A Wondrous Mix
The Zork family makes beautiful music together.
Dearest Georgie

Thank you for the article “Dearest Georgie,” by William G. Johnsson, in the June 24 Adventist Review. I remember as a little girl in church on Sabbath morning looking up at Elder Spicer—his twinkling blue eyes, rosy cheeks, and trim white goatee! “It’s a great family to belong to,” he would say. So it was, and so it is!

—Frances E. Anderson
Loma Linda, California

Boston Regional Medical Center Closes (revisited)

This letter is in regard to the letter in the June 24 Review by Martha Ford concerning the closing of Boston Regional Medical Center. Years ago I read a statement by Ellen White that indicated that the work would come back to the East with a greater power than ever before, so I can’t believe that we won’t have powerful medical work there again.

Perhaps, though, instead of a hospital, we should think in terms of something operated by the local churches, such as a “daily health dial,” which would give daily five-minute messages on health for the public to call.

My pastor husband and I (we are now retired; I am an R.N.) did this in one of the large cities of our nation. We used material from the American Medical Association, The Ministry of Healing, Life and Health, and Listen magazine, as well as other materials from our Health and Temperance Department. We offered free literature from both our own church sources and the American Heart and American Cancer associations. When the recorded phone messages talked about hydrotherapy, we offered to give home demonstrations. We had more requests than I could get around to.

I always took a church member volunteer with me who serviced the area of the call with literature. As Evangelism, page 520, says: “The Lord has ordained that with those who preach the Word shall be associated His medical missionary workers. . . . Medical missionaries come under the head of evangelists. The workers should go forth two by two, that they may pray and consult together.”

—Janet Skilton
Apopka, Florida

Let Me Cry an Ocean

The article by Ken M. CFarland, “Let Me Cry an Ocean,” in the July 22 Adventist Review was very good in helping readers not to blame God for suffering in this world. However, M. CFarland appears to discredit his own theology in the final paragraphs when he writes of God permitting “bad things to happen.”

I know it is traditional to say it that way, but should we reconsider our theological language? When we establish, as did M. CFarland, that the devil alone is the one who causes death and suffering, we obfuscate the truth when we then say that God permits them to happen.

Would it not be better and more consistent to say that God has nothing to do with causing pain and death? In Job’s case the devil had the ability to strike him whenever he wanted. M. CFarland is right in explaining that the real issue was that Satan wanted God to stretch out His hand to do harm to Job. And yes, God refused to participate, reminding Satan that Job was in his hands. The crux of the story is that the devil was up to his dastardly design to damage God’s character. In many ways today he is succeeding in doing just that in the minds of so many in the world and even in the church in this matter of answering the “why” questions. Let us not allow the
notion that even though Satan does the evil, in fact God permits it. Who, then, is really to blame? At best, if we hold that God permits it, He and Satan are both to blame.

Jesus helped us to understand that the devil did not need the permission of God to cause Job to suffer. In John 12:31 Jesus said, “Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be driven out” (NRSV). Satan was the ruler of this world also in Job’s day. A gain, in Hebrews 2:14 it says that the one who has the power of death is the devil. The one who has the power of death does not need permission to use it.

Let us be consistent and clear in our theology. God has nothing to do with evil. It is totally accounted for in the work of the devil, who is the ruler of this world.

—Douglas Devnich
Owen Sound, Ontario, Canada

The absolute sovereignty of God means, among other things, that nothing evil can happen in the universe without His permission. Permission and causation are separate concepts.—Editors.

I cannot remember when an issue of the Adventist Review has touched me so much. Ken McFarland’s article on suffering and pain was written by a person who is speaking from his own pain and suffering. Kristi Ayars’ article “That’s My Line!” is by someone who has been out there in the real world. R. Lynn Sauls’ “You Never Know, That Child Might Grow Up to Be a Heart Surgeon” is another article of a person who speaks about the real world, so it seems to me.

—Kenneth Livesay
Paradise, California

Adventist Review on the Internet
I have been reading with interest your plans to make the Review more readily available, and the enthusiasm of your North American readers for your plan. But what about us in the rest of the world? Do you have any plans to make it available via the Internet? (Please don’t suggest CompuServe—it’s far too expensive out here in the Aussie bush!)

I grew up with the Review and can remember reading it for myself for at least the past 45 years, but even for a committed reader like me it is a nuisance to receive my Review up to two months late and in the back-to-front order my postal system seems to think is normal!

I think my family is the only one in our local church who gets the Review, and I have little chance of convincing others how great it is while it comes out here via snail mail in its present and expensive U.S. dollar fashion. Please, make some creative plans for us, too.

—D. J. Pashniak
New South Wales, Australia

The Adventist Review goes on the World Wide Web in late September. And the South Pacific Division plans to print the World Edition each month.—Editors.

