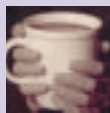


MANNA

True Jesus Church ISSUE 42 OCT-DEC 2003 **Science And Technology**



A Scientist's **Point of View**: *Interview*
I Can't Wait
A **Family** Story



Dear Reader,

We would like to hear from you!

It has been just a little over one year and five issues since Manna took on a new art direction, and we would like to get your feedback about the magazine. We would also like to select and publish your comments in the next issue of Manna.

Please email your feedback to manna@tjc.org and let us know what you think!

On a more personal note, I'd like to respond to the question Sam posted at the end of his article (p.43): What can't you wait for?

I can't wait to burn with the same fire that burns in your heart. I can't wait to cook with Martha, either, because I always thought we told her story a little bit unfairly.

Although I'm not sure if we'll ever get to see Martha, or Paul, or any of the others in spiritual paradise the way we understand them in the physical world, I can't wait to attain all the purity and innocence that is so apparent in your writing, and that which I strive for in my day-to-day living.

I can't wait to give Jesus a hug.

THE EDITOR

MANNA

Oct-Dec 2003

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Science And Technology

“The goal of Manna is to inspire believers to live an active faith through mutual encouragement and the study of biblical truths.”

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Science And Technology



COLUMNS

campus life

SoftWare Piracy—Is It Wrong? 34

Does God really care if we pirate software? Is this considered a sin in God's eyes?

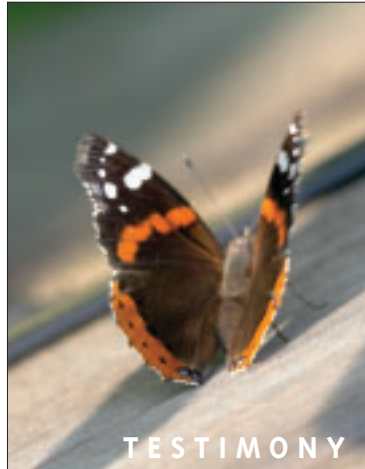
by Enoch Chang

love and marriage

When "Happily Married" Couples—Aren't 38

The true measure of quality in a marriage comes after "I do." Learning how to compensate for what is lacking in our marriage with our own exemplary behavior.

by Richard Solgot



TESTIMONY

A Family Story 02

A sister recounts the passing of her father and the constant abidance of God with her family throughout the years.

by Cindy Ho

"I Will Go One More Time" 06

It is a miracle when God changes our hearts towards Him. When we are willing to follow His call, He will lead us home as a shepherd leads a lost sheep.

by Iris Chiang

Awake! 09

God gives us many chances to return to Him when we have gone astray. When He calls, we need to awake from our spiritual sleep and rise to His occasion.

by Amy Yu

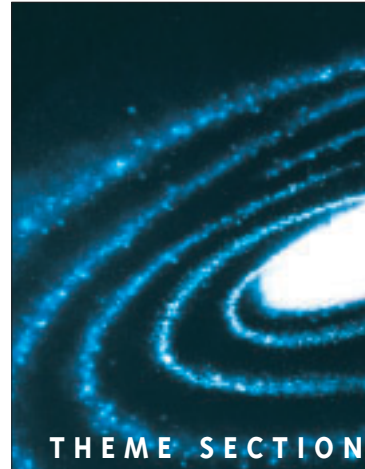


DOCTRINAL STUDY

In Defense of FootWashing 12

it is important to address misconceptions and arguments that downplay the role of footwashing in our salvation.

by FF Chong



THEME SECTION

Can You Trust The Biblical Account Of Creation? 20

Does the scientific evidence, which estimate the earth to be 4.6 billion years old, discount the biblical account of the six-day creation? How does faith and science complement one another.

by Stephen Ku

God Made All Things Well 26

You could be surprised by what you might find if you looked deeper into a droplet of water or an oxygen atom—nature has a message for you.

by Johanna Bloom

A Scientist's Point of View: An Interview 30

A Christian scientist takes the time to discuss current issues in the field of research, and the lessons that he has learned about his faith and his profession.



DEPARTMENTS

Creative Corner

I'm Here

by Deborah Chang

Reflections 42

I Can't Wait

by Samuel Kuo

Call For Articles 44

TJC Information 45



EXHORTATION

What it Means to Be His Own 16

Dying for us on the cross, Jesus claimed us as His own, and this compels us to extend His love to the world.

by Jason Hsu



A Family Story

Cindy Ho—Portsmouth, United Kingdom

Just as every family has its own wondrous and compelling tales of God's grace and compassion, all filled with life lessons, I offer my family's story as an indication of the depth and breadth of His loving mercy and an illustration of God's unequivocal and timely control over everything.

The testimony that I would like to recount concerns my parents' individual and separate journeys of how they both came to believe in Christ, and, in particular, my dad's remarkable acceptance of God just before his death in October 2000.

I would also like to share what God has revealed to me about my parents that I had previously been blind to for a long time—especially the attributes of my dad, whom I had always had to struggle to find the capacity to respect.

My parents first met each other almost thirty-five years ago, but it took them a long and arduous thirty years before they were finally able to come to share the same faith in God.

Their individual journeys of faith and their own lives were neither simple nor easy but, rather, pitted with many obstacles.

The hardships and difficulties they faced and managed to overcome together made their belief and conviction in our heavenly Father something truly precious to behold, and it remains a beautiful legacy for me.

THE NOMADIC YEARS

Like many of the first UK Church members, my parents were economic migrants of the 1960's and 70's, mostly from neighboring fishing villages in rural Hong Kong. Many families were acquainted with each other because of the tight-knit ethos of the fishing communities at that time.

As with most of the early UK brethren, the catering trade provided my parents with their livelihood in the UK. But unlike most of the UK members of that time, neither of my parents had any firm knowledge of the True Jesus Church or any Christian beliefs prior to their immigration to the UK.

Due to the nature of the catering trade in the UK, most of the early Hong Kong immigrants had literally scattered themselves across the length and breadth

of Britain, either in search of work in the catering trade or to open up their own restaurants or takeaways in different towns and cities.

And because of this, many people lost contact with each other as they became dispersed around the UK and communication with each other became fragmented. Just to illustrate the instability of the lifestyle of some of the Hong Kong migrants at that time, my parents themselves moved almost ten times around the UK in the first fifteen years of their migration.

By the time of my birth, my parents were living in Scotland and had become close acquaintances with a few members of the True Jesus Church through working in various restaurants. It was during this time that my parents heard that my distant uncle was living in Edinburgh.

So, they took my older brother and I along to the dedication of Gifford Park Church in Edinburgh in 1978 because they were told that my uncle would turn up at this event. On this occasion, my parents became reacquainted with many people they knew from when they were in Hong Kong.

My mom also managed to rendezvous with her younger sister, who had, by this time, come to believe in Christ through marrying a True Jesus Church member and was living on the south coast of England in Portsmouth.

As for my own family, however, our time to receive Christ into our home wasn't to come until July 1985. My mom, my older brother, and I became the first ones in my immediate family to be baptized, and my remaining siblings were baptized a few years later. But my dad's time to be baptized would not come for

many years.

LIVING APART

In the intervening years from their immigration to the time of my baptism, it seemed that my parents were almost always in a financial quandary.

Coupled with many emotional upheavals, the years prior to 1985 seemed like a never-ending struggle for them to provide the secure and stable environment they wanted for their family.

A chain of failed business ventures meant that, for a long time, we led quite a nomadic lifestyle, moving around the country in search of a stable home to call our own.

One of the major shifts in my family took place in 1984, when my family split up. My dad took up a job that was in another town, and my family moved to Portsmouth to live with my aunt and her family. We were separated for four years.

Although we were physically disconnected, with my dad working away and with my younger siblings being looked after by foster parents, this was a momentous step forward for us to draw closer God. This was also when we began to experience the embrace of His loving arms.

As we lived with my church-attending aunt and her family, the natural thing for my mother to do, it seemed, was to go with them to church every week, taking my older brother and me with her.

God had a lot of compassion and love in store for us. I firmly do not believe that it was any fleeting coincidence that, once my mother took the first step to believe in God, the physical circumstances and the stability of our family took a major turn for the better.

Consequently, I had always felt that



Although we were physically disconnected...this was a momentous step forward for us to draw closer to God.

I never really knew my dad properly and did not have a very communicative relationship with him. He was the traditional patriarchal figure, who was stern and emotionally self-contained.

Nevertheless, I knew that as a father, he undeniably had a deep, unspoken love for us, especially when I think about the struggles that he went through since his migration to the UK.

It would have been so much easier for him to live a more selfish life just for himself or for him to turn his back on his family, but instead he demonstrated great integrity when faced with difficulties.

My dad was not a frivolous man and he always seemed content with the simple things in life. Like many fathers, he would never put his own needs before those of his children.

Although our family did not seem to be very cohesive or emotionally united, God always provided enough for us in terms of material needs. And by 1989, God blessed us with our own house and a successful family business.

MY DAD'S INDIFFERENCE

My dad was quite a headstrong character, and, for the most part of his life, he held quite agnostic views to there being a creator, despite his philosophical outlook on some things in life.

He felt that, as long as he did no wrong to others, he did not need to believe in God or to hold onto any notion

of there being an eternal life after death. No requirements of salvation were in order in his view.

So my dad was not the most ideal candidate to accept any messages of salvation. He remained quite adamant in his stance and held firmly to his views for many years after my baptism.

However, he never once objected to my mom's, my siblings', or my belief in God, nor to us going to church on any occasion. But despite the many efforts of various preachers and deacons, he would always diplomatically and tactfully decline any invitations to church.

Moreover, I started not to have any real concern for my family. By the time I'd moved to Japan, it came as no great surprise that my faith in God was already quite stagnant, and I became increasingly unsure of where my life was heading.

But once again, God extended His invisible hands out to turn me back to my family and, more importantly, to show the way of salvation to my dad.

GOD'S WAKE-UP CALL

In April 2000, my parents were able to take their first holiday together on their own for the first time in a long while—

treatment, and I went back to Japan to resume my work.

On my return, the full gravity of my dad's illness had not really hit me yet, and I made no real attempt to comprehend the full implications or the reasons why God allowed this to happen to my family.

I wasn't really able to trust in Him fully to guide my family safely through my dad's illness. But I knew enough to realize that whatever was to happen would be in God's hands and that I could only pray for God's will.

Subsequently, in October 2000, I received a phone call telling me to fly out to the UK because my dad had once again been admitted to the hospital. This time, the doctors were very blunt in telling us that nothing more could be done for him.

I knew that this was God's will and that only He could give us the strength to get through this. So everyday at the hospital with my dad, I would speak to God, asking Him to carry out His will but also to look after us as a family.

Somehow, amidst all the turmoil and trauma, our whole family managed to have this quiet confidence and strength in God and to trust that everything would be all right.

During this difficult time for us as a family, the brothers and sisters in the UK never failed to show us their love through their encouragement and prayers. Since my dad knew some of the brethren from when he was in Hong Kong, he, too, could feel their concern for him.

I believe that it was through their constant prayers for him that, thank God, three weeks before his death, my dad finally agreed to be baptized.

And through the amazing virtue of



Somehow, amidst all the turmoil and trauma, our whole family managed to have this quiet confidence and strength in God and to trust that everything would be all right.

By the time I moved away from home to study, however, the disparity and lack of unity between my church life, family life, and my own spirituality became more and more discernible.

I continued to contemplate on what God still had in store for my family and, in particular, I wondered if the day would ever come where my dad would get baptized. But due to my own lack of reliance on God, I was never able to muster up the courage or wisdom to ask my dad to church or attempt to preach to him in any way.

By 1998, I had graduated and moved abroad to Japan to work. At this time, my faith was very shallow and was not rooted in any real way, since my attitude towards church had become lukewarm long ago. And to my own detriment, I found myself not behaving as a very good Christian.

going on a month-long tour in China.

A few days before their return flight back to the UK from their last stop at Hong Kong, my dad was admitted to the hospital and was diagnosed with liver cancer. This was the beginning of a huge wake-up call for me to turn back to God and to ask Him for His mercy.

I flew out to be with my dad in Hong Kong, and, although his condition had stabilized by the time I arrived, it was still a huge shock for me to see the state that he was in.

During this time, I could really see the strength and the resolve that my mom had in God. Somehow, as a family, we were able to remain relatively calm despite the traumatic circumstances we faced.

After about two weeks of hospital stay in Hong Kong, my dad was able to return to the UK to begin cancer

God, a few days before his baptism, my dad received the Holy Spirit in the hospital. God can truly bring people to believe in Him in the most profound ways.



It seems that by showing my dad His great mercy, God has given me another chance to revive my faith and zeal to follow Him.

SO MUCH MORE TO LEARN

Although it has been almost three years since my dad passed away and many adjustments have had to be made as a family, I am constantly reminded of how God graciously and freely extended His compassion to my family.

In retrospect, I have come to learn an immense amount about my family and myself through our spiritual journey. I have learned that my dad showed great strength of character throughout his life, right up to the point of his death.

And even before my dad came to believe in Christ, he showed some very Christian-like attributes, not only towards his family but to others as well. At his funeral, people came from afar to pay their respects to him, for he had touched many people with his generosity and kindness throughout his whole life.

As a family now, there seems to be a lot more hope and joy for us. We are able to draw great comfort in knowing that God has given His salvation to my dad and that, at last, he is within the Lord.

There is certain incident in the Bible that I heard during a sermon, and it strikes a chord with me. 2 Kings 13:20,

21 records the story of how a dead man was revived by touching Elisha's body.

It seems that by showing my dad His great mercy, God has given me another chance to revive my faith and zeal to follow Him. This is something that I truly hadn't expected. Regardless, I am thankful that God has brought me to a better understanding of why I need to be a Christian.

Without the presence of God, my life would just be a meaningless sequence of events. However, His fathomless love for my family has shown me that it can be something greater.

God has abundantly and compassionately taken care of us, even before we came to believe in Him. Just as it is written in Ephesians 1:4, 5, He chose us even before the world was made.

