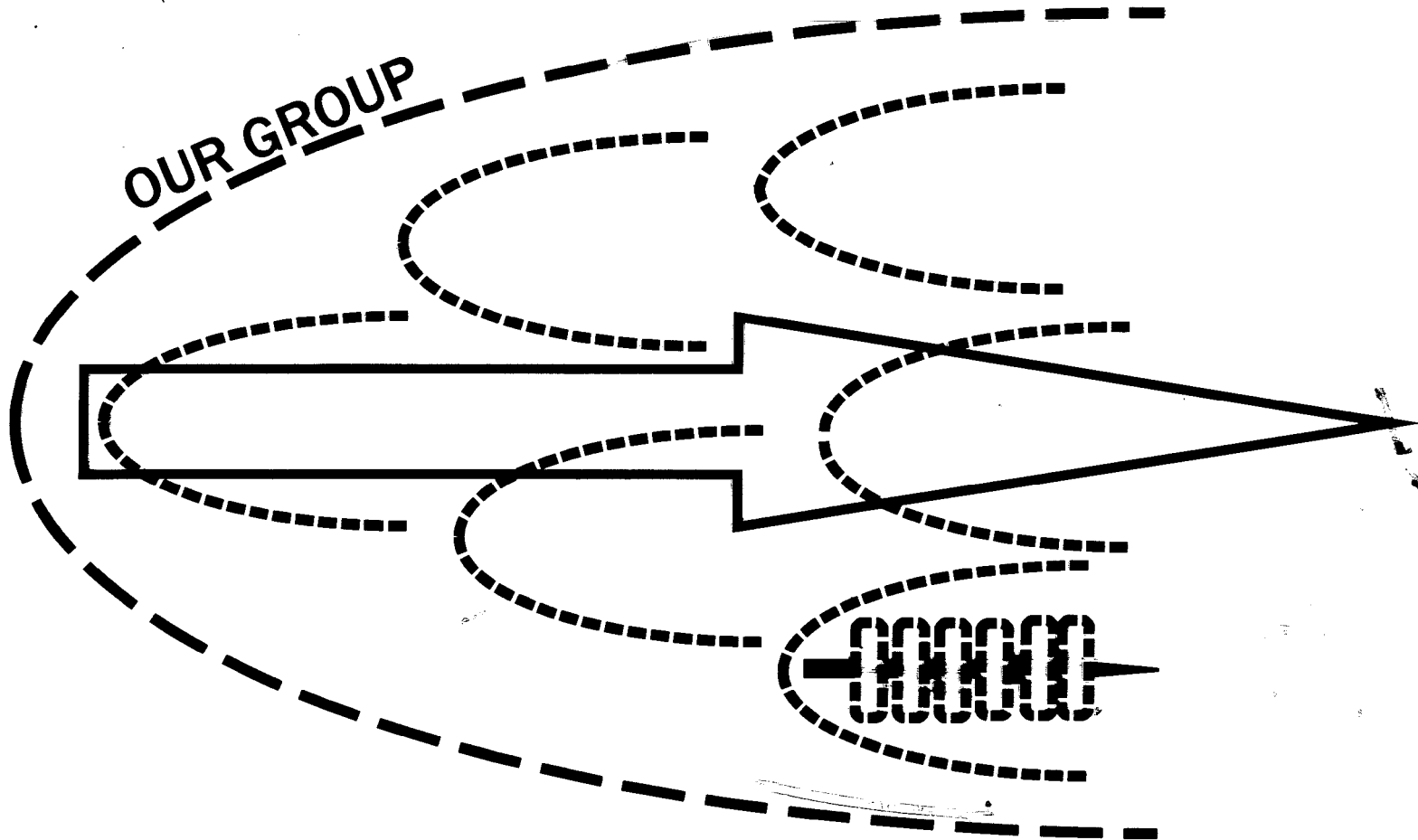
# **FINDING MEANING IN LIFE**

**Life is a story . . . .**



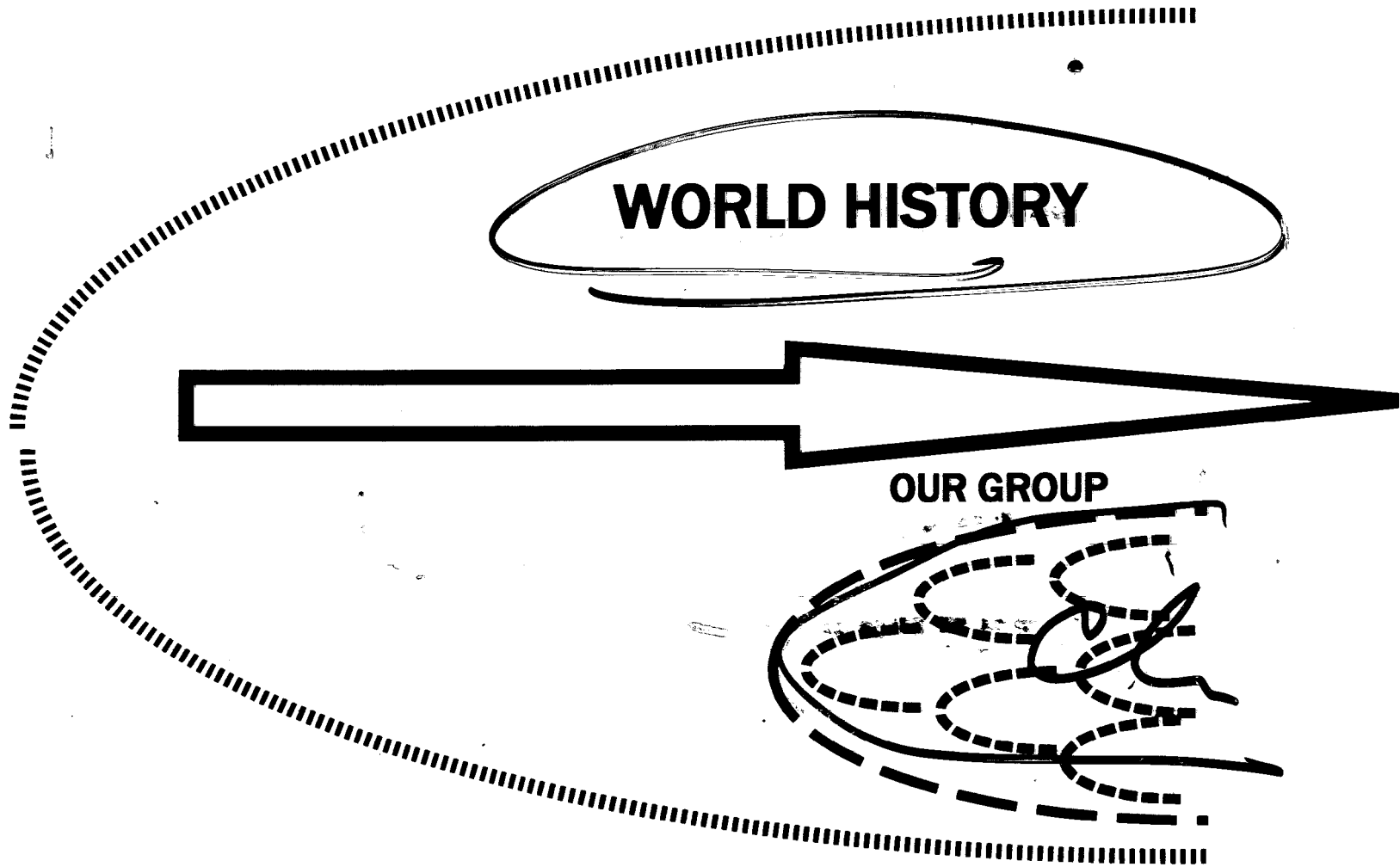