Letters Policy
The Review welcomes your letters. Short, specific letters are the most effective and have the best chance at being published. Letters will be edited for space and clarity only. Send correspondence to Letters to the Editor, Adventist Review, 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904-6600; Internet: Reviewmag@adventist.org CompuServe network: 74617.15.
WILLIAM G. JOHNSSON

If you once drink of the living water, you will never be satisfied with the broken cisterns from which the multitudes lap. Others may, you cannot.

Jesus is a spring that never runs dry, that bubbles up in cool, refreshing torrents. He alone quenches our thirst for eternity, for God.

He is the great I Am, the one in whom is “life, original, unborrowed, underived” (The Desire of Ages, p. 530). Knowing Him, we know all that matters; without Him we are wanderers in the vast universe, ever learning but never able to arrive at the truth.

In His light we see light. We see God, and we know that God is infinitely good, infinitely compassionate, infinitely merciful. We see ourselves, and we know that we are loved. We see that the glamour that attracts the multitudes and the games they play are pathetic baubles dangling from a string.

If ever God should walk the earth, God would be like Jesus. God did walk the earth, and they called His name Jesus.

He invited once, and He invites still: “If any one thirst, let him come to me and drink. He who believes in me, as the scripture has said, ‘Out of his heart shall flow rivers of living water’” (John 7:37, 38, RSV).

If Jesus has called you to the secret place of His friendship, you can have no other gods before Him. Others may, you cannot.

No person or place, no task or amusement, no appetite or desire, can take what belongs to Him alone—nothing. Jesus is Lord.

To abide in Him in daily fellowship, to speak to Him and to hear His voice, to rest secure in His strength, to receive His peace and His joy inexpressible and glorious—this is living in a new dimension. We have passed from death to life. We know that we are saved. We know that love is stronger than death. We know that He who is in us is more powerful than he who is in the world. We know that as He has overcome we too shall overcome in His strength.

When Jesus is Lord we see His likeness in every brother, every sister. To put them first, to wait on them, seems the only thing to do. The Father sent Him; now He sends us. He came to serve—He served us—and now we serve others. Not for one hour a day or eight or 12; not for five days a week or six. His life is in us, His Spirit empowers us, His love constrains us.

His voice rings in our ears and hearts every day, calling us home: “If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me” (Matt. 16:24, NRSV).

If Jesus has called you into His fellowship, you cannot abide in Him as a solitary Christian. You will love not just the Parent but all His children.

The church, which is His body and His bride, seems the least of God’s creation. Weak and enfeebled, the church is fractured by members who fight and argue and can’t get along. This bride wins no beauty pageant. That the church ever accomplishes anything is a miracle.

But Jesus loved the church and gave Himself for her to present her a pure, spotless bride for Himself. She is precious to Him, the supreme object of His affections on this earth.

When we see the church as Jesus sees her, we love her with His love. We are jealous for her with a godly jealousy, eager to defend and slow to chide. We guard the work built up over many years in toil and tears. We grieve over every loss and rejoice over every gain.

When we value the church as Jesus values her, we walk in awe that we have been called to her wedding. Our hearts burn with His zeal to expand her borders, inviting all to the marriage supper of the Lamb.

His mission to seek and to save the lost becomes our mission.

If we love the Parent, we will love the child also. “A new commandment I give you,” He tells us. “Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another” (John 13:34, NIV).

And so the beloved John says: “We love because He first loved us” (1 John 4:19, NIV).

Others cannot, we may.
Do we need a new version of the Bible? One that more accurately describes just how we as Seventh-day Adventists view our message and mission? Are there passages that maybe need to catch up with our actions? How might we tailor the new translation to fit the way we actually function?

Let's try four examples for size. I'll quote the original passage, and then suggest an “Adventist” revision.

1. Timothy's advice to youth: "Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith, and in purity" (1 Tim. 4:12, NIV).

My suggestion for the new Adventist translation is: "Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example by living the way the older people lived when they were your age. Live your faith in such a way that you might win their approval. (For instance, use the songs from the Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal or from Rodeheaver.)"


We'll all agree that Christ's mission was to preach the gospel. That's as plain as any verse in the Bible. But to the poor? The afflicted, the humble, those with broken hearts?*

Here is my updated Adventist version: "He has anointed me to preach Revelation 13 and other prophecies, particularly to members of other Christian churches. You see, if you share Me with the secular person, the drug addicts, the alcoholics, the poor, the non-C-hristians, there will not be many baptisms. And since numbers indicate the pastor's success or failure and show the level of responsibility the conference has assumed for the ways the money is spent, you need to evaluate your focus. Don't put much funding into programs that show only few "results.""

3. Another passage we perhaps need to bring up-to-date is Jesus' instruction, "Suffer little children . . . to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 19:14).