It is God's supreme and ultimate wish for us all, whom He lovingly created, to be reunited with Him for all eternity. It is up to us to choose to accept Him as our only Savior from this world.

For the Lord will rejoice over you for good...if you turn to the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul. (Deut 30:9b,10b)

And no matter how far we think we can run from Him, God, out of His all-encompassing love for us all, will constantly watch over us, waiting longingly for our return to Him.

God has provided every individual in this world a unique path in life to find Him. We just have to discover this path for ourselves and be willing to step with conviction onto our own paths to follow Christ in all sincerity.

Once on this path, we must help guide others to find their paths and

support each other in our life journey.

Even after all these years of my baptism, I feel that I still have so much more to learn about the magnitude of God's empowering and loving nature.

No matter how hopeless our life journey has become, we have only to remember that, in the depths of our despair, we will always have hope in the Lord. He will always be guarding and watching over us. We only have to look towards Him.

*I will lift up my eyes to the hills –
From whence comes my help?
My help comes from the Lord,
Who made heaven and earth. (Ps 121:1, 2)*

May all glory be unto our Lord.
Hallelujah! Amen. ★



“I Will Go One More Time”

Iris Chiang—Garden Grove, California, USA

A NEW FRIEND

In the fall of 1999, I left Taiwan for San Francisco to continue my education. At one of the school computer labs, I made friends with someone who worked there, and when he learned that I had just come to the United States, he was very kind to offer me help.

I assumed that he so eagerly took care of me because he liked me. But surprisingly, I realized later that he was equally helpful with everyone else. His conduct puzzled me.

Having grown up in big cities, I was taught to be suspicious of people and was accustomed to white lies. Also, having worked as a reporter at a periodicals office, I have met many successful people and, from their

experiences, I quickly learned about the seedy side of society.

So I did not expect to meet someone as naïve as my friend. I decided that he must live a miserable life. But after observing him over a long period of time, I could see that he lived very happily. And he would give thanks to God whenever something good happened.

I believed that people should work hard for themselves and not rely on God. After all, does God really exist? I had gone to different religious institutions and had never felt God.

THE FIRST ENCOUNTER

I still remember it was a Friday night when I went to the church with this friend.

The minister cited many miracles to prove God’s existence but I didn’t think much of the sermon. Instead, I wanted to ask him if he could prove that these miracles came from a supernatural force.

The minister continued, “Everyone has sinned. We must acknowledge our sins before God, pray for the Holy Spirit, and then we can enter the heavenly kingdom in the future. When one receives the Holy Spirit, he will speak in an unknown tongue.”

At that point, I realized that I might have stepped into a cult of some sort.

When the sermon concluded, the minister invited everyone to go to the front of the chapel to pray. He said, “Those who have sickness or would like

to pray for the Holy Spirit can come forward, and the ministers will help you by the laying of hands. When you pray aloud to him, God will fulfill your request.” Seeing everyone standing up and walking forward, I braced myself and went, too.

We knelt down and, when everyone started to pray, I immediately understood what the minister meant when he asked the congregation to pray aloud. I was startled by the sound of praying in tongues, and my fear of having gone to the wrong church was further confirmed.

I kept thinking to myself, “When is the prayer going to end?” Since I had never knelt this long in my life, I was sweating and feeling faint. So I prayed to God, “Please end this prayer soon. I don’t want to faint and be embarrassed.”

Thank God, I suppose this was my first miracle—that I knelt for thirty minutes and didn’t faint. But I vowed in my heart that I would never go there again.



On the following Saturday morning, I woke up feeling that I would receive the Holy Spirit that day.

“You have to Experience Faith”

Afterwards, my friend said to me, “You have to experience faith.” I replied, “How do you experience faith?” He said, “When you receive the Holy Spirit, you will know that God exists, and many questions that you have will be resolved.”

He said with further conviction, “The Bible promises us: Ask, and it will be

given to you. Seek, and you shall find. Knock, and it will be opened to you. As long as you are willing to pray for it, God will surely give you the Holy Spirit.”

I was still very skeptical of the existence of the Holy Spirit. I thought that people usually seek God when they want their sickness healed or when they have difficulties in life.

I was very satisfied with my life, and I couldn’t find anything I needed to ask of God. Besides, I didn’t think I had committed any sins to ask God’s forgiveness. As far as I was concerned, I didn’t need God’s forgiveness, and I didn’t have any reason to believe in Him.

MY OWN MIRACLE

Even though I constantly questioned his religion, my friend never gave up on bringing me to church services. So, I told him, “I will go one more time. But if I do not experience God this time, please don’t try to persuade me that God exists or ask me to go to church ever again.”

I went to the church again on a Sabbath. When I knelt down in prayer

delivered a morning sermon that touched me deeply and struck a chord within me.

What was more miraculous was that I could readily open the Bible to the passage he was referring to. Even the sister who was helping me with the Bible asked, “Are you a Christian? Is that why you are so familiar with the Bible?”

I had never read the Bible. When the sermon concluded, I felt the urge to pray. So my friend suggested to me, “There is a thirty-minute prayer session in the chapel before lunch.” I decided to stay for the prayer session.

I knelt in a corner where no one was around and prayed, saying, “Hallelujah! Praise the Lord.” My hands began to shake slightly like the last time. I thought to myself, “If there’s a God, please let me experience Him and give me the Holy Spirit!”

As I was thinking that, I felt a ray of light shining on me from behind like a warm current. My hands shook more vigorously, and I began to speak in an unknown tongue.

At this moment, I felt a wonderful message entering my heart: my well-being and the blessings in my life did not come from luck or my own diligence but from God’s grace that He had freely given me.

In my prayer, I thought about my relationship with others. I realized that there were many times when I had a conflict of interest with another, and I would struggle to love and help them. God opened my eyes to see how often my own interests took precedence over others’.

The more deeply I prayed, the more I realized that I was just as much a sinner as everyone else. It finally dawned on me that God really exists in this world.

He knew my doubts. Only He could humble me and, in an instant, show me how insignificant I was and how I needed to recognize my own sins.

God opened my heart to understand that sin is not defined by human standards of morality or law. If I don't belong to God, I am a slave to the sins of this world. And only through Jesus Christ can my sins be pardoned and cleansed.

At the same time, God allowed me to understand a lesson far greater than sin—His love for me.

I BECAME HIS

The moment when I realized that God had changed my heart, my tears began to flow uncontrollably, but the joy in my heart was unlike anything I had ever experienced before.

I felt like a lost sheep who had found her way home. When the concluding bell rang to end the prayer, I realized that I had prayed for thirty minutes. After this miraculous experience, I finally believed that this was the church in which God abides. Praise God!

I became His when I received baptism in October 2000.

The Holy Spirit strengthened me so that I would willingly and actively study the Bible. I knew that I could only receive true joy and peace by accepting the Lord Jesus as my Savior.

Before I believed in the Lord, I thought I was happy and blessed. But after my conversion, I really understood what true bliss is all about. It is so enlightening to have faith in God.

He is almost like a round-the-clock bodyguard and a psychiatrist who sees to my troubles at no cost. What is more miraculous is that I do not need to say anything. God already knows what



It is so enlightening to have faith in God.

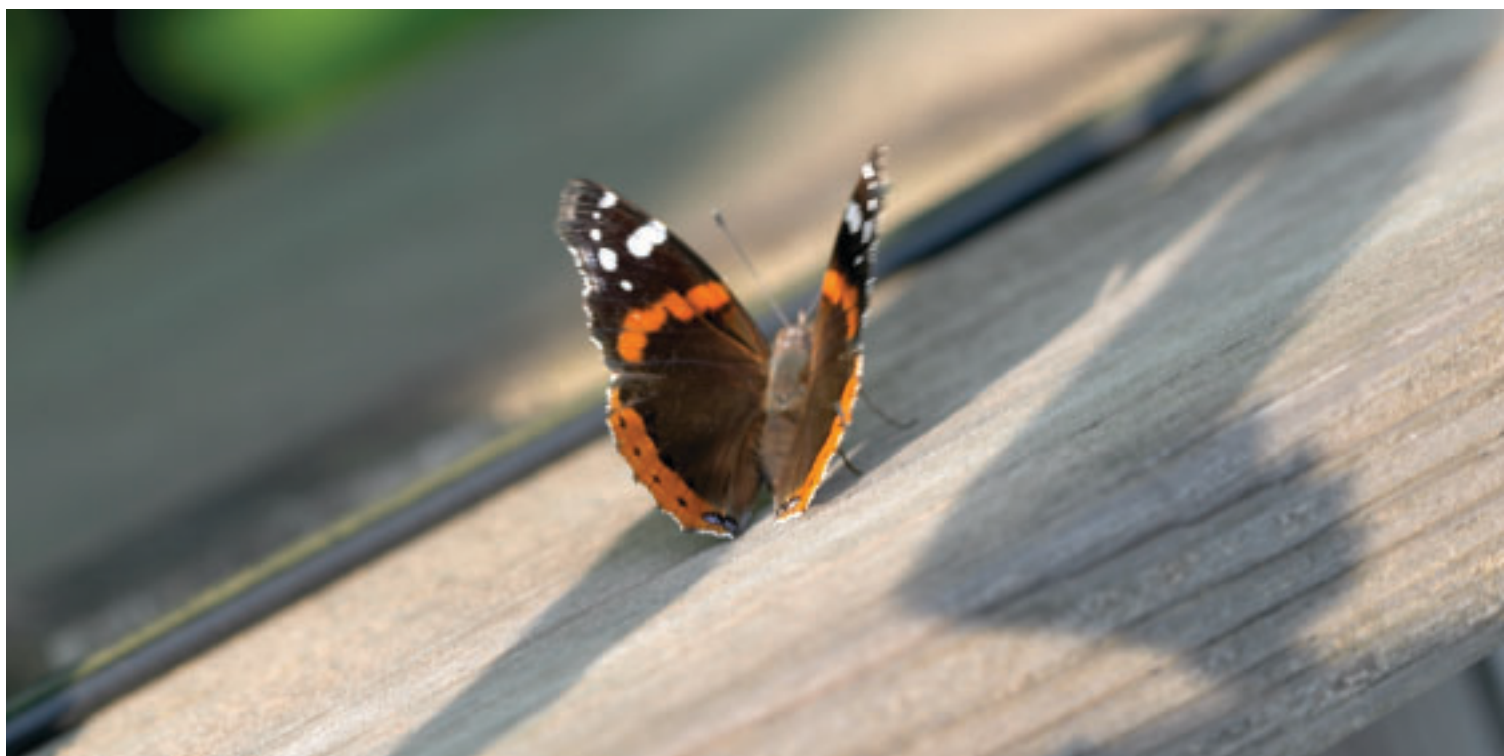
I need through my prayers, and He comforts me with the Holy Spirit.

Often, I find that what God gives me far exceeds and outweighs what I pray for.

How capable are men? Can we really control our lives? I could never have imagined that one day I would testify for the Lord. We should not draw conclusions prematurely about things we don't understand.

God exists in this world. Through the Holy Spirit that dwells in us, we can experience His abidance, as long as we give ourselves the opportunity to accept and believe in Him.

May all the glory and praise be unto our heavenly Father. Amen. ★



Awake!

Amy Yu—Irvine, California, USA

GOD'S ACTS OF LOVE

Ever since I was born God has blessed my loved ones, and He has always shown His love for me throughout my life. The first miracle occurred in 1976, when I was still a baby and my family lived in Taiwan.

One night, my family and friends were awakened by a flood and tried to reach higher ground for safety, but in the midst of frenzy they accidentally left me sleeping in the crib.

Through God's mercy and love, my grandfather came to the rescue. He swam to the building where I was stranded and brought me safely back to my family and friends.

My grandfather was amazed to find me sleeping peacefully and unafraid, even though the water was rising quickly and I was just a vulnerable infant. God

had protected me and held me with His big and warm hands.

This kind of wonderful work by God happened very often in my life.

As I became older, the peaceful child became naughtier. I was always leading a group of kids to do challenging things: climbing trees, exploring the hills behind my old house in Taiwan, catching weird insects, etc.

I often put myself in dangerous situations, but, time and again, God always came to my rescue. He comforted me when I fell down from trees or lifted me out of the deep end of the pool where I thought I could swim but I couldn't.

As an adult, I slowly lost sight of my heavenly Father. I became so overwhelmed

with my life and my career that I had lost my path with Him.

Nevertheless, He never left me, nor did he stop protecting me or guiding my footsteps. He gave me many chances to return to Him, but my ears didn't hear, my eyes didn't see, and my heart was no longer hot or cold. I had jeopardized my love and faith for Him and had become lukewarm.

Rev 3:15, 16 records God's similar warning in a letter to the church in Laodicea:

I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold or hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth.

HE GAVE ME MANY CHANCES

God loves us and always gives us chances. 1 John 1:9 says, “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

But if we continue in blindness, then God’s discipline will strike. This is exactly what happened to me a few months ago.

I have a bleeding disorder and I don’t even quite know when it started. I was always told that it would go away eventually but it never did. Whenever I have my menstrual cycle, I will have it for weeks—sometimes months, and even off and on for a year.

Through God’s mercy and love, this problem never affected my personal life. Until this year, my bleeding worsened to the point that blood was flowing out like an unstoppable broken water fountain.

However, I was too occupied with myself to think too much of it. I was wrapped up with work, buying a house, and a new marriage that resulted in my missing many Sabbaths.

I slowly stopped participating in church work, and my spiritually started to dwindle. I knew that, as a Christian, I should serve God where I could, but I was weak.

I was always thankful to God for the talents He had given me, and, at the back of my mind, I did want to serve Him more, but I always gave myself an excuse. Finally, God chastised me.

I DIED FOR FIVE MINUTES

Two days before the incident, He warned me through dreams that something bad was going to take place. In one of the dreams, I saw myself eagerly and fiercely climbing up an active volcano.

Two nights in a row, I dreamt that

I was jumping over lava and climbing continuously until I reached the peak of the mountain. And as my usual self, I didn’t give too much thought to my dreams.