# **FINDING MEANING IN LIFE**

**Our life is part of our group's story.**



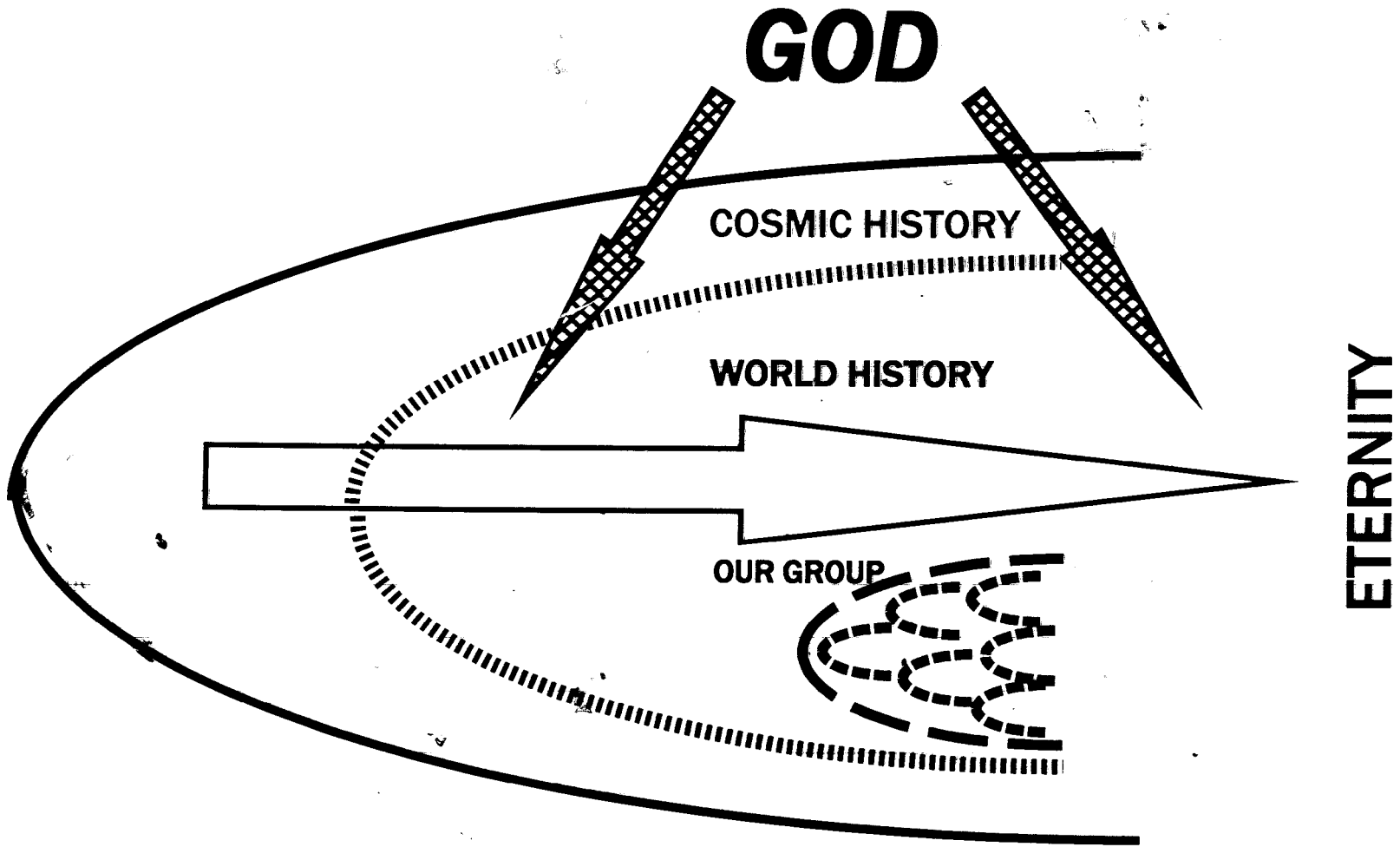
# **FINDING MEANING IN LIFE**

**Our group is part of world history.**



# FINDING MEANING IN LIFE

World history is part of God's big story.