Here's my version: "Suffer the little children . . . to come unto Me, but do not attempt to include anything the children might enjoy or understand in the presentation of My Word (how else will they learn reverence?), or provide alternate worship services to give relief to tired parents."

4. While we're on a roll, let's push it to talk about relationships. Moses wrote, "For this reason a man will . . . be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh” (Gen. 2:24, NIV). Obviously this wasn't exactly what was meant. The new translation would read, "For this reason a man will be united with his wife, and they will become two individuals with the man giving lip service to the equality issue where it's politically correct to do so. Inwardly, however, the man knows that women are less than equal."

Prophetically speaking, we are the Laodicean church. Are you comfortable with the by-our-action-translation we have adopted? Some of us are not.

* Clarke's Commentary, p. 302.
GIVE & TAKE

LET'S PRAY
Would you like to share a prayer? Each Wednesday morning at 8:00 the Adventist Review staff meets to pray for you. Send your requests and join us in prayer. Let’s share in each other’s lives.

QUOTE:
“God never says ‘oops.’”
— Pastor Greg Brothers, Nestucca Seventh-day Adventist Church, Oregon
— Submitted by Beth Robinson

DON’T ROCK THE BOAT!

WE NEED YOU
Send Give & Take submissions to...
Give & Take, Adventist Review, 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904;
Fax: 301-680-6638; E-mail: 74617.15@CompuServe.com. Please include phone number. Submissions will not be returned.

HOW ADRA GETS ITS VIDEO CLIPS: David Brillhart waves to onlookers from his “camera station” on a wooden canoe in the Malaysian state of Sabah in northern Borneo.
It's a chilly day in early spring. Late-afternoon sunlight bathes the steps of Andrews University's James W. Hite Library. Just across the sidewalk a wide assortment of students lounge on blankets, enjoying the scene before them. The object of their attention, a four-person band on the library's steps, has just concluded an active contemporary Christian melody. Enthusiastic applause and a few breathy whistles reward their efforts.

"Come on, guys," urges a redheaded guitarist as he nonchalantly strums a sequence of challenging chords. "Feel free to stretch your legs and move around a little. Get into the music!"

The audience stays seated.

"Really. We don't mind at all . . ."

Still no one moves.

Suddenly a lone woman jogs to the front of the crowd and raises her hands in the air. A few nervy collegians accept the challenge and leap to their feet. Undaunted, the woman positions herself in the front row and begins clapping enthusiastically to the beat of the music.

"That's my mom down there!" the redheaded player calls from the steps. "Isn't she great? Hi, Mom! I love you, Mom!"

The audience cheers their approval.

"Sorry, but she's already married!" The drummer, who looks suspiciously like the guitarist, quips. The majority of the crowd claps along with "Mom," who still grins at her sons from the front row. Satisfied with their growing enthusiasm, he leads the band, Plan C, into their next spirited Christian song. The woman maintains her post at the helm of the crowd, affirming their freedom to respond to the music by her own youthful reaction.

Surprising Six

Isn't she great? I love you, Mom.

The words, spoken by guitarist and rhythm player Nick Zork, echo in my ears as I drive out to the family's home for our first official interview. The Zorks have already surprised me with their freedom; I prepare myself for an equally unpredictable evening.

I am not disappointed.

Greeted first by the family dog, Daisy, I soon meet the redheaded wonder herself, Mrs. Susan Zork. Stephen, her husband, sits at the table with a pile of mail larger than the stack I collect in a week. He offers me an open smile of welcome.

In the kitchen, I meet the rest of the gang. Nick, Plan C's guitarist from the night before, a freshman at Andrews University; Ben, the drummer in the same group and a junior at Andrews Academy in Berrien Springs, Michigan; Tim, a sophomore at Andrews Academy; and Jasmine (known as Jazzy by her friends), a soon-to-be high school
freshman. They’re lined around the table, enjoying a late supper after an incredibly busy day.

I soon learn that “busy” describes nearly every aspect of the Zorks’ hectic lives. Stephen, the director of Choral Activities at Andrews University, and Susan, the coordinator for the AU/Home Study International Distance Education program at Andrews University, acknowledge the rapid pace of their lives. “There are some weekends where we each have obligations at a different church in town. It gets pretty hectic.”

But this family wouldn’t have it any other way. Despite the demands of school and extracurricular activities, they insist that they enjoy their lifestyle. “Life is what you make it, right?” Jazzy asks me simply. I have to agree.

Broad-minded Base

For the Zorks, life has definitely been an adventure.

“I’ve been singing ever since I was 5—and writing music, too,” Susan says. “Almost 100 percent of it is sacred stuff from my own experience.”