That Friday night, I was again overwhelmed by work and exhausted from my menstrual cycle. I couldn’t eat or do anything except sleep, so I went to bed early. Around 1:00 a.m., I woke up, went to the bathroom, and passed out.

I died for 5 minutes or longer. My eyes were dilated, my body turned pale, and my neck was twisted and seemed out of place. I wasn’t breathing at all. Finally, because of my dogs’ continuous barking, Kevin, my husband, woke up.

He came to see what was going on and found me shockingly in a pool of blood. The toilet was filled with blood, and the floor was covered with blood—it was an appalling image.

Kevin tried to perform CPR on me but without success. He pounded hard on my chest, but I didn’t wake up. Shaking, he walked downstairs to the kitchen and called 911 for help.

All this time, I was still in the bathroom breathless. Then, I faintly heard the word, “Awake!” The voice became louder and louder and called me three times. At first I thought it was Kevin but later on confirmed that it was not him.

So, I woke up and saw my dogs staring at me. I weakly cried out to Kevin, but he couldn’t hear me, so I somehow managed to get up on my own. I didn’t know what had happened to me. I just knew that blood was everywhere, and I was terribly cold.

I walked carefully out of the bathroom and tried to call Kevin again. This time, he heard me and ran up the

stairs to see what was going on. I saw him shaking uncontrollably and choking on his words as he was talking to me.

He asked me how I felt, and I replied that I was very dizzy and cold. He told me what happened and suggested that I should go into the emergency room. But all I could think about was how much this would cost and if my insurance would cover what just happened.

We decided it would be best to go to the hospital.



Then, I faintly heard the word, “Awake!” The voice became louder and louder and called me three times.

A QUICK RECOVERY

As we walked into the emergency room, I was still hesitant and suggested that maybe we should go home. Then a doctor saw me and instructed me that I should stay for some tests. He told us that my countenance didn’t look good and that I was too pale.

After several blood tests and numerous examinations, the doctor returned and said that I needed to be placed in the ER/ICU section and ask me whether I could walk there or if I needed a wheelchair.

I boldly told the doctor that I would walk, and I did. I walked to my sickbed and laid myself down. All the doctors and nurses were amazed. I found out why later on. As soon as I laid down on the gurney, the personnel in the hospital placed an oxygen mask over me and immediately performed more tests.

The results finally came back, and the doctor briefed us about my condition. He told me that I had lost two-thirds of my blood and that my hemoglobin count was down to barely four. The average hemoglobin count for men is 16 g/dL and for women is 14 g/dL.

Hemoglobin (Hb) in red blood cells carries oxygen to all parts of the body, providing energy for the body to function. When the body is anemic, less oxygen is able to reach the muscles and organs.

This can leave a person fatigued and unable to do things that require a lot of energy. Anything below a count of six or seven is considered dangerous, and I was barely four. The doctor and nurses were amazed.

They said they were surprised that I could walk into the hospital, walk to my sickbed, and walk to the restroom several times. They said that I should have been comatose and that I shouldn't have been doing what I was doing.

They informed us more extensively about the severity of my condition and transfused four bags of blood into my body. At first they thought I might have cancer or a tumor, but the tests turned up negative.

My health recovered very quickly, and I was discharged from the hospital the next day. God gave me a second chance at the age of twenty-six—a chance that not everyone is given.

I am ashamed of my past, but I cannot rejoice enough at being given a second chance. Through this incident, God has awakened me to His message, to feel His love, and to walk more faithfully in His path.

Even though there are tribulations, frustrations, and many more things that may cause us to stumble in life, as long as we have Jesus Christ, this difficult and narrow journey is worth all our efforts.

I am thankful that God has given me the opportunity to bear witness to His miraculous work, and I only hope to encourage everyone to wake up from their own spiritual lethargy.

May all the glory and praise be unto His holy name. Amen. ★

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In Defense Of FootWashing

FF Chong—London, United Kingdom

In the Ancient Near East, much attention was given to the feet. The earliest biblical account of this practice is in Gen 18:4. The servant of the house, sometimes the host, or even the guests themselves, would carry out the practice of washing feet.

Although priests, who had the special task of offering sacrifices to God, were required, under the purification laws, to wash their hands and feet before ministering to God (Ex 30:18ff; 40:3, 32), footwashing never became part of the Jewish religion.

It remained only as part of the Jewish custom.

TO HAVE A PART WITH JESUS

The Jewish custom of footwashing usually preceded a feast. A quick glance over the sequence of events in John

thirteen tells us that the institution of the sacrament of footwashing occurred after the close of the Passover feast.

If the footwashing performed by Jesus were a tradition, Peter, being a Jew, rightly questioned why his Master was performing such a menial service. Instead, he could not fathom why his Master was serving him.

In his mind, it was utterly appropriate to refuse the washing. To his surprise, however, such a humble refusal would amount to having no part with the Lord, showing the importance of Jesus' action.

The word "part" in the original text is "meros," which means "participation" or having a share in someone or something (*The Bible Expository Commentary*, Vol 1, Warren W. Wiersbe, pg 346, 1994).¹

This word becomes very inspiring and meaningful when we talk about salvation. God unites us with Christ through salvation when we are willing to accept His footwashing.

When Peter understood Jesus' action and became terrified at the prospect of not having part with Jesus, he quickly

pleaded that Jesus wash his whole body. Jesus did not stop Peter from wanting a part with Him. He merely curtailed his request saying, "He who is bathed needs only to wash his feet" (Jn 13:10).

It was customary for guests to bathe themselves before attending a feast, and they would wash their feet upon arriving at their destination.

In spiritual terms, we must receive baptism and footwashing, which marks His acceptance of us as members of His household. Baptism and footwashing are equally necessary for salvation; they are inseparable, and neither is sufficient without the other.

After the sacrament, Jesus resumed His seat and said, "Do you know what I have done to you?" This question is profound for it reinforces the importance of the sacrament.

It is quite unlikely that a Jew would ask another about the significance of a customary act performed on others in courtesy. Therefore, Jesus initiated the footwashing as an example for all believers to follow.

Jesus' question shows that the footwashing mentioned here is different from the traditional one. It is He who initiated the footwashing sacrament. Thus it was for all believers to follow.

IN DEFENSE OF FOOTWASHING

There are some arguments against footwashing as a requisite for having a part in the body of Christ.

The Element of Time

Based on the fact that footwashing, as instituted by Jesus, took place before His death, some argue that footwashing is not a requisite for salvation, since it preceded the establishment of the church.

We need to understand that, although the church was established in New Testament times, it comprises not only of the New Testament believers but also the ancient saints (Heb 12:23, 24). The church is the body of Jesus, and to have a part with Jesus is to have a part with His body.

"...Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for it," (Eph 5:25). Based on Paul's understanding, Christ's sacrifice is the result of His love for the church,

not nullify the efficacy of footwashing.

Just as the blood of Jesus has a retroactive effect on the ancient believers (Heb 9:14ff), so does footwashing on the disciples, after the establishment of the physical church, for salvation.

Can we, for example, denounce the importance of baptism, since the Bible is silent about the baptism of the twelve apostles?

Similarly, can we disclaim footwashing to be necessary to having a part with Jesus, though there is no record of the washing of the feet aside from that of the apostles, of the 120, 3000, 5000, and Samaritan believers?

In the Gospel of John, Jesus authoritatively said, "For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you" (Jn 13:15). And the apostles, through the empowerment of the Holy Spirit, remembered all that Jesus said to them (Jn 14:26b).

Some may argue that footwashing is not part of the salvation plan the way baptism is clearly stated in the Bible (Mk 16:15, 15). But belief in Jesus actually precedes baptism, and it includes the practice of His words, such as praying for the Holy Spirit and receiving footwashing.

Beyond doubt, there is a difference between "in" and "with." Let us examine the following example given to support the difference: "For He dwells with you and will be in you" (Jn 14:17).

It is claimed that the first part "for He dwells with you" is in the present tense, which means that Jesus was talking about the existing relationship between the Holy Spirit and the disciples.

Therefore, the Holy Spirit is a temporary guest that dwells with us and will revisit us in the future, as stated by "will be in you." This argument is unsound.

The pronoun "He" in the first part refers not to the Holy Spirit but to Jesus in the flesh. When Jesus was in this world, the Spirit would not come (Jn 16:7).

In the Bible, the difference in usage between the two prepositions, at times, is negligible. Let us consider these two quotes of Jesus: "And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another helper, that He may abide with you forever" (Jn 14:16).

Would the apostles have only the presence of the Spirit, in the same way that they had with the physical Jesus, after His ascension?



In the Gospel of John, Jesus authoritatively said, "For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you" (Jn 13:15).

If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him. (Jn 14:23)

though the physical church had yet to come into existence.

The Lord Jesus initiated the institutions of the three sacraments (baptism, footwashing, and Holy Communion) before the church was established, so the element of time does

The Correct Interpretation

Another argument is the use of prepositional differentials. The RSV Bible describes footwashing as "to have a part in Jesus." The NKJV is "to have a part with Jesus," which is the accurate translation of the Greek text.

"We" or "Our" refers to the Spirit. We take the phrase "make our home with him" to mean "the dwelling of the Holy Spirit in him."

Careful reading of the Bible is an important requirement for comprehending the word of God, but certain words must not be taken too literally. We have been

given the spiritual capacity to interpret the Bible.

Peter has given us some very good examples. In explaining the downpour of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, he quoted Joel to support his message. He interpreted 'in those days' (Joel 2:29) to be 'in the last days' (Acts 2:17), which neatly coincided with the occasion.

The Spirit's guidance becomes essential when reading the Bible (cf. 2 Cor 3:6). We must strengthen what we have already received, especially with regard to the doctrine.

Restricted by Principles

The last argument is based on a set of principles stipulated to determine whether a doctrine comes from the Lord.

1. It must be spoken by the Lord Jesus Christ (Heb 1:1-3).
2. It must be taught and practiced by the apostles (Acts 2:42).
3. It must be evidenced by Scriptures in at least two places in the NT (2 Cor 13:1).
4. God confirms the word with signs to follow (Mk 16:20).

At first glance, this set of principles seems reasonable. However, the insistence that ALL four conditions must be fulfilled for ALL doctrines makes it untenable. Moreover, closer examination of the principles raises relevant questions.

In the first principle, we must deduce that, since Jesus did not speak directly about circumcision, the guidance of the Holy Spirit at the Council of Jerusalem (Acts 15) was sufficient to guide the apostles and elders into the correct practice for the gentile believers.

Now, applying principle (2) to

footwashing, we may also fairly infer from John 13:17 that the apostles would obey Jesus' command and, therefore, performed footwashing. Jesus endorses the teachings of the apostles (Jn 15:20b; Lk 10:16). Their words in the Bible are the Lord's and, thus, equally authoritative (1 Jn 4:1ff).

The apostolic teachings in Acts 2:42 use the teachings of Jesus as the foundation, meaning that footwashing is included, for:

...when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God... (1 Thess 2:13)

The well-established foundation is Jesus, apart from whom no one can lay another foundation (1 Cor 3:11). Jesus is the embodiment of the truth in the Bible: "...as the truth is in Jesus" (Eph 4:21).

Preaching what Jesus did and said was one major responsibility of the apostles:

That which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also you may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. (1 Jn 1:3)

Footwashing surely was one of the unforgettable sacramental rituals that the apostles declared to those who believed. Through this sacrament, they had fellowship with the apostles and with God.

The third principle is a red herring. In 2 Corinthians 13:1, Paul was using Deuteronomy 19:15, the Old Testament principles, to form a church disciplinary guideline to correct wrongdoers.

Lastly, God confirming His word with

signs is biblical. But the term "word" must be read in its collective sense—all the teachings of Jesus.

If it is taken to mean individual doctrines, then it is impossible to answer questions such as "How does God confirm the teachings on the Sabbath and Holy Communion with signs?"



Jesus is the embodiment of the truth in the Bible: "...as the truth is in Jesus" (Eph 4:21).

THE TRUE SACRAMENT OF FOOTWASHING

A sacrament is a practice instituted and given to the apostles by the Lord Jesus Himself.

It represents and confers grace when rightly received, and its physical aspects must conform entirely to the Bible to effect spiritual significance. A sacrament must meet the following criteria:

1. The Lord Jesus has Himself demonstrated it (Mt 3:13ff; Jn 13:1ff; Mt 26:26ff).
2. The Lord Jesus has commanded His disciples to perform it (Mk 16:15f, Matt 28:1; Jn 13:15ff; Lk 22:19).
3. It concerns salvation (Acts 2:38; Jn 13:8; Jn 6:53f).

Footwashing holds its rightful place as a sacrament taught in the Bible.

Though it was mentioned only once, it deserves the strictest observance on our part. It enables us to have a part with Jesus and to have the hope of receiving eternal life in His kingdom.

It also reminds us to strive for holiness, to serve one another in love, and to follow His example by manifesting a magnanimous and forgiving heart towards our fellow brethren and others.

IT WAS HIS ACT OF LOVE AND HUMILITY

Since footwashing is sacred, its teachings must diffuse into our Christian life. It also illustrates the appropriate ethos of the community of faith.

Just as a military parade is regimental and disciplined, portraying the trademarks of a military life, so does footwashing portray service, humility, and love as the trademarks of a true believer in the Christian community.

Footwashing is radical. It undermines an established convention of society—that a subordinate must serve his leader. No leader can claim to have embraced a more acute expression of servitude than Jesus Christ, as He washed His disciples' feet.

He came to serve and not to be served (Mt 20:28). Similarly, within the church, the great will serve (Mk 10:42ff). The stewards of God must emulate Jesus, so that the spirit of servitude pervades the church.

Jesus, leaving His seat to wash the disciples' feet, discloses what humility is all about. Humility forms the soft ground for the seed of truth to flourish and for harmony amongst us to prosper.

Do nothing from selfishness or conceit, but in humility count others better than ourselves. Let each of us look not only to our own interest, but also to the interests of others. (Phil 2:3, 4)

Love is also an emotion evoked in this simple act. Picture this in your mind: “[He] rose from supper and laid aside His garments, took a towel and girded Himself” (Jn 13:4). What an intense picture of love and sacrifice.