**What is a biblical  
theology of suffering  
and death?**

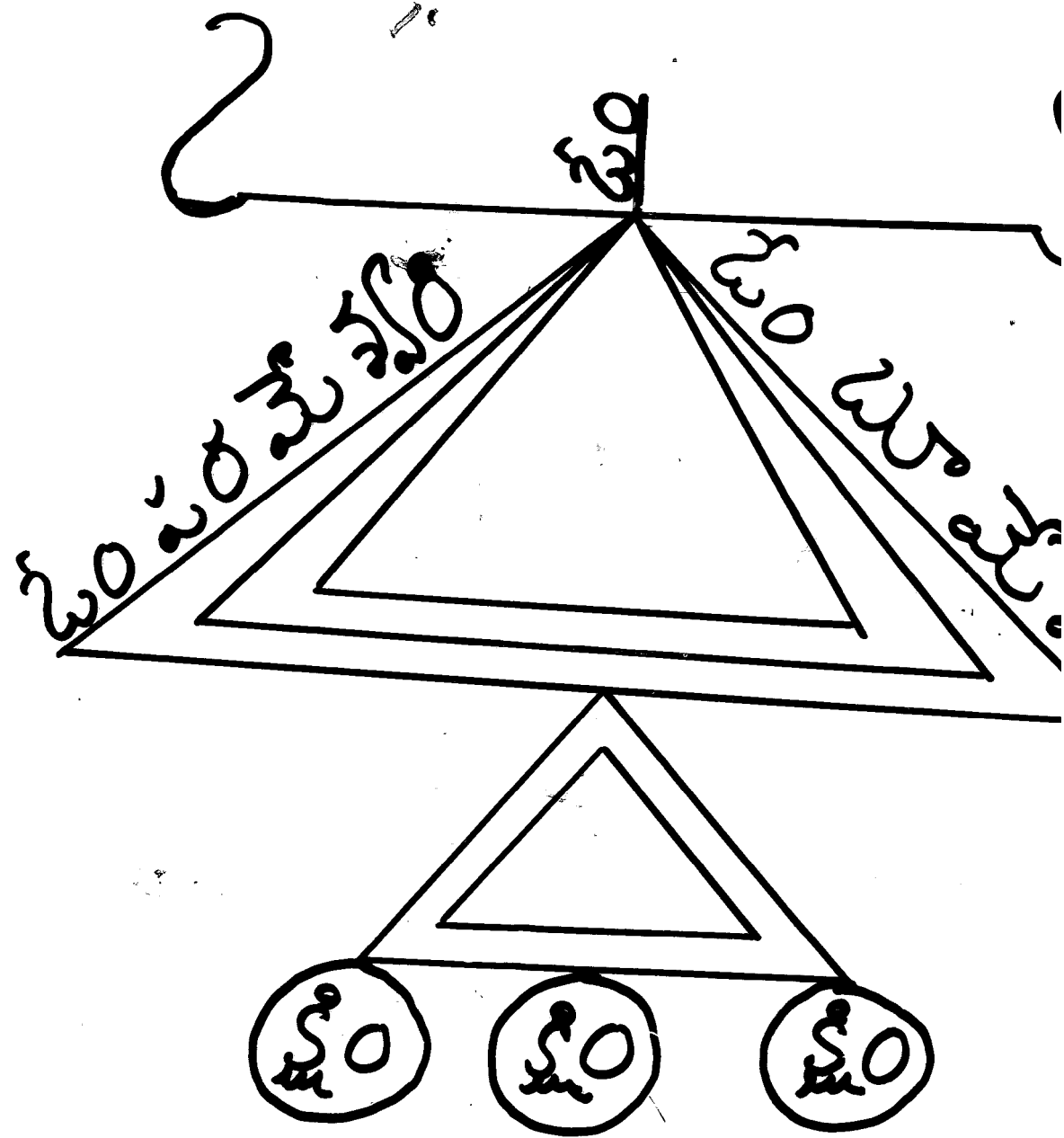
## Ministering to the bereaved:

- do not give simple, trite answers. Sit with the bereaved, and weep with and comfort them
- as a church provide for their psychological and physical needs during the time of grief
- uphold them for a long time, grief does not die quickly
- remember: how we care for the bereaved is a great witness to the world

## Towards a theology of death

- death is not the final word, it is a transition
- death is release from this sinful world
- for the Christian there is the hope and assurance of meeting our loved-ones
- godly dying is a great witness to the world of the hope that is in us.
- martyrdom is a great witness to the gospel
-





POWER AND PROTECTION