Stephen too enjoys singing and creating music. Although he plays piano, banjo, ukulele, guitar, and string bass, his chosen profession deals with choral productions. Stephen has directed the University Singers through
Plan C

Plan C, an unconventional Christian band, became well known around the world through several performances during the NET ’98 evangelistic series uplinked from the Pioneer Memorial church at Andrews University campus. The band consists of four close friends: Ben Zork (drums/vocals), Nick Zork (vocals/guitar/violin/mandolin), Elia King (vocals/guitar), and Glenn Lester (bass guitar). Says Nick of the band’s unique style, “A lot of people who hate Christian rock are educated when they hear our music, because they can actually understand the words!” Plan C began in 1996 as a secular band, but in writing and performing Christian songs for a youth rally, Plan C found their real niche in the Christian music scene.

Although Plan C members play together primarily because they enjoy it, their performances often draw large audiences. They were featured in Oshkosh, Wisconsin, during the “Discover the Power” Pathfinder Camporee this August. And during their “spare” time this summer, they’ll be putting the finishing touches on their second CD. For more information, contact manager Michelle Pahler at chellecp@aol.com.

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Despite their unique talents and preferences, Ben, Nick, Tim, and Jazzy follow their parents’ example of musical broad-mindedness. “I’m studying classical guitar, but I love to do electric guitar,” Nick tells me with a shrug. “I don’t prefer one to the other, it’s just different.” Ben admits that he has the most fun “letting it all out” when he plays with Plan C, but hastens to add that he loves “all kinds of flavors” of music.
On Church Ministry
Nick: “Honestly, I think our church is taking some steps forward in accepting that people are different. . . . Our taste buds are different; why can’t our ears be different? . . . I think we’ve come a long way.”

Susan: “The church is becoming more eclectic in what it will accept, produce, or perform. I think this is very healthy. If we want to have a people ready for Jesus to come, we’re not just going to be kind of people.”

Steve: “People think that if you have a guitar . . . or a set of drums, you’re going to be able to reach the youth. [This] could come across as patronizing. . . . Don’t typecast youth. . . . The youth these days are more inclined to enjoy classical as well as contemporary music. They are intrigued with it, not just because it’s ‘good music,’ but . . . for its quality.”

On New Music
Ben: “People are starting to realize that my attitude when I’m sitting at a drum set or Nick’s attitude when he’s sitting behind a guitar is what makes our playing wrong or right. Any time we can make our attitude pure and praising God, we’re heading toward [happiness].”

Steve: “There seems to be less paranoia that if we investigate the music of other cultures and genres it [will] be pervasive and overtake . . . our interest in classical music or that we’ll throw away the hymnal. . . . Music won’t necessarily turn you away from God.”

On Family Life
Tim: “I don’t always agree with my parents’ decisions, but you just have to trust that they’re doing what they think is right—and 90 percent of the time, it is right! They’re not out to get you, and you have to respect what their ideals are.”

Susan: “We have a tradition that doesn’t sound very holy, but we always pray on our way to school in the car . . . we’re a very verbal family.”

Jazzy: “Usually we start the day and end [it] together. . . . I get a lot of views on my situations that I go through, which is really nice. We’re very open about our own lives.”

On Musical Education
Steve: “We can educate our communities and students to be more discriminating, to have taste, to have values that aren’t governed by guilt or miseducation. ‘Taste’ is quite different than sin or nonsin. God gave us choice. Educate people as to what’s good quality and to be tolerant of other styles that [they] may not like. Just because my taste does not include the kind of music you’re going to perform, that doesn’t make your kind of music a sin.”

Nick: “Good music is good music. I don’t categorize music by style.”

Harmonious Home
The Zorks’ musical views have influenced their family and social experiences as well. “We’ve learned a lot of tolerance,” says Nick of growing up in such a diverse family. “Our parents are very tolerant people.”

Tolerance, it seems, is a necessary ingredient in this family’s success. Because the Zorks are so busy (the family often splits between four and five churches each Sabbath), they’ve learned to deal with change and surprise in a healthy way. It’s not uncommon to plan a family dinner for Sabbath and end up with a houseful of guests. But no one seems to mind.

Stephen and Susan vowed years ago to never put their children in any particular mold. “Each person’s individuality has been held high,” Susan remarks. This leaves the entire family free to enjoy their valuable time together. Other keys to the family’s happiness include the ability to communicate effectively, an appreciation of humor, sharing meals together, great Friday night family traditions, and Susan and Stephen’s daily verbal prayers for each of their children.

Solid Serenity
Of course the Zorks are busy—overwhelmingly so. But something holds them together. Something makes it “cool” for a teenage boy to shout “I love you, Mom!” in the middle of his concert and for Stephen to enjoy giving his own children voice lessons. Something keeps the laughter rolling around the crowded dinner table. Something inspires the respect and tolerance that make this family stand out from the rest.

God has plenty to do with it. Each member of this household cites His significance in his or her life. But combined with that is a sense of security I rarely find in any family these days.

Although I’ve just met this engaging group of people, my soul has been both quieted and challenged by our time together.