More powerful still is the picture of loving forgiveness when Jesus washed the feet of Judas, who was about to betray Him (Jn 13:2).



Jesus, leaving His seat to wash the disciples' feet, discloses what humility is all about.

Jesus knew of this betrayal from the very beginning and, yet, He gave Judas a chance to come to his senses; and footwashing was the strongest reminder.

Forgiveness is not just about forgetting the wrongs done to us, but helping the wrongdoers come to repentance.

May all of us consider Jesus' words carefully: “If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them” (Jn 13:17). ★

¹“Explicit soteriological use is found in Matt 24:51; Lk 12:46; Jn 13:8; Rev 20:6; 21:8; 22:19” (Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament, Vol 2, pg 410, Balz and Schneider, 1994).



What It Means To Be His Own

Jason Hsu—Baldwin Park, California, USA

He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. (John 1:11)

If we believe God knows all things (Ps 139:1-6; Rev 1:8), we will realize that what John's gospel describes in John 1:11 depicts the full extent of God's love. For even before God came to His own, God knew His own would not receive Him. Yet, God still came and made known His love to those whom He called "His own."

This is the greatness of God's love over human love.

THE DEFINITION AND CONCEPT OF "HIS OWN"

The Greek lexical form of "his own" in John's gospel is *idios*, which is where we get English words like "idiom," "idiosyncrasy," and "idiot." Thayer's and Smith's Bible Dictionary defines *idios* as

"pertaining to one's self, one's own, belonging to one's self."

The self-identifying aspect in the definition of "His own" must be distinguished from the distinction between "owner" and "owned." The distinction between "owner" and "owned" helps us understand how being "His own" is separate and distinct from being God.

But the self-identifying aspect between "owner" and "owned" helps us realize that an owner should, in some sense, be revealed by what he calls "His own" (cf. 1 Cor 6:19-20).

GOD REVEALS HIMSELF TO HIS OWN

So how is God revealed? And how do we come to know God?

We might not think much about questions like these in our day-to-day life. Like most people, we probably immerse ourselves in our daily tasks and forget that which we cannot see. And since nobody has ever seen God

(Jn 1:18), God becomes a distant reality—a myth and a fiction (cf. Ps 14:1f; 2 Pet 3:3f).

But John emphasized a different message: although no one has ever seen God, God became flesh to live and dwell among us, so we could both see and touch Him whom no person has ever seen (1 Jn 1:1; 4:12; Ex 33:18-20).

John's gospel teaches that the greatness of our faith is revealed when we have faith without seeing (Jn 20:29). Yet, John understood that people often need to see to believe (Jn 20:30-31).

So although the Bible describes God as one no man has seen or can see (1 Tim 6:16; cf. Jn 3:13), it also teaches us that God must be revealed in ways that can both be seen and believed; an expression of love.

Jesus Personifies God's Love

John says that a person who does not know how to love does not know God, for God is love, and Jesus Christ came to reveal God's love to us.

The Bible describes the love revealed through Jesus Christ in this way: Jesus came to be an atoning sacrifice for our sins (1 Jn 4:8-10; cf. Jn 14:9-10).

So Jesus said, “Greater love has no one than this...to lay down one’s life for his friends” (Jn 15:3). In another place, John describes this love as a love that loves “to the end” (Jn 13:1). There is no greater love than a love that loves to the end, for this type of love does not seek its own selfish gain but surrenders its life for others (1 Jn 3:16).

man to serve man (Phil 2:6-7). Though He had every right to be served as a king, Jesus did not come to be served but to serve and give His life as a ransom for others (Mt 20:28).

THE CHURCH IS HIS OWN To Have Part with Jesus

Through Jesus’ sacrifice, the Lord effected the gathering of God’s fallen people to Himself (Ezek 36:24; Jn 12:32; 17:21; Eph 2:13, 17f), a concept of “the church.”

longer see or associate with Jesus in a *physical* sense, for when Jesus said, “If I do not wash you, you will have no part with Me,” Jesus knew full well He would soon depart soon and could no longer be physically present with His disciples (Jn 13:1).

So Jesus was not focused on having continued physical fellowship with Peter; rather, Jesus was teaching Peter about the importance of spiritual fellowship with Him as “His own,” which should be contrasted against Judas Iscariot’s rejection of fellowship with the Lord as “His own” (Jn 13:10f; Acts 1:17-20).

From Jesus’ conversation with Peter in John Chapter 13, we realize that “having a part” with Jesus implies more than having a part with Jesus in a physical sense; it implicates our fellowship with the Lord on an even deeper level—spiritually—as “His own.”

So when Jesus knew His hour of departure had come, Jesus focused His teachings to His disciples on the promised Holy Spirit—to highlight the importance His disciples’ continued spiritual fellowship with Him (John 13-17).

Spiritual Fellowship

Jesus had to depart from His disciples after His death and resurrection (Jn 17:11), so the Holy Spirit became the new basis for fellowship with the Lord. This “spiritual fellowship” was fully realized in the church, on Pentecost, when God’s Spirit was poured out according to the prophets (Acts 2:1, 16-21, 41-42; cf. 1 Jn 4:12f; Jn 20:22).

In John 16:14, Jesus told His disciples about the Comforter—the Spirit of truth—who would “take of what is Mine [i.e., of Jesus] and declare it to you.” So



In John’s gospel, the concept of God’s restored people is found in the concept of “His own,” which is related to the concepts of “church” and “fellowship”.

Such was the love possessed by the Lord in John 13:1.

John 13:1-20 illustrates the depth of the Lord’s love for His own in an unforgettable way; it was unforgettable because it was true. And that truth—that realness—once felt, is hard to forget. If we ever saw such a love, we would also not forget.

At the last supper, Jesus sat among His disciples as both Lord and master.

But then the Lord Jesus removed Himself from His seat. After He left His seat, Jesus set aside His garments and girded Himself with a towel—taking the form of a servant. The transformation of the Lord to a servant must have greatly astonished Jesus’ disciples. How much more surprised were they when the Lord began to wash their feet? (Jn 13:4-5).

Jesus’ willingness to take the form of a servant before His disciples reminds us that God, likewise, took the form of a

Jesus came to save and restore God’s fallen people (Mt 1:21; Lk 2:25) and to gather what had been scattered (cf. Gen 11:7-9; Acts 2:4-6). In John’s gospel, the concept of God’s restored people is found in the concept of “His own,” which is related to the concepts of “church” and “fellowship.”

To understand the relationship between “His own” and “church,” we must first understand that the church is more than a mere building or human organization. The church is the body of Christ (Eph 1:22-23) and consists of the fellowship of those people especially chosen and purchased by God’s blood (Acts 20:28).

Going back to John Chapter 13, Jesus tells Peter that if He does not wash his feet Peter will have *no part* with Him (Jn 13:8).

Peter’s not having a part with Jesus did not simply mean that Peter would no

the Holy Spirit reveals the Lord Jesus—His Spirit—to His disciples.

The practical application of this revealing of the Spirit of the Lord is found in 1 John 1:3, which says, “[T]hat which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us...” 1 John 1:3 is essentially a teaching about the basis of our fellowship in the Lord: sharing what we have seen and heard from the Lord with others.

After the Spirit reveals the Lord to us, practically speaking, we need to declare the Lord to others (cf. 2 Cor 3:16-18). That is the natural progression of God’s revelation.

But if our fellowship is devoid of the Spirit, our fellowship cannot declare or manifest the Lord to others. Without the Lord’s Spirit, our declarations are no more than declarations of the human spirit. However noble the human spirit, the church must declare the Lord with the power of His Spirit (1 Cor 2:4; Rom 15:19; 1 Thess 1:5).

When we realize the Spirit is the source of strength in our fellowship, we will begin to realize the invaluable role the Holy Spirit plays in guiding the church. Furthermore, we will better appreciate the Spirit of fellowship and gathering that alone can truly reveal the Lord to others.

For others to identify and see God in our gathering, we must reveal the Spirit of the Lord, which is love. Jesus said, “[Love] one another; as I have loved you...By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another” (Jn 13:34f).

The church is not God; it can never replace God. But the church is an extension of God in the world—having a part with Him as His own. And as His

own, the church has an affirmative duty to reveal God in ways others can see and touch—just as Jesus did.



**But love is just a word—
and *idios* just a concept—
until it is revealed in real
and concrete ways.**

LOVE UNVEILS US AS HIS OWN

Armed with an understanding of what it means to be “His own” in John’s gospel, we must realize that love is the highest expression of *idios*.

But love is just a word—and *idios* just a concept—until it is revealed in real and concrete ways. True love should be vibrant enough to reveal itself to a world living in darkness.

In the same way, the truth of the gospel remains a theory until it is tangibly revealed.

Jesus did not just speak the truth; He revealed it in tangible ways. When crowds of sick and diseased people surrounded the Lord, despite being exhausted, He saw the peoples’ needs and not their potential to burden Him (Mt 9:35f).

And by this we learn from the Lord what it means to represent God in the world, for we are sent into the world just as He was (Jn 17:18, 20f).

Jesus once presented a challenge to Philip as they were facing a multitude of hungry people: “Where shall we buy bread, that these may eat?” (Jn 6:5f) It was a challenge of faith.

But it was also a challenge of love.

It reminds us of another challenge Jesus presented: “The harvest truly is

plentiful but the laborers are few” (Mt 9:37). Without love, who will reap the harvest?

Our Mission

Today, the mission of the True Jesus Church stands or falls, not based on our wisdom, our knowledge, or our skill, but upon our willingness to reveal God’s truth in love.

Doctrinal truth and apologetics, while vital aspects of the church’s ministry, should not overtake the practical aspect of the church’s mission—reflecting God’s nature through justice and through love (Lk 11:42). Love should not be reflected towards ourselves alone but also to the world (Mt 5:14-16).

If we have a part with the Lord, then we are called to be “His own.” This is a special privilege that beckons us to fulfill the Lord’s commissions and live out the truth He entrusted to us.

As His own, we must come to realize that just as Jesus revealed God, who is true (Jn 1:18; 1 Jn 5:20), we are entrusted by God to concretely reveal the true Jesus to the world. This is the essence of the True Jesus Church.

The first two verses referring to “His own” in John’s gospel (i.e., Jn 1:11, 41) reflect both the progression of God’s revelation to the world and the mission of God’s true church.

First Verse: John 1:11 reveals how Jesus came to His own, which is a revelation of Him who is true (God) to the world.

Second Verse: John 1:41 reveals how John the Baptist witnessed about the Lord Jesus to Andrew, who then found his own brother, Peter, and witnessed

to him.

Following the progression of these two verses, the first verse is an expression of God's revealing to the world through Jesus and the second an expression of our revealing of God to others through witnessing.

But we must have a deeper understanding of "His own" in these two verses, for the two verses are, foremost, an expression of love, without which there is no meaning (1 Cor 13:1-3).

In order to reveal God to the world (i.e., 1 Jn 1:11) and make others (who do not know the Lord) "His own" (i.e., 1 Jn 1:41), the church must reveal the Lord through love.

For without love Jesus would not bother coming to His own, especially when His own would not receive Him. Without love, Andrew would not bother witnessing to his own brother, Peter, and the church would be missing a pillar (Gal 2:9).

Therefore, love is fundamental to the mission of the True Jesus Church. Without it, God's true church remains veiled, and the "invisible church" remains invisible.

So how do we love? John encouraged us to love, not in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth (1 Jn 3:18).



The highest form of *idios* is love and to know how to love is what it truly means to be "His own."

Apostle Paul summarized love's practical application for us in 1 Corinthians 13:4-7:

- Love suffers long and is kind
- Love does not envy
- Love does not parade itself, is not puffed up
- Love does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked
- Love thinks no evil
- Love does not rejoice in iniquities, but rejoices in the truth
- Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things

If we can apply these principles of love to our own life, we will be well on our way to learning how to love just as the Lord loved.

Let's study a final example of love from John's gospel. In John 19:26f, as Jesus was crucified on the cross, Jesus saw both His mother and His beloved disciple underneath the cross.

Jesus' mother, Mary, was the only person to witness both the Savior's birth and His death. To give birth to the Jesus was not an easy task for Mary to bear (Mt 1:18f; 2:13). But to see her own son die on a cross like a common thief, as a mother, must have been even more unbearable.

But hanging on the cross, Jesus entrusted His beloved disciple with an important mission. Jesus turned to His mother and said, "Behold your son..." Then, turning to His beloved disciple, He said, "Behold your mother..." The beloved disciple understood completely.

After the cross, Jesus knew He could no longer be a son to His mother, so Jesus turned to His beloved disciple. And

from that time forward the beloved disciple did what Jesus could not: he took Jesus' mother into his own home.

This reminds us about how we love.

The highest form of *idios* is love and to know how to love is what it truly means to be "His own." For we are ambassadors of Christ to the world—reconciling, representing, and revealing an unseen God to a world living in darkness (2 Cor 5:18-20).

Through us others can see God's presence and feel God's love in real and concrete ways (1 Jn 4:12). As "His own," we bear the responsibility of love, for we have each been graced with a love that loved us to the very end.

God loved and continues to love "His own" in the world with a great love. But if that grain of truth cannot find root in our heart, we will continue to be oblivious to how we ought to receive His love.

The truth of John 1:11, then, remains just as true today as it did many years ago: "He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him." And if that is the ultimate truth, we must all bear responsibility for it.


And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us an understanding, that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life. (1 Jn 5:20) ★

Science And Technology

Living in this day and age it is inevitable that Science and Technology will play a big role in our lives, and modernity and the changing values of society can challenge our faith. That is also the reason why many of our readers have asked us to address this issue.

In this section, three writers explore the role of Science in Christianity: Do they conflict with each other? As scientific discoveries gradually extend to every aspect of our lives, what should our perspective be? How does it help us better understand our relationship with God?

As you will soon read, each author takes his/her own personal route to answer these questions, and all will arrive at the same conclusion: God's wisdom surpasses all others but science can add a rich dimension to our faith, if our purpose is centered on finding Him.