As we near the end of our interview, Susan looks at me and speaks a simple truth: “If you find your family interesting, life is good.” As I gaze from face to face, knowing something of the quirky, loving nature behind each pair of eyes, I am confident that the entire family agrees. Through mutual appreciation and trust in God, the Zorks exist as a truly wondrous mix—a testimony to the quality of life that is possible for any Christian family.

Sarah Kelnhofer is finishing her English degree at Andrews University this fall.
Glorifying God With Our Gifts

BY ELLEN G. WHITE

T

HE LORD HAS COMMITTED TALENTS TO men, that they may be better fitted to honor and glorify Him. To some He has entrusted means; to others, special qualifications for service; to others, tact and influence. Some have five talents, others two, and others one. From the highest to the lowliest, each has been entrusted with some gift. These talents are not our own. They belong to God. He has given them to us for conscientious use, and He will one day ask for an account of them.

Many have left the one and the two and the five talents out of their reckoning; but by so doing, they rob God. He expects all to do their best, and He will require the interest in proportion to the amount of entrusted capital. It is our privilege, on the great reckoning day, to bring our talents to the Lord, saying, “Lord, thou deliverest unto me five talents; behold, I have gained beside them five talents more.”

God would have us realize that He has a right to mind, soul, body, and spirit—to all that we possess. We are His by creation and by redemption. As our Creator, He claims our entire service. As our Redeemer, He has a claim of love as well as of right—of love without a parallel. This claim we should realize every moment of our existence.

Before believers and unbelievers we must constantly recognize our dependence upon God. Our bodies, our souls, our lives, are His, not only because they are His free gift, but because He constantly supplies us with His benefits, and gives us strength to use our faculties. By returning to Him, we show that we recognize our dependence upon Him.

Jesus asks us to consecrate ourselves to Him. He has placed signal honor upon the human race; for He says, “As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.” Shall we not, then, give to Christ that which He has died to redeem? If you will do this, He will quicken your conscience, renew your heart, sanctify your affections, purify your thoughts, and set all your powers at work for Him. Every motive and every thought will be brought into captivity to Jesus Christ.

Those who are sons of God will represent Christ in
character. Their works will be perfumed by the infinite tenderness, compassion, love, and purity of the Son of God. And the more completely mind and body are yielded to the Holy Spirit, the greater will be the fragrance of our offering to Him.

If the spirit of self-denial and self-sacrifice imbued the hearts of all who claim to be children of God, every one would represent Jesus to the world. It is because of self-seeking on the part of His professed followers that the gospel of Christ is, to so great a degree, robbed of its power. If our hearts were free from all selfishness, the water of life, flowing from Christ to the world—the gift of righteousness and immortality, brought to light through the gospel—would be imparted to those who are ready to perish. By our unselfish devotion, other souls would be won to Christ.

God has ordained that men and women and children should be educated by His Word to become colaborers with Christ in the great work of dispensing His gifts to the world. But those who do this work must be like Christ. They must bear His image, and live His is pure, unselfish life. By too many the incarnation and work of the Son of God are but dimly comprehended. He was the Majesty of heaven, the King of Glory; “yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.” He pleased not Himself, but cheerfully gave Himself to ransom the world. He went about doing good, and this we must do if we would cooperate with Him. Selfishness, self-pleasing, self-serv ing, can find no place in the life of the true Christian.

The life of Christ is an example of what a Christian can do with the powers given him of God. Do not become discouraged because your gift is not so large as that of someone else. Cheerfully give what you have, and God will bless your efforts. As you press close to the bleeding side of Christ, you will be actuated by His Spirit, and your heart will respond to His call. You will work as He worked, revealing His loving, unselfish spirit. Your faith will be strong, working by love and purifying your soul. Strengthened by power from above, you will be enabled to meet the Lord’s requirements, applying yourself resolutely to irksome tasks and self-sacrificing deeds for the Master’s sake.

This article is excerpted from a longer piece originally appearing in the November 24, 1896, edition of the Advent Review and Sabbath Herald (now the Adventist Review). Seventh-day Adventists believe that Ellen G. White exercised the biblical gift of prophecy during more than 70 years of public ministry.
My Battle With Chronic Fatigue

I knew something was wrong, but I didn’t know what. I had to get back on track, but I didn’t know how.

BY JOYCE L. KEELER

Five years ago, if anyone had told me that I would spend nearly six months in bed, I wouldn’t have believed them. If someone had told me that I wouldn’t be able to cook, bake, entertain, drive, or shop, I would have told them that they were talking about somebody else.

Those who knew me as a child considered me to have endless energy, but in 1994 my body was on a journey of its own, a journey that taught me more about myself than I could ever have imagined.