Can You Trust The Biblical Account Of Creation?

Stephen Ku—Pacifica, California, USA

Brought up in a Christian family, I always accepted without question what I was taught about the Bible and about God. But my faith began to meet some serious challenges during my college years. One of them was the study of science.

THE AGE ISSUE

During my first semester I took a geography class. Geological evidence of the age of the earth often came up in lectures, readings, or discussion sessions. Based on fossil records and radiometric dating, which measures the radioactive decay of rocks and meteorites, scientists estimated that the earth is about 4.6 billion years old.

This clearly contradicted my belief that the universe was only a few

thousand years old. Without even attempting to weigh the evidence, I simply dismissed the information as an unreliable claim founded on an inaccurate dating method.

The issue of the age of Earth and the universe surfaced again a year later when I took an astronomy class. This time, it smacked me right in the face.

In a discussion session, our TA talked about the size of our universe. He started by saying, “The universe is so vast that it is way bigger than you could possibly imagine!” Then he introduced the concept of the light year, a unit of measurement with which astronomers estimate the distance of objects in space. Light travels at 3×10^8 kilometers per second. A light year, then, is the distance

light can travel in one year, i.e. 9,500,000,000,000 kilometers.

Just to give an idea of the scale that we are dealing with:

- Alpha Centauri, the closest star to us besides the sun, is 4.3 light years from us.
- Our galaxy, known as the Milky Way, is about 100,000 light years in diameter. (This means it would take light 100,000 years to travel from one end of our galaxy to the other!)
- Our nearest neighboring galaxy, Andromeda, is 2.2 million light years away.
- The distance to the galaxy M87 in the Virgo cluster is 50 million light years.
- The distance to the most distant object seen in the universe is about 18 billion light years (18×10^9 light years).

Because it takes time for light from stars to reach Earth, we are actually looking back in time when we look at the stars. For example, in 1987, scientists observed a supernova in a nearby galaxy called the Large Magellanic Cloud. Since this galaxy is 190,000 light years from us, they were looking at an event that actually occurred 190,000 years ago.

The most distant objects that astronomers can see now are about eighteen billion light years from Earth. This means that the universe must have existed eighteen billion years ago, which is, incidentally, the current estimate for the age of the universe. In other words, when we see these objects in space, we are literally looking back in time at things that existed at a time when the universe was just formed.

When I learned of these facts, I was



blown away. I was amazed at the vastness of the universe we live in, and I suddenly realized how tiny and insignificant human beings are. At the same time, I was forced to confront the fact that this universe is billions of years old. This time around, I couldn't run away from the evidence; it was all too real.



As I learned more and more from the astronomy class, I became increasingly uneasy.

THE SEARCH FOR ANSWER

As I learned more and more from the astronomy class, I became increasingly uneasy. I couldn't help but question the beliefs I had taken for granted: What about the biblical account of creation? Didn't God tell us in the Bible that He made everything in six days? Did this universe really begin with a huge explosion and expand to the current state over billions of years? And if it did, where was God in all of this?

I became afraid to know more than I wanted to know, and I was apprehensive at the thought that the Bible I had believed in all my life could possibly contain such a gross error. And if

the biblical account of creation cannot be trusted, what in the Bible can be trusted?

I could have ignored the facts and held firmly to what I believed. But I would be fooling myself; my belief would be nothing more than a superstition. On the other hand, if it turned out that the Bible was wrong, I would be completely lost! What would I do if I found out that my faith in God had been nothing but an illusion?

I went to the school library and picked up books on the Big Bang theory and the origin of the universe. I also visited the library of a nearby union of divinity schools and found a handful of books on science and creation. I tried to be as open-minded and objective as



When we continually discover the wonders of God's creation, we cannot but stand in awe of the Almighty God and praise Him for His greatness.

I could and made a point to see the issues from different points of view.

After some extensive research and deliberation, I was able to resolve many of the questions I had. My mind opened up to a much wider horizon. On the one hand, I had to reshape some of my former prejudices. On the other hand, I became more convinced of my faith in God and in the Bible.

I do not have any degree in science, and I do not presume to speak as someone who is well-versed in it. But I will share with you, from a lay-person's perspective, a few of the things I learned in the process of my search, in the hope that they will also help readers who may have little knowledge in science.

Science and Faith Differ in Scope but are Mutually Complementary

Science and faith explore two different kinds of realities. Whereas science studies the physical realm, religion helps us understand the spiritual. Science explains the mechanics of things, but religion inquires about the meaning and purpose of things. Science makes deductions from things that can be observed and tested, but faith is based on God's direct revelation through His word.

Scientists can tell us that the universe is expanding, but they do not have the

authority to claim that it wasn't God who caused the expansion. On the other hand, Christians do not need to fear that new discoveries in science might undermine their faith and thus reject scientific explanations on the mechanics of how this universe originated.

Albert Einstein commented, "Science without religion is lame; religion without science is blind." Although science and faith are concerned with different realities, they must complement each other.

Science seeks to understand God's general revelation through nature. Faith seeks to understand God's special revelation through Scripture (see sidebar). It would be foolish to think that science has made religion obsolete, just as it would be narrow-minded to think that scientific discoveries can pose a threat to our faith.

When we are willing to open our eyes to God's general and special revelation, we gain a much fuller understanding of God and His works.

Faith helps science students gain a spiritual perspective on the physical things they observe. It answers questions such as, "Who brought this universe into existence?", "What is His relationship to us?", and "What is His purpose for us in this physical existence?"

On the other hand, science helps believers in God gain a greater appreciation and understanding of God's creation. Astronomy, for example, gives us insight into the vastness and complexity of this universe,

When we continually discover the wonders of God's creation, we cannot but stand in awe of the Almighty God and praise Him for His greatness.

Side Bar I

General Revelation and Special Revelation

God is infinitely higher and greater than human beings, and our minds are too limited to grasp the existence and nature of this Supreme Being. The only way for us to know God is through His revelation of Himself to us. The Bible teaches us that God reveals Himself to us in two important ways.

First, He reveals Himself to us through nature. This is usually called the "general revelation." Paul writes about this kind of divine revelation, "Because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse" (Rom 1:19, 20). Because science explores the physical universe, the study of science can help us better understand our Creator and His creation.

The second kind of revelation is known as the "special revelation." This refers to the Scripture, the written word of God. Through the Scripture, God reveals to us who He is, His relationship to us, His works, and His will for us. By studying God's word, we may know Him and obey Him.

Because God is the Creator of this universe as well as the author of the Scripture, His general revelation and special revelation to us do not conflict with each other. Rather, they complement each other. The study of science and the study of Scripture together help us gain a fuller knowledge and appreciation of the one true God.

Belief in an Old Universe does not entail Belief in Atheism

Some Christians reject the old age of the universe outright or look at it with suspicion because they believe that it is an attempt by atheists to deny a creator. But such an attitude is unfounded.

Physical sciences make observations, gather empirical data, and arrive at physical laws or theories without any personal prejudice. In this sense, science continually helps us understand the physical existence.

But it does not and cannot draw conclusions for us about things beyond the physical existence—that is where faith comes in. Therefore, scientific findings are neutral as far as spiritual implications are concerned. It is up to the individual to interpret the scientific finding according to his personal faith.

The discovery of the old age of the universe was not the result of an atheistic agenda. Neither is the Big Bang model an attempt to discredit faith in a creator. In my search for answers, I came across books by Bible-believing scientists who believed in the old age of the universe and the Big Bang model. To me that speaks volumes.

These scientists did not compromise their faith to accept the old age of the universe. They were individuals who were sincere in their faith and well respected in the scientific community.

I came to the conclusion that if these scientists could openly embrace the old age of the universe without compromising their faith in God, I had no reason to fear.

There is also no need for Christians to be on the defensive, for a billion-year universe would not threaten our faith at all. We just need to resolve the apparent conflict between science and our beliefs.



So when scientific facts do not seem to reconcile with our reading of these records, they should not call into question the reliability of the Scripture.

Scientific Facts Help Us Re-Evaluate Our Understanding of God and His Word

When scientific facts seem to contradict the Bible, the problem does not lie in the reliability of God's word. Rather, it is often the result of our own misinterpretation of the biblical text.

We ought to humbly acknowledge that our understanding of God's word is limited and be open to a more accurate interpretation. We should not defend our interpretation as if it were the absolute truth.

We have learned from history the mistakes some Christian leaders in the Middle Ages made of condemning scientists as heretics in order to defend the view of a flat Earth.

One major objection to the old age of the universe is that it implies that the universe evolved naturally. People who are in this position argue, "If the universe took billions of years to form, then that would mean that there is no creator!"

They firmly believe that God must have created things instantaneously. When God said, "Let there be...", things just appeared in a split second as if touched by a magic wand. Billions of years to form the universe simply rules out a creator, they claim, because that is not how God does things.

I bring up the above example not to argue for or against an old universe. But it just shows that we tend to interpret the Bible with our own preconceptions. Those who hold to the idea of "instantaneous creation" question how God could have possibly taken THAT long to create the universe.

But if we think about this position critically, we can just as well ask, "But who is to say that God couldn't have slowly formed the universe the way a craftsman carefully works at his masterpiece?"

God's word is eternal, and it stands firm in the heavens (Ps 119:89). The eternal truths of God's word, such as God's love for the human race, His redemption through Jesus Christ, His everlasting dominion, and His commandment to love the Lord and our neighbors, can never be changed.

But our reading of the historical records or the cultural references in the Bible may be subject to change as scientific or archeological discoveries shed new light on these passages. So when scientific facts do not seem to reconcile with our reading of these records, they should not call into question the reliability of the Scripture.

This is not to say that whatever scientists tell us is always right. Empirical data may often be indisputable, but theories based on scientific facts are not absolute. As science continues to develop and scientists make new discoveries, theories of the past may be rejected and replaced with more accurate models or physical laws.

Since theories will be tested with time, we will do well to take them into consideration and reserve our opinions about them for the time being.

LOOKING AT THE CREATION ACCOUNT

With the above principles in mind, how should we resolve the apparent contradiction between an old universe and the six-day creation? Many solutions have been proposed, which we do not have time to analyze one by one. The table summarizes three common interpretations of creation¹ : *(please refer to table)*

THE CREATION ACCOUNT AND OUR FAITH

Through my research on the issue, I have come to understand that there needs to be no conflict between science and faith and that the creation narrated in Genesis can be explained in view of scientific facts.

In fact, recent discoveries in science, not just in astronomy but also other fields, have provided more and more evidence that point to intelligent design in the universe by a loving Creator. Although Christians may not agree on the exact mechanics and duration of the creation event, we can agree that science attests strongly to the biblical account of creation.

However, I have also come to realize that, ultimately, our faith does not rest on the creation alone. The issues surrounding the creation pale in comparison when we consider the overwhelming number of scientific discoveries that have confirmed the reliability of Scripture over the years.

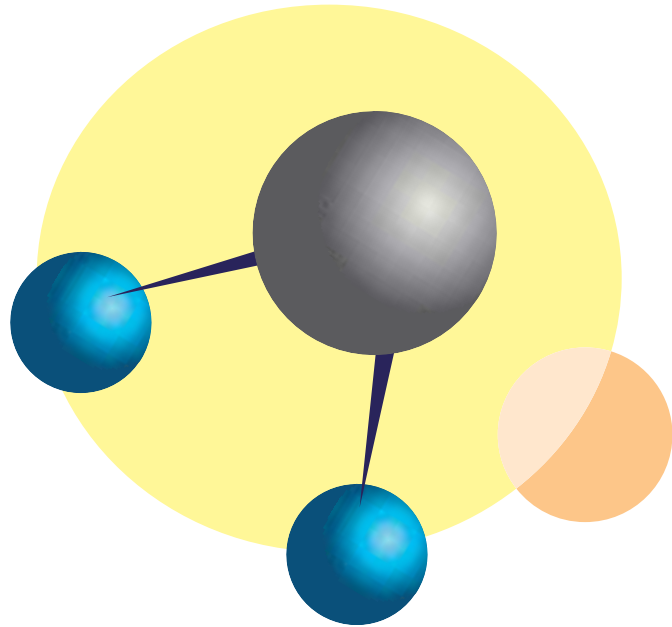
The fulfillment of prophecies in the Bible, the impact that the Bible has had on human history, the confirmation of archeological findings on the historical accuracy of the Bible, and so forth, have all served to strengthen our faith in God's unchanging word. Perhaps most

Interpretation	Summary of Interpretation	Position on the Age of Earth and the Universe
Gap Theory	God first created the heavens and the earth, as recorded in Gen 1:1. Then there was a "gap"—an unspecified duration of time in which Satan and his angels rebelled and ravaged God's creation. Starting with Gen 1:2 is the record of the creation week, a period of restitution in which God restored His creation.	Old
Calendar-Day	God created all things in six twenty-four hour days. The exact length of day is an essential part of the Creation account.	Young (Thousands of years-old)
Day-Age	The word "Day" in Scripture can be a period of indefinite length (e.g. Isa 11: 10-11). Some who hold this view also understand the narrative of Genesis 1 as written from the perspective of the earth as it was being prepared for man rather than an account of the creation of the whole universe, which is very briefly stated in Gen 1:1.	Old
<p><i>If you are interested in the arguments for these interpretations and others not listed here, I encourage you to do some reading on your own and draw your own conclusions. I personally find the Day-Age position most satisfying exegetically and scientifically, but this does not mean that other views are definitely wrong.</i></p>		

important of all, our personal experience in the life-transforming power of God's word is the best testimony to the truth in the Scripture.

While we continue to gain a greater knowledge of God and His creation through studies of science and the Bible, we can rest assured that science and faith are not on a collision course and that we do not have to choose between the two. Further insights into both the general revelation of nature and the special revelation of Scripture will only bring us closer to God's eternal truth. ★

¹A much more thorough presentations of the various interpretations of the Creation account can be found at http://www.reasons.org/resources/apologetics/pca_creation_study_committee_report.shtml?main



God Made All Things Well

Johanna Bloom

As humans, we seek for the simplest answer, almost never expecting to find it, because our daily experiences seem to indicate that things really aren't that simple. Because of this, we are inclined to devise complicated ways to explain the simplest phenomena.

Since this is a Christian magazine, consider the question of religion. The answer to "Does God really exist?" is very simply a "Yes" or a "No." But the deliberation by which we reach that conclusion can often be convoluted and exhausting.

Specifically, relying solely on science to prove or disprove the existence of God may lead to more questions than answers. Science, however, undisputedly shows that life and all the things we see in nature are far more complex than we can imagine.

Learning about all these complexities in the world that we live in have continuously convinced me that God exists because His fingerprints are everywhere.

They lie beneath a flower petal, a water droplet, and even something as miniscule as a protein molecule. If there was a good reason to study and embrace science, it is to unravel the wisdom of God.

So for the next few minutes, let us admire and learn about things we see and experience everyday but may not have thought about in depth.

THE HANDPRINTS OF GOD

The Perfect Molecule

Take a droplet of water, for example. We drink from it and bathe in it everyday, but what we don't see on the surface are the

intricate properties that make up a water molecule.

We are all familiar with its chemical structure: H₂O—two hydrogens and one oxygen atom. Simple and, as we will soon realize, beautiful.

All the elements in the periodic table have their own electrons (negatively charged particles). Oxygen is an atom that likes electrons, and so it will tend to attract the electrons of nearby atoms towards itself.

In the case of water, the oxygen, in addition to its own electrons, pulls the electrons of hydrogen atoms towards itself. This results in the water molecule being slightly negative near the oxygen and slightly positive near the hydrogens; this separation of opposite charges is what makes water a polar molecule.

When two water molecules are near each other, the slightly negative oxygen of one molecule will attract the slightly positive hydrogens of the other molecule, since opposites attract.



Given that astronomers have yet to find a planet that is covered with water like the Earth, this phenomenon, in my mind, is beyond coincidental—it is deliberate.

This slight attraction of water molecules towards each other explains the phenomena of cohesion, by which water behaves as though it were coated with an invisible film. We can observe this in a full glass of water: the water will appear to rise above the rim of the glass but not spill over.

What could be the use of such a trivial observation? What does this have to do with life on this planet? As it turns out, cohesion and adhesion are the mechanisms by which plants hydrate themselves, and as we all know, the world's ecosystem requires that plants supply the base of the food chain.

Plants do not have muscles like complex vertebrates do, so they don't "pump" water up from the roots the same way our hearts pump blood to our heads, against the pull of gravity. They rely on the cohesion of one water molecule to the next to draw up the water from the roots to the leaves.

If water molecules were not polar, they would not be as cohesive and plants would have no way to get the water from the roots to the leaves.

Another property of water that is often overlooked: its ability to maintain a temperature range suitable for life. Water is also involved in maintaining our body temperatures at a precise 98.6 degrees Fahrenheit.

Finally, water is also at a pH (a measure of acidity) that permits the pH of human blood to be at a very precise 7.4. To give you an idea of how sensitive a human body is to pH, if blood was at pH 7.0 or 7.8, that person would die within minutes (Campbell, p.50).

If the water in our body was slightly more acidic or slightly more basic, the human race would easily be wiped out. We are alive today because our blood can maintain a constant pH of 7.4.

There are other properties of water that are remarkable and essential to life. Any biology book, even if its authors are atheist, will testify to the necessity of water to life on earth, and any geography book will tell you that seventy

percent of this earth is conveniently covered with this life-sustaining substance.

Given that astronomers have yet to find a planet that is covered with water like the Earth, this phenomenon, in my mind, is beyond coincidental—it is deliberate.

Consider Hemoglobin

Hemoglobin is a protein. Proteins are not considered to be living organisms, yet their function is sophisticated. Hemoglobin picks up oxygen in the lungs and drops it off in the tissues. Then, it picks up carbon dioxide in the tissues and releases it in the lungs.

Have you ever wondered why or how hemoglobin "knows" when to pick up oxygen and when to drop it off? Imagine if it was "stupid": you would lose oxygen content in the blood en route to the tissue, and by the time hemoglobin gets to the tissue, there would be no oxygen left. Or, the hemoglobin would pick up the oxygen, not knowing when to drop it off, so we would have a large quantity of oxygen in our blood, but none of it nourishing our tissues.

Also, consider the situation of hemoglobin in a pregnant woman. How does the hemoglobin ensure that the oxygen gets to the mother and the baby? In this circumstance, the baby's hemoglobin has different properties from the mother's hemoglobin so that the baby is sure to get enough oxygen.

And again, consider the case when you ascend to higher altitudes where oxygen concentration is lower. Once again, your body's natural chemical system takes care of that situation as well, and hemoglobin, a non-living entity, "knows" to pick up the slack and

provide your body the oxygen it needs.

Are They Coincidental?

The chances of everything falling perfectly into place to create the perfect conditions for life on earth are very slim. All these random processes would have to occur in a very particular sequence in order for things to be as they are today. Trying to explain all the randomness that makes up the order we see in the natural world today can be very complicated, which is why many scientists around the world are deeply involved in its study.

There is, however, a simple answer to all this complexity for those who are willing to accept it: God deliberately made things the way they are.

We can see that everything that sustains life has been carefully crafted and elegantly executed—from the simple water molecule, to the oxygen-carrying hemoglobin in our blood, to the complex interactions of the various organs in our bodies.

NATURE'S MESSAGE

*But ask the animals, and they will teach you,
or the birds of the air, and they will tell you;
or speak to the earth, and it will teach you,
or let the fish of the sea inform you.
Which of all these does not know
that the hand of the LORD has done this?
In his hand is the life of every creature
and the breath of all mankind.
(NIV, Job 12:7-10)*

Through everything that God has made, I am reminded and assured that the God who created all these things is also in control of my life.

If He has taken so much effort in forming this earth, what else do I need to



Our heavenly Father loves us and has made everything work together perfectly so that we can live as we do today.

worry about? People often say that it's in the little things a person does that shows what kind of person they are.

In the same vein, it is in nature that we can see the divine nature of God, which is also how He continually shows us His love—He is faithful in the little things.

He has numbered the hairs on our heads, handcrafted every droplet of water and every molecule of protein; He feeds the birds, He causes lilies to grow, and He clothes the grass of the fields (Mt 6:26-30).

Just as the beauty of nature proclaims God's magnificence, almightiness, and glory, so must we thank God and stand in awe of Him.

Then when those who have yet to know God come and ask us, we must reply in the same way that the animals, the birds, the earth, the fish, and the sea respond—that the hand of the Lord has done this.

LET US PRAISE HIM

While scientific discovery and research into nature are not the primary reason for my belief in God, it has added an enriching dimension to my faith in Him.

Science has given me even more reason to rejoice for the life and breath that is given to me by God, and it makes me realize that while I may be a scientist, I'm finding out more and more about the masterful works of God.

Although the pursuit of science does not replace experiencing His words through the Bible and praying and

touching God in the spirit, it gives me a sense of assurance, knowing that my Father in heaven, who so attentively accounted for every iota that supports life on earth, has also made me with the same tenderness and care.

We cannot rely on physical things to maintain our faith in God. Even though faith is the evidence of things unseen (Heb 11:1), the wonder of His creation is daily reminder that God is always within my reach.

*I will praise You, for I am fearfully and
wonderfully made;
Marvelous are Your works,
And that my soul knows very well.
Ps 139:14*

Whenever I am discouraged or wonder where God is in my life, I can go out for a walk by the pier, and remember the amazing work of His hands, and I am comforted that the Lord, who made all things well, also accounted for me.

Our heavenly Father loves us and has made everything work together perfectly so that we can live as we do today. Let us not despise His love for us by ignoring the ingenuity that we see all around us in the biological world.

Rather, let us acknowledge that it is a gift of love from God, and let us praise Him for His wisdom. ★

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a dollar a day...



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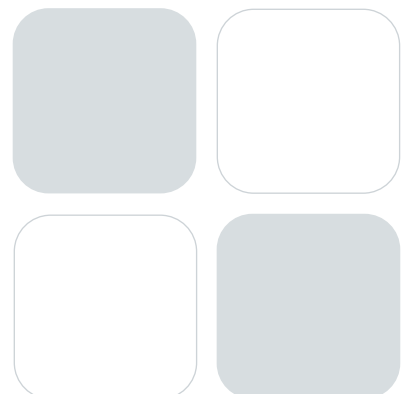
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A Scientist's Point Of View: An Interview

James Lin—Montreal, Quebec, Canada

1. Can you briefly describe your background and area of study in the field of science?

My focus and area of study is in the field of toxicology, and my research includes studies and applications of cell and molecular biology, as well as animal models. My major research contribution to the scientific society includes:

- Providing evidences to explain the differential toxicity of Cadmium (a heavy metal) to human and rodent cells
- Developing an organ culture technique that can be applied to pulmonary toxicology research

Currently, I am working on applying neuron stem cells to Parkinson's disease, which is termed "cell therapy".

How can we incorporate scientific approaches to our faith?

I think the scientific approach often encourages doubt because people

become dependent on proofs and results—things that we can see. And it is doubt that can easily plant the seed of uncertainty in our faith.

Jesus knows this weakness in us, just as He recognized it in Thomas. Jesus accepted and answered Thomas' doubt because this particular apostle would not believe that Jesus had resurrected until he could see the scars of the nails in His hands. So Jesus appeared to Thomas and showed him (Jn 20: 24ff).

Though I don't encourage doubting in our faith in God, I do think it is good to ask questions: "Is this true?" and "Is this correct?" Jesus often questioned His disciples so that they could examine if their faith was genuine.

But the questions that we ask should not twist God's words, just as the serpent twisted God's words when he tempted Eve to eat of the fruit from the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

Our education system trains us to doubt and ask questions; especially scientists, who are trained to ask objective questions and find answers.

And this is how I got my degree.

Being both a scientist and a Christian, I've seen the best of both worlds. Being a scientist helps me ask good and healthy questions about my religion, but I also remember what Jesus said to Thomas, "Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed" (Jn 20:29).

2. What is evolution, and what do genes have to do with evolution?

Briefly, evolution is the process of gradual change of living organisms from simple to complex forms. Because we won't have time to cover such a wide topic, I will not get into the origin of evolution.

Genes are the significant sections located on the DNA, which is the basic material of living organisms. The end products of genes are peptides/proteins and they provide the structural and functional foundation to support biological functions.

All living things evolve and they are predisposed by genetic factors (such as

genetic alterations and gene mutation), behavioral factors (for higher animals), and ecological factors (such as environmental conditions and interactions with other species).

The theory of evolution itself is continually being shaped even today, based on complicated facts, assumptions, hypothesis, and a bit of imagination, too. Evolutionary mechanisms are now even presented mathematically.

Genetic alterations do arise, which lead to the structural and/or functional changes of living organisms, and evolution occurs when a population successfully passes on the altered genes and also the consequent structural and functional changes.

Genetic information is then somehow the record of genetic alterations and genetic fidelity through generations, and it's usually applied to provide evidence of evolution.

To give an example of how genetic information can be applied to track the lost genealogy; a group of Native African population was recently identified as the descendent of Abraham through genetic and other evidences such as culture and tradition.

This example might not be a good one to correlate evolution and genes, but it does illustrate how genetic information can reveal the alterations and relationships that started thousands of years ago.

Based on similar genetic approach and theory, evolutionists came to the conclusion that mankind and apes are closely related.

Simply by looking at nature today, we can see that certain degree of evolution does take place. We can see that the descendents of Adam and Eve have now evolved into different races, and the

scientific term for this is intra-species evolution.

There is another type of evolution, which hypothesizes that different species can evolve into another. And scientist uses the example of domestic animals, said to have evolved from wild animals, and claims that they are the result of inter-species evolution.

There is no direct evidence so far to support inter-species evolution, since no one has ever lived long enough to witness the changes from one species to another.

It is important to note that changes among the same species can be identified easily, but changes from one species to another have never been witnessed. But Evolutionists hypothesize that the latter happens if given adequate time.

3. What are your thoughts on genetics? Where do you think we are heading in this technologically advancing society, and what are some things we should pay attention to, and/or stay away from?

The growing genetic age of science and technology is a challenging era for the Christian faith, since traditional biblical teachings do not always have direct answers to new and ethical issues that constantly pop up.

I have routinely altered genetic contents of living organisms (bacteria, cells, and complex animals). The purpose, of course, is for research, and I feel comfortable because the Bible does not prohibit from doing so.

In fact, genetic manipulation can be traced as far back as biblical times, when

Jacob separated the spotted goats from the brown ones, and he mated the stronger livestock so that his flocks grew in large numbers (Gen 30:35-43).

Today, genetic alterations are taken to a whole new level with the advancement of technology. Nowadays, these methods are also used for commercial applications and therefore have greater impact on society.

Society benefits greatly from the fruits of genetic technology, and we are enjoying a lot of genetically altered foods (animals and veggies) and some products for medication. But there are definitely things that we should watch out for.



The growing genetic age of science and technology is a challenging era for the Christian faith, since traditional biblical teachings do not always have direct answers to new and ethical issues that constantly pop up.

Tougher Issues to Come

- Genetic researches have revealed that some genes might be greatly related to human behavior (the phenotype). Someday, genetic factors might be the legitimate excuse for criminal action.
- Homosexual behavior might be somehow related to gene patterns. A biblically sinful behavior detestable to God might be excused because of a bad gene.

- Brain research is another important scientific field. Understanding how brain works might cast a lot of doubts on religious experiences such receiving Holy Spirit, divine revelations, and other spiritual experiences.
- Psychological verses spiritual experiences has been the center of debates for a long time, and the effects of genetic factors to these experiences will eventually be investigated by researchers. No big breakthrough has been achieved at this moment.
- One thing I think we need to stay away from is performing inter-species breeding, which will affect ecological stability. Although Jacob did perform breeding practices in his time, his method was very traditional compared to what we can do now.

is that we might lose ourselves in our ability to create (modifying is probably a better term) lives and become a person that has neither respect nor love God's creation.