Life in the Fast Lane

Prior to 1994 I experienced events that caused stress in my life. My father died, and I was laid off from my job in California. This prompted me to move back “home.” I accepted the position as an administrative assistant in a Maryland hospital. My first day on the job I learned the hospital had been reorganized while I was packing in California. I now had two bosses. The additional work meant 10- to 14-hour workdays, and working weekends, with no overtime compensation.

I had always been fairly healthy, but I soon found myself regularly succumbing to flu-like symptoms: sore throats, severe headaches, and colds. My doctor told me later that high stress and long hours of work had broken my body.

In 1995 I decided to make a career change. I accepted an administrative position at a major hotel chain. I had to delay my starting date in March 1995 because I was recovering from a respiratory infection and the flu.

Soon after starting my new job, I felt my energy drastically decrease. I kept thinking, I’ll snap back—I just need time. However, I soon found myself taking naps after minor activities, such as making the bed or taking a shower.

By the end of June I was literally dragging. My 5- to 10-minute naps had increased to 15-20-minutes or more. I was coming directly home from work to go to sleep. I would spend weekends in bed. My headaches were getting worse; I often felt lightheaded and wasn’t able to concentrate on my work.

One day my mother encouraged me to go for a complete physical examination. By then I could barely function.

What’s Wrong With Me?

In July I had $700 worth of lab work done. On that visit my doctor told me that I might need to take a three-month leave of absence. Laughing, I told him about my new job and that I couldn’t afford to take a leave of absence. But I soon realized that I was ready to do anything to get well; that I couldn’t “afford” not to listen to my doctor. The lab work came back with no indication that anything was wrong. I cried, hoping for some answers. A few days later the Epstein-Barr virus test came back with a high positive result. Finally we had the cause for my symptoms: chronic fatigue syndrome (CFS).

CFS is a controversial diagnosis among medical practitioners. Most doctors don’t know what to do for patients with CFS. Although studies are still being conducted, there is seemingly no cause or cure for CFS. Doctors can only treat the symptoms, order bed rest, and hope for the best.

At the time I was diagnosed, I wasn’t able to make sense of my symptoms or to help those around me understand. Those who didn’t spend much time around me doubted that
I was sick. The company I worked for didn’t support my request for a three-month leave of absence. However, my boss did. The first three weeks I slept an average of 20-22 hours a day, and still I was exhausted. I suffered from night sweats, severe headaches, sore throats, muscle spasms, and fevers. The second day of my “bed rest” I awoke to discover that I could barely move. My exhaustion was so severe that I couldn’t lift my legs to get out of bed. I lay there and cried.

I vaguely remembered the doctor telling me to push fluids. The Gatorade in my kitchen was the incentive I needed. I threw my legs over the side of the bed, and they hit with a thud. Not being able to lift myself from the bed, I fell to the floor, uncontrollable sobs racking my body. O God, I prayed, no one should have to live like this. What have I done to deserve this? I’m not sure how long it took me, but I crawled, then rested, then crawled a bit more, until I reached the kitchen. I had always been a positive person, but now I saw only obstacles before me. The simplest things that I had taken for granted were now major accomplishments.

The inability to walk lasted only a few days, but it seemed like an eternity. Slowly my body gained spurts of energy, which I would quickly use up with simple tasks such as fixing something to eat. My aunt gave me a walker, which helped steady my weak gait at home.

Take It Seriously
BY ALLAN HANDYSIDES, M.D.

Everyone gets tired at times, but usually the condition is not persistent enough to consult a physician. Yet it is estimated that more than 7 million people visit the doctor each year, complaining of fatigue. Fatigue may come in the forms of abnormal exhaustion after usual activities and decreased ability to sustain effort or attention. Fatigue that lasts more than a month is referred to as “chronic.” It is estimated that 20 to 45 percent of patients complaining of fatigue have an organic cause and that 40 to 45 percent have a primary psychiatric diagnosis. The remaining patients meet the Centers for Disease Control’s (CDC) definition of chronic fatigue syndrome (CFS).

Organic Causes. There are many diseases that cause fatigue, including tuberculosis, Lyme disease, and histoplasmosis. Certain malignancies may also produce fatigue accompanied by the presence of a palpable mass, weight loss, and pain. Various types of epilepsy, chronic liver disease, and sleep disorders may also cause fatigue. Drug use—both over-the-counter and prescribed—may have fatigue as a side effect. Because of these considerations, anyone with fatigue as a chronic problem needs a thorough checkup.

Psychiatric Problems. Depressive illnesses and anxiety disorders as well as somatoform disorders may cause fatigue. These disorders may be brought on by stressful lifestyle changes such as marital discord, job stress, a newborn baby, etc.

There still remains a sizable group of individuals for whom no easy explanation for their fatigue exists. The CDC suggests three main theories surrounding the cause of CFS: Postinfectious. Up to 95 percent of CFS patients suffer from viral colds and Epstein-Barr virus infections.