It is definitely plausible in the near and foreseeable future that simple forms of life will be created in the lab out of supra-molecules through biochemical procedures. If this occurs, mankind will become "life-creating" and will be like God—words first spoken by the serpent in the garden of Eden (Gen 3:5).

Mankind can be creative; in fact, it is a gift from Him. But our pride is a sin that only leads people away from God. We should be aware of any thought to "act God".

Our Morals

Success in in-vitro fertilization and human cloning techniques will enables us to select and deposit "embryo". These

choose only one in-vitro fertilized embryo out of ten or twenty? Actually, in-vitro fertilization and modern molecular biology have made no way for us to escape these theological problems.

More than ever, we need to find these answers for ourselves—we need to find God's place in our lives.

4. How do you reconcile what you do with what you believe in?

Thank God, my research has not really brought any conflicts to my faith. On the contrary, through the understanding of the cellular structures and the complexities of nature, I have come to a deeper appreciation of God's wisdom and His creation.

For me, to be able to perform research and to unravel the beauty of God's creation is His gift to us. But most scientists only know to use this knowledge to understand and improve themselves and not to appreciate and value God.

Of course, the knowledge we gain through research is inadequate to approach God, because He is Spirit, and that is the key to His true wisdom and our salvation (Jn 4:24).

But we don't have to ban research altogether because this is part of God's wisdom, too. So I don't believe we need to discredit science and research just because we believe in God.

King Solomon's wisdom into living things was the result of his request to God, which He was pleased to grant. In fact, his approach to understand the nature of living things was very similar to the scientific approach (i.e. assumption, hypothesis, and experiment).



Of course, the knowledge we gain through research is inadequate to approach God, because He is Spirit, and that is the key to His true wisdom and our salvation (Jn 4:24).

Our Perspectives

The difference between then and now is the motivation behind these experiments. In the past, natural selection was a way for survival but I'm not sure if we can say the same for today's practices.

I think biblical teachings are the only standard for us, and we should ask God's revelation and go in-depth to approach these difficulties because there are many unknowns as technology moves forward.

One thing that I think is potentially dangerous for bio-researchers like myself

cast big challenges to our interpretations over the compositional elements (spirit, soul, and body) of mankind; or maybe it makes it clearer for us.

Knowing God is a life-giving God, does He breathe the same breath into genetically modified/cloned animals or human beings? What is God's involvement in this life-generating process? Until which embryonic stage does God give spirit and soul? Do the early stages of the embryo hold human life?

Are we killing lives when we have to

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Thus Solomon's wisdom excelled the wisdom of all the men of the East and all the wisdom of Egypt...Also he spoke of trees, from the cedar tree of Lebanon even to the hyssop that springs out of the wall; he spoke also of animals, of birds, of creeping things, and of fish. (1 Kgs 4:29, 33)

The more we discover about His wisdom in this world, the more we will come to enjoy and desire to nurture His creation—to stand in awe of God. ★



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SoftWare Piracy—Is it Wrong?

Enoch Chang—Houston, Texas, USA

From a technological standpoint, two of the greatest and most influential achievements of recent time have been the advent of the personal computer and the deployment of the internet.

Multifaceted, each is useful for virtually every type of application. Used in both our personal and professional lives, they have become an integral part of society.

However, since they can be used for such a wide variety of purposes, the question is, what do we use them for?

EVERYBODY DOES IT

King Solomon, with his God given-wisdom, once said,

That which has been is what will be, that which is done is what will be done, and there is nothing new under the sun. Is there anything of which may be said: 'See, this is new'? It has already been in ancient times before us. (Eccl 1:9-10)

Reading Solomon's statement, you can't help but wonder what exactly he means.

As humans our life is composed of new encounters that become our experience. But unfortunately since a person cannot be born with the knowledge and experience of others there is no advantage to being born today as opposed to being born yesterday,

since his/her experience is unique.

Solomon is saying that what we face today are the same things everyone else faced yesterday and the same things everyone else will face tomorrow. Everyone has "been there" and "done that."

And in any given circumstance, we still have to make decisions between right and wrong. There is nothing new about the choices that people face in their lives, just a change in how it appears with time.

The same thing can be said of sin. Since the beginning of time, men have sinned against God. But the enticements of Satan have evolved quite dramatically since Adam and Eve ate of the fruit from the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

So, if what Solomon said is true, that



This is the dilemma we face today. We know what the Bible says, but we don't realize how it applies today, which ultimately says that we don't always know when we're wrong.

nothing really changes and sin exists, then the question for us as Christians today isn't "have we" but "how are we" sinning against God?

For we who live in the technological age, we still need to make decisions of right and wrong, but Satan has grown more deceptive to fool us. He now knows to make use of seemingly non-religious scenarios so that we are less sensitive to our conscience.

If you ask a college or high school student what they primarily use the computer and internet for, you'll probably get a response similar to: check email, surf the web for news and sports, blog, chat with friends, sell and buy things online, play computer games, make web pages, do homework and research, look at pictures, stay updated with their hobbies (fixing up their car, latest video games, latest tech stuff, etc), burn CD's, and more.

For the most part, this isn't a bad list of things to do, although whether or not it's a good usage of time is debatable. But things get interesting when you ask them what exactly they burn to CD, what they download, where they got the game they're playing from, and how they got the software to make their web pages.

IT'S NO BIG DEAL

Of all the hundreds, possibly thousands, of Mosaic laws the Israelites had to observe, we have to remember only ten of them. But these ten laws are not just lifeless words that we must remember.

For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart. (Heb 4:12)

God's word is the weapon of choice to combat sin because, just as sin changes it's form with time, God's word is applicable all the time. But God's word is useful to us only if we recognize our target.

For some reason or another, our ideology or philosophy of stealing doesn't seem to have kept up with the advancements of technology. In most cases, the word stealing is usually associated only with taking something from a grocery store, robbing someone at gun point, or breaking into someone's house and taking their belongings.

What we don't associate stealing with is downloading illegal mp3's and bootleg videos, cracking trial versions of software, burning copies of copyright-protected CD's, and performing other "cost-saving" measures.

Maybe we admit it's a form of stealing, but somehow it's just not the same as robbing a bank.

This is the dilemma we face today. We know what the Bible says, but we don't realize how it applies today, which ultimately says that we don't always know when we're wrong.

WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?

To society we're referred to as students, children, and young adults. From that point of view, we're no different from the next person. But, there is a difference. We're religious education teachers, counselors, youth group leaders, and Christians.

How can we live up to these roles—roles that are supposed to glorify God—if we ourselves make excuses for the "less important" wrongdoings we practice?

Moreover, how can we expect younger youths and non-believers to know what is right if we're teaching them to do what is wrong?

Right after teaching a lesson on the Ten Commandments, being honest, or being separate from the world, we sometimes ask our students for or give them copied software, videos, or songs.

Sometimes, we even ask if they can help with various church works, which may require certain computer programs, but we adhere to a no-questions-asked policy on how they get the software or even worse, give them the illegal program to use. This gives them the impression that this kind of activity is condoned.

Or how many times have we swapped CD's with friends we invite to church? We want them to come to know God and to know the truth, but we don't seem to practice the truth ourselves because our life doesn't reflect it.

Yes, we know the basic beliefs and teachings of the Bible, observe the Sabbath, and say we don't celebrate various holidays because they're not biblical, but, when it comes down to the small daily issues of life, we're just like everyone else.

Luke 16:10 says, “He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in what is least is unjust also in much.” Here Jesus gives us a good guideline on how to judge character—look at the little things.

If we’re found faithful in the little things, then that means we’re also considered faithful in the big things. We have to wonder if we’re faithful in the little things that we let pass by, thinking it’s no big deal.

Setting a bad example is just one of many problems with software piracy. It can lead to other forms of stealing, incur legal woes, encourage us to lie about using pirated software, and hinder our relationship with God.

Whenever we serve God, we’re actually offering our best to Him. But if we’re using pirated software in our service to Him, are we offering our best?

In Mark 11, Jesus grew upset and cast out those who were doing business in the temple and “would not let anyone to carry ‘wares’ through the temple.”

Jesus’ rash actions may sound a bit harsh because we may not think what we’re doing is all that condemning. But the severity of software piracy—especially when we use church as a medium to pass on these things to other members—effectively put a shameful blanket on our conduct in the house of God.

If Jesus was displeased with the sight at the time, what would Jesus do if He saw us with our stolen goods in His temple today? Jesus once said, “Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s” (Mt 22:21).

This reminds us that we may be Christians, but we also live in this society

and must be compliant to what our society requires of us, that is, to do the right thing and to observe the laws.



Today’s society is all about being on the forefront of cutting-edge technology. Likewise, we need to be on the forefront to recognize the many faces of sin.

Start with Ourselves

The first step we need to take is to reconnect with the source of truth, which is God Himself.

Just like a virus-scanning program needs to connect with a central server to stay updated on the latest virus definitions, we need to stay connected with God in order to have the wisdom to see the new variations of sin.

This entails not only reading the Bible and praying on a consistent basis to build up sensitivity towards sin but also looking carefully at our lives and keeping up with the newest issues in society.

Our task in life as Christians is to shine the light for Christ, which means we have to live in the world and not flee to some hole in the ground, fearing that we’ll be influenced by all the evils of society.

Instead we should be active participants in society and be aware of new trends and ideologies. Then, we must use the Bible to discern whether these “new” things are actually sin in disguise.

If we’re able to do this and constantly keep our database of sin updated, then

we have a much higher probability of not being ignorant towards sin and all its forms.

Today’s society is all about being on the forefront of cutting-edge technology. Likewise, we need to be on the forefront to recognize the many faces of sin.

HOLD EACH OTHER ACCOUNTABLE

Software piracy, unfortunately, is only one of many problems that we face today. With much advancement in science and technology, many old problems have surfaced in new ways.

Knowing that software piracy is wrong and is very much a form of stealing doesn’t mean that it is easy for us to stop the practice.

For most, software piracy is a gratuitous way to watch the latest movies, have the latest software, and listen to whatever songs we want. It even keeps us educated because it provides uninhibited access to whatever programs we would like to learn how to use.

Since there are so many reasons and “benefits” of using pirated software, as well as the fact that it has become a large part of our lives, determining to stop alone may not be good enough.

However, if we hold each other accountable as a group and really have it in our hearts to stop the practice, then curbing the habit will be much easier. The Bible says, “Though one may be overpowered by another, two can withstand him. And a threefold cord is not quickly broken” (Eccl 4:12).

In practical terms, this means limiting our computer time, deleting peer-to-peer software, becoming more aware of what our church students and siblings are doing on the computer, and actually

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being open about the topic with our spiritual companions.

If we are able to address the issue rather than ignore it, then we're well on our way to devising a solution. We need to get the message across that software piracy is unacceptable.

The problem presented by software piracy has ballooned to such a catastrophic extent that numerous software and music companies are beginning to search for people using illegal software and prosecuting them.

If not for any other reason, we should encourage those we care about to stop for their own good. Even if the person is older than ourselves, perhaps even our youth leader, we must courageously broach the subject with them.

We're all in the same boat trying to get to the same place. Even if some of us don't seem interested in reaching the final destination, we can't just leave them behind. We have to support each other and push together. ★

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When “Happily Married” Couples—Aren’t

Richard Solgot—Tampa, Florida, USA

Scene one: A young man and a young girl are sharing a tender moment together at their favorite ice cream shop. They are sitting opposite one another, drinking sodas and enjoying a nice conversation.

He: “I like you.”

She: “I like you, too.”

He: “I like you more than I said.”

She: “I like you more than I said, too.”

He: “I love you.”

She: “What!?”

He: “Nothing.”

She: “No, go ahead...say it again!”

He: “I love you”

She: “I love you, too!”

He: “Will you marry me?”

She: “Yes! Yes! We are going to be so happy together!”

Scene two: Same young man and girl are

exiting from a church with beaming smiles as their friends and families wish them happiness forever.

Scene three: Six months later. Young husband is sitting at breakfast table reading his newspaper. Young wife sets a plate of burnt toast before him.

He: “I am getting sick and tired of burnt toast.”

She: “You shouldn’t complain. There are so many people who are starving in this country. You should be thankful.”

He: “From some of the meals I’ve been having lately, maybe I would be better off starving.”

She: “If you want to starve yourself, go ahead. Nobody’s stopping you!”

He: “I think I will!”

Young husband storms out of the house.

Okay, it might take a little longer than six months...maybe ten or eleven. But too often such things happen. So how are we to deal with our disgruntled marriage?

MEASURING QUALITY

The quality of a marriage relationship can be measured in many different ways. A study at the Institute for Family Research and Education at Syracuse University identified ten elements as being important in a marriage:

1. **Love.** This seems obvious, but it doesn't exist in all marriages. Each spouse needs to be the recipient of consistent, caring, and sensitive behavior shown in large and small ways. Love needs to be conveyed by words and actions. The lack of displayed love produces hurt feelings and alienation.
2. **Sense of Humor.** Humor brings a sense of balance to daily life. It relieves stress and tension that otherwise develop in daily life and in every marriage. Without laughter, there is a risk that friction will not be dissipated
3. **Friendships.** Every married couple should have meaningful friendships with other couples. And each spouse should have a few friends. A marriage that is cut off from other significant relationships loses perspective.
4. **Involvement.** Activities outside of the job and the house can provide each spouse with a sense of purpose.
5. **Physical Intimacy.** The expression of shared intimacy is an important part of marriage.
6. **Communication.** Conversation is an important part of a healthy marriage. The dialogue carries more than just information. It is a vehicle for expressing feelings.
7. **Sharing.** Marriage is a cooperative arrangement. There needs to be a willingness on the part of both spouses to share in the responsibilities and duties.
8. **Integrity.** Each spouse needs to be dependable and trustworthy.
9. **Adaptability.** Personal growth should be anticipated. Each spouse should appreciate the growth of the other spouse.
10. **Tolerance.** There needs to be an acceptance and forgiveness of the other spouse's mistakes. Although mistakes don't need to be ignored, they should be discussed in a way that is not detrimental to the relationship.



To turn the problem areas of your marriage into a successful one, you may need to do the opposite of what comes naturally.

Commit to Improve the Relationship

The quality of the marriage can be jeopardized when any aspect of the relationship between the husband and wife is ignored. If both spouses are committed to improving their relationship, then the risk of harm is avoided.

But, the case is tragic when only one of the spouses recognizes or is willing to deal with the problem.

You might feel like your marriage is a failure if you are trapped in a situation where your spouse is oblivious to a problem or unwilling to make changes that are necessary to remedy an ailing relationship.

In such circumstances, you may be tempted to reciprocate with an equally uncompromising attitude. That would be a natural reaction, and it is understandable. But it is not the action that will improve your circumstances.

To turn the problem areas of your marriage into a successful one, you may need to do the opposite of what comes naturally.

DEAR ABBY

The Bible tells the story of a woman, Abigail, who was trapped in ailing marriage. Hers is a story of contra-intuitive behavior—doing the opposite of what comes naturally. But her surprising behavior had successful results.

The story of Abigail and her husband, Nabal, is told in 1 Samuel 25. Nabal was a farmer and rancher. His name meant “fool.” You might be surprised that any parents would give their child such a name, but in Nabal's case it was well suited.

David (of Goliath fame) was a young man with a small army that protected the local citizens from robbers and invaders.

He was a sort of Robin Hood of his day. The neighbors subsidized David's army with food and supplies.

When David sent his messengers to Nabal for his contribution, Nabal refused. In fact, he even insulted David in the process:

"Shall I then take my bread and my water and my meat that I have killed for my shearers, and give it to men when I do not know where they are from?" (1 Sam 25:11)



Abigail did not hesitate to make a personal sacrifice, at great inconvenience and risk to herself, for the sake of her husband.

When David received the message of Nabal's ingratitude, he prepared for battle. He strapped on his sword (by this time he had outgrown the slingshot), and together with four hundred of his men, he rode toward Nabal's ranch with the intention of obliterating everything and everyone in sight.

Meanwhile, back at the ranch, Nabal's servants had informed Abigail of her husband's stupidity. Without telling her husband, she gathered up enough supplies for David's entire army, and she took a shortcut to intercept David.

She interceded on her husband's behalf. She apologized to David for not anticipating the situation. As she gave David all of her supplies, she begged for David's forgiveness and mercy. David accepted her gifts and granted her plea with this statement:

Blessed is the LORD God of Israel, who sent you this day to meet me! And blessed is your advice and blessed are you, because you have kept me this day from coming to bloodshed and from avenging myself with my own hand. For indeed, as the LORD God of Israel lives, who has kept me back from hurting you, unless you had hastened and come to meet me, surely by morning light no males would have been left to Nabal. (1 Sam 25:32-35)

LEARN FROM ABBY

You need to read Abigail's story in its entirety to get the full sense of this woman's situation.

She was in a relationship that by all outward standards was a failure. Yet, she rose above the failings of her husband and compensated for them with her own exemplary behavior.

While others might have been tempted to respond with bitterness, Abigail displayed:

- **Attractiveness.** The Bible describes her as a beautiful and sensible woman. She was attractive on both the inside and outside. Although her husband may have been rude, crude, and disgusting, she maintained her appearance and her attitude.
- **Perceptivity.** She didn't become closed-minded like her husband. She was sensitive to other people's feelings. The servants knew that she was the one who could handle the crisis.
- **Protection.** While Nabal put himself and the rest of his household at great risk, Abigail protected her family by covering for his mistakes. She even protected him from further folly by concealing from him the fact that she was going to attempt reconciliation with David. If Nabal had known of that attempt, he would have blown it for sure.
- **Action.** Abigail did not hesitate to make a personal sacrifice, at great inconvenience and risk to herself, for the sake of her husband.
- **Humility.** Most people can't even apologize for their own mistakes, but Abigail took personal responsibility for her husband's blunder. She was humble and repentant as she pleaded on her husband's behalf.
- **Commitment.** Although he didn't deserve it, Abigail was devoted to her husband. While she had every reason to abandon this buffoon to the consequences of his own folly, she remained loyal to him.

AND THEY LIVED HAPPILY EVER AFTER—NOT!

You already know part of the ending of the story: David relented and Nabal was spared. So it proved to be a successful outcome for Nabal, but what of poor Abigail? Well, there was a successful ending for her as well, and here is the rest of the story:

Then Abigail went to Nabal, and there he was, holding a feast in his house, like the feast of a king. And Nabal's heart was merry within him, for he was very drunk; therefore she told him nothing, little or much, until morning light. So it was, in the morning, when the wine had gone from Nabal, and his wife had told him these things, that his heart died within him,

and he became like stone. Then it happened, after about ten days, that the LORD struck Nabal, and he died. So when David heard that Nabal was dead, he said, "Blessed be the LORD, who has pleaded the cause of my reproach from the hand of Nabal, and has kept His servant from evil! For the LORD has returned the wickedness of Nabal on his own head." And David sent and proposed to Abigail, to take her as his wife. And when the servants of David had come to Abigail at Carmel, they spoke to her saying, "David sent us to you, to ask you to become his wife." Then she arose, bowed her face to the earth, and said, "Here is your maidservant, a servant to wash the feet of the servants of my lord." So Abigail rose in haste and rode on a donkey, attended by five of her maidens; and she followed the messengers of David, and became his wife. (1 Sam 25:36-42)

Now, don't get the point of the story wrong! It is not being said that God will rescue the innocent spouse from a failing marriage by killing off the arrogant spouse. That's not the point of the story (although it did bring a nice bit of divine justice at the end).

The lesson from the life of Abigail is the continual display of love toward a spouse that did not reciprocate. In those circumstances, loving behavior was not the natural reaction, but it was the conduct that Abigail chose to exhibit.

Her behavior kept a bad situation from getting worse, and it eventually proved to be a successful approach.

PUTTING LOVE TO THE TEST

The affirmations of love between a bride and a groom are easily spoken at the wedding altar. They are more difficult to put into practice as time goes on and one spouse becomes self-centered and the other spouse struggles with the temptation to retaliate.

But the method for avoiding the complete failure of the marriage is found in the definition of love itself. If you are in the difficult circumstances of a marriage that is teetering on the brink of failure, remember these words:

Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails. (1 Cor 13:4-8)

The situation in your marriage may not immediately change, but any personal feelings of failure will be replaced with the confident knowledge that you are following God's pattern for success. ★



I Can't Wait

Samuel Kuo—Hillsborough, New Jersey, USA



I can't wait to behold the glory of God, His light, His majesty, His tender mercies, His overpowering love, face to face. I can't wait to behold the splendor of heaven and its riches, to see my dwelling place, resplendent with God's spirit.

I can't wait to sing with angels. I can't wait to sit at Jesus' feet and listen to His voice. I can't wait to meet the Samuel, after whom I was named. I can't wait to meet David and have him sing and play his psalms in original score.

I can't wait to talk to Paul, to John, to Daniel—my favorites. I can't wait to cook with Martha. I can't wait to fish with Peter, make tents with Paul, Apollo, and Priscilla, and race on water with my church friends. I can't wait to hear the stories, the testimonies, the sharing, and the fellowship.

I can't wait to see the tears on our faces, from the grace we have received, wiped away. I can't wait to know no more sorrow, tears, or pain. I can't wait for faith to be sight, for hope to end, and for love to abound.

I can't wait to ask God all the questions I always wanted to ask. I can't wait to ask, "Why me?" I can't wait to ask, "Was I really worth dying for?" I can't wait to ask, "Were you pleased?" I can't wait to hear, "Good and faithful servant, well done." I can't wait to hear, "His name is Sam, my little lamb."

I can't wait truly to know God

I can't wait to see the sights. I can't wait to see the twelve gates, the twelve foundations. I can't wait to see the jasper walls, the city of gold, the clear glass sea, the tree of life, and the twelve fruits.

I can't wait never to switch on a light ever again. I can't wait never to wear glasses again. I can't wait to be of a normal weight. I can't wait to be in my spiritual body. I can't wait to teleport and to communicate telepathically. I can't wait to never be tired again.

I can't wait to see how big the book of life is. I can't wait to see movies of the creation and of all the stories in the Bible and everything not mentioned in the Bible. I can't wait to live beyond four dimensions.

I can't wait to get a piggy-back ride from an angel. I can't wait to see their servitude, their praise, their honor. I can't wait to see old friends. I can't wait to be home.

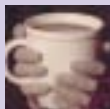
I can't wait truly to know God.

I can't wait. In the meantime, God, please lead me home. I'm but a stranger here; heaven is my home. Jesus has satisfied; Jesus is mine.



What can't you wait for?

*What a day that will be when my Jesus I shall see,
And I look upon His face—the One who saved me by His grace;
When He takes me by the hand, and leads me through the Promised Land,
What a day, glorious day, that will be. —Jim Hill ★*



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Christian Living

A *Christian Living* article gives practical biblical guidance on real-life issues and how to use Jesus' teachings in our daily lives. Article length: 1500-2000 words.

Bible Study

A *Bible Study* explores a passage or character from the Bible and draws out the teachings for readers to apply to their lives. Article length: 2000 words.

Doctrinal Study

A *Doctrinal Study* examines an aspect of True Jesus Church beliefs and may present it in comparison to other beliefs. Article length: 2000 words.

Exhortation

An *Exhortation* encourages and admonishes the reader in different aspects of the Christian faith. Article length: 1500-2000 words.

Testimony

A *Testimony* recounts an experience in the Lord that will encourage and edify the reader. Article length: 1000-1500 words.

Creative Writing

Creative Writing pieces include poems, parables, or short stories that illustrate a biblical teaching or idea. Keep in mind as you're writing: how will this edify the reader?

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Issue #44

Theme: The Life of Jesus

Articles due: Feb 29, 2004

This theme will focus on the character and ministry of Jesus Christ. What are the seven "I am's"? How do we imitate Christ? How do we understand Jesus in the plan of God? And what can we learn about the example He set for us?

Issue #45

Theme: A Life of Servitude

Articles due: May 31, 2004

How do we serve in our respective roles, what are the attitudes of serving God, and how do we make service a life-long commitment? What can we learn from biblical exemplars of the faith?

Issue #46

Theme: Evangelism

Articles due: August 31, 2004

This theme will address the precious gospel entrusted to the true church. How do we equip ourselves to spread the gospel; what are the correct approaches and attitudes to evangelism? And how does this involve me?

In your submission, please include your name, mailing address, email address, and telephone number

GENERAL WRITING GUIDELINES

CONTENT

- Content should be biblically sound and adhere to biblical principles.
- Article should be organized and have a logical flow of thought.
- The main point or teaching of the article should be clear to the reader.
- Readers should be able to apply what they have read to their daily lives.

GRAMMAR/STYLE

- Use active instead of passive voice.
- Write concisely.
- Use concrete words and ideas instead of abstract concepts.
- Use "plain old English" instead of obscure, academic language.
- Use the NKJV version when quoting Bible verses.
- Use American spelling, if possible.
- Adhere to the IA Style Guide, except for He/Him when referring to God/Jesus.

True Jesus Church

Articles of Faith

Jesus the True God

The One True God was manifested in the flesh. He is the Lord Jesus Christ, who died on the cross for the redemption of sinners, was resurrected on the third day, and ascended to heaven. He is the only Savior of mankind, the Creator of the heavens and the earth, and the only True God.

Holy Bible

The Old and New Testaments of the Holy Bible are inspired by God and are therefore the only authentic scriptures which testify to the Truth.

Church

The True Jesus Church was established by our Lord Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit (the Latter Rain) and is the revival of the True Church of the Apostolic Days.

Salvation

Salvation is given by grace through faith. However, it is necessary to rely on the Holy Spirit to pursue holiness and to keep the biblical teachings of honoring God and loving humanity.

Baptism

The Baptism of Water is the sacrament for the remission of sins and for regeneration. The baptist must already have received baptisms of water and the Holy Spirit. The baptism must be immersion in natural, living water and must be administered in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, with the candidate's head facing downward.

Foot Washing

The Washing of Feet is a sacrament which enables one to have a part in the Lord and teaches mutual love, holiness, humility, service, and forgiveness. The sacrament of the washing of feet must be performed in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ to all newly baptized members. Mutual washing of feet may be practiced when necessary.

Holy Spirit

The baptism of the Holy Spirit is a prerequisite for entering heaven; speaking in tongues is the evidence of having received the Holy Spirit.

Holy Communion

The Holy Communion is the sacrament to commemorate the death of the Lord Jesus Christ. It enables us to partake of the flesh and blood of our Lord and to be in communion with Him so that we may have eternal life and be raised on the last day. This sacrament should be held as often as possible. Only one unleavened bread and grape juice should be used.

Sabbath Day

The Sabbath Day, the seventh day of the week (Saturday), is a holy day, blessed and sanctified by God. It is to be observed under the Lord's grace for the commemoration of God's creation and redemption and with the hope of eternal rest.

Judgment Day

The Lord Jesus Christ will descend from heaven on the Last Day to judge all people; the righteous will receive eternal life, while the wicked will be eternally condemned.

TRUE JESUS CHURCH CONTACT INFORMATION

For additional information on the True Jesus Church, contact us or visit us on our website. We look forward to hearing from you!

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I'M HERE

Deborah Chang—Irvine, California, USA

*Across a chasm I kneel;
Straining,
To catch a glimpse of His face—
Of the One I've longed for even in my dreams.*

*His Owner probes and knows
My qualms, my fears, my all;
I search for Him there—
So tantalizingly close yet an infinity away.*

*But when the fallen one grips
Despair and doubt defiles my soul
My barriers crumble;
My hopes extinguish.*

*Then out rides the Champion
Leading the winged legions;
A flaming chariot He rides—
To chase away the darkness.*

*For His power transcends the ages
And how easily He broaches my walls;
Brimming my heart
Not with night—with day.*

*A love of unfathomable magnitude
A peace; an embrace
As He whispers—
"I'm here"*