Psychiatric. A direct link has not been established, but an increased prevalence of psychiatric illness is associated with some chronic fatigue sufferers.

Immunologic. Although some have identified immunological disturbances in CFS sufferers, no consistent pattern has emerged, and there is nothing to suggest a specific linkage.

Treatment is at best empirical, although exercise has been recommended to keep one from becoming too weak. Drug therapy has been used for the relief of sleep disorders and muscular pain.

One of the best things about CFS is that symptoms often improve with the passage of time.
In public I was oblivious to the stares of people. I wasn't aware of how badly I was walking until someone mentioned something several months later. To me, it was a major accomplishment just to be on my feet. My mother bought me a cane. Although this greatly helped to alleviate pain in my hips, steady my gait, and preserve my energy, I had to struggle with the psychological battle of having to use a cane at my "young" age. People's thoughtless comments didn't help. I was getting a large dose of frustration and a lesson on how to deal with it. My progress was slow. My faith was weakening. Why would God allow me to suffer like this?

After a month of struggles, I became more aware of what was happening. That was when the frustration grew. As I lay in bed one night I cried to God to take the pain away. I felt that I was a burden on my mother and aunt, who were doing much of my shopping and housework. I retained hardly a trace of independence.

A few months after I was diagnosed with CFS, my doctor diagnosed me with fibromyalgia syndrome (FMS), a disease that shares similar symptoms with CFS. Fibromyalgia left me feeling as if a truck had run over me. I felt bruised even when toweling off after a shower.

Learning to Lean

My mother persuaded me to allow an announcement to be made at church. Although I valued my privacy, I knew that I needed the power of prayer. The outpouring of support was tremendous. The announcement included a request not to call, because I needed rest. However, many messages were passed on through my mom and aunt. Church members, friends, even children I had taught in Sabbath school wrote, wishing me well. The "thinking of you" and "get well" cards comforted me; and the notes of encouragement helped me get through the frustrating times. I still read them.

As I tried without success to fall asleep one night, I thought about life and realized that the devil was working to break me. I cried at the thought that a few times he may have been close. I spoke to God...
very openly that night, telling Him that I would depend on Him for the strength I needed to survive.

I recalled stories from Sabbath school that I heard when I was a child—how people in prison would sing songs and recite Scripture passages. I felt as if I were in prison, so I softly started humming songs, not quite remembering the words or the tunes. I had memorized so many scriptures as a child, but when I really needed them I couldn’t remember any. The turning point was when I remembered the first one.

Jesus said, “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Matt. 11:28). Then I remembered that He asked us to cast our burdens upon Him (Ps. 55:22). That night I gained new determination to overcome the obstacles before me.

Although I have had many frustrations with CFS, including a recurring case of shingles, I have learned from them. Instead of seeing my experiences as punishment, I learned to look at them as lessons. I realized there is a time for everything. The long work hours with little or no break for my physical and mental well-being had taken their toll. I had ignored the warnings my body had tried to send me. The Lord used this disease to slow me down. The doctor told me how “fortunate” I was to be “young” when diagnosed with CFS, since the recovery is often more difficult for an older person.

I wish I had been able to keep a diary of those days when I was confined to bed. Memories of that period make me appreciate each day more. I don’t take life for granted anymore.

There are still frustrating days when my muscles ache and it is a challenge to walk or read. Some people still don’t understand my illness. There are some things I don’t understand myself.

Life Lessons

People often ask, “What have you learned from CFS?” I tell them my doctor’s advice: “Take time for yourself. When you begin to feel the stress in your life, take some time off work to relax.”

Looking back over the past four years, I can see God’s guidance in my life. Today it’s difficult for me to believe and comprehend how bad my condition was four years ago. I still face many challenges, but I thank God for the ability to work full-time and for the progress I’ve made.

The biggest lesson I have learned from my illness is to depend on our heavenly Father for the strength to get us through the rough times in life. Because with God, all things, even difficult ones, are truly possible.

Joyce L. Keeler is administrative secretary at the Retirement Office of the North American Division. She lives in Burtonsville, Maryland.
The Seed That Sprouted After 50 Years

BY YEHUDIT CARMELI, A MEMBER OF THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CONGREGATION IN HAIFA, ISRAEL

It all began in 1936 in Budapest, Hungary, when my father, Eno Vamoshi, met Mihnai Laslo, a Seventh-day Adventist pastor who lived and worked in Hungary's capital, just as we did. My father began to attend the Adventist church services, and soon, convinced that he had found the truth, became a Seventh-day Adventist Christian.

It was in Budapest that I too first became acquainted with the good news of the gospel—through the same pastor. My father was 44 and I was 17. My mother and my sister, although they came with my father and me to the church, never accepted the belief that Jesus is the Messiah.

As the Germans and the Fascist Hungarian authorities controlled the country during World War II, we found ourselves in a battle for survival—we were Jews. In 1944 our plight became very serious; our people were being exterminated. What were we to do?

The Adventist church to which my father belonged began to hide several Jews in the church building. It didn't matter whether the Jews were of the Jewish or Christian faith. All those hidden in the Adventist church were saved. However, the building could take only so many. Pastor Laslo and his family came to us and suggested we try to hide another way.

Since the documents used in those days had no pictures, it was easy to use someone else's papers. So the Laslo family made copies for themselves and gave us their originals for my father, mother, and even for us girls. If they were caught, their lives would be no more valuable than those of Jews.

The pastor then sent us away from Budapest to a village called Vats. We stayed at the home of another Adventist family on a hill at the periphery of the village. Soon after we arrived another Jewish family (not Adventist) joined us in that small house, consisting of only a room and a kitchen. We managed in that way until the end of the war.

Bible Games

Each evening we played Bible cards. I will never forget one particular evening when I pulled out a card containing Psalm 124:7-8. It read: "Our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowlers: the snare is broken and we are escaped. Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth." When I read these verses, I knew that we would survive.

Five years after the war, in 1950, I immigrated to Israel, alone. At this time my name was changed from Iuliana to Yehudit, and by marriage from Vamoshi to Carmeli. My father died in 1953 in Hungary, and I ceased to practice what I once knew about Jesus. I never stopped believing in Him, but I did not observe any of the teachings, not even the Sabbath. Three years later my mother moved to Israel and lived with me in Haifa almost until the day she died in 1987.

Back to Budapest

In 1995 I went back to visit Budapest and met some of those who had put their lives in danger in order to save mine. Through them I found out that there was a Seventh-day Adventist church in Israel too. In fact, there was one in Haifa, where I was living. A few years later I contacted the church in Israel, and Pastor Otinel C. Iancu officiated at my baptism. After 50 years the seed that my Lord planted in my heart sprouted and brought fruit.

You see, although Jewish by birth, we never practiced any form of religion before my father met Jesus. I had to meet Christ in order to keep the Sabbath. Today, more than ever, I feel and know that I was, I am, and I shall ever remain a Hebrew, the seed of Abraham, through Christ.

Those who may read my story should take courage. Keep planting seeds of the gospel through words and deeds. God will make that seed sprout and grow one day.
A tent revival in late spring. The image brings to mind the “sawdust trail” of yesteryear, a communal spot where an agrarian society listened to the spirited messages of itinerant preachers.

But it was beneath these canvas cathedrals that souls were won and given in service to God’s church. This turn-of-the-century phenomenon recently got an end-of-the-century twist at Andrews University in Berrien Springs, Michigan. From May 16 to May 22 university students conducted peer-to-peer evangelism on the infield of the campus track. The first campus tent revival in seven years, its objective was to point students toward their need for Christ—particularly before the annual student diaspora that the end of a school year brings.

“We believe that God wanted us to end the year this way,” said Tricia Wynn, a sophomore English major from Markham, Ontario. “Before we all went our separate ways, we wanted to bring everyone together.”

The revival sponsorship showed that talk of unity was more than just an ideal. Members from the campus’s two leading religious bodies, Bringing Andrews to Christ (BRANCH) and the Black Student Christian Forum (BSCF), worked overtime—on top of mountainous end-of-the-year academic obligations—to ensure that the outreach was not only cross-focused but also cross-cultural. “We were amazed at how many miracles made the event possible,” Wynn said.

Revival speakers were BRANCH president Matthew Gamble, a senior theology major from St. Augustine, Florida, and Wesley Knight, a master of divinity student from Toronto, Ontario. Tent revival traditionalists looking for fiery rhetoric and portrayals of apocalyptic prophecies didn’t find it here. Instead, both Gamble and Knight focused on Christ and His relevance to today’s college students. Other students gave testimonies about a God who carried them through the social, academic, and financial struggles that mark the journey at a private Adventist college.

A living Saviour was the focus in “Mystery Unveiled.” But unveiled at the same time was the abiding interest that college students have in Christianity’s central figure. Opening night numbers of 200 climbed throughout the week, and the revival culminated with a Sabbath morning altar call given by Gamble. Beneath a cloudless Michigan sky, more than 50 lives were rededicated to greater commitment and service.

“There’s a tendency to think that Adventist college students are too bored, too jaded, or just too busy with school to make it out for something like a tent revival,” Gamble said. “But we saw that there is still an abiding hunger for Christ’s friendship.”

The tent that brought community has long since come down. The grassy plot transformed into sacred space has returned to sunbaked turf. And the Andrews school year that started with a globally focused NET ‘98 bang ended with a community-focused revival. Thinking globally. Acting locally. Praying unceasingly to a God who cares. That’s the Christian walk for Andrews students. That’s the mystery unveiled.
The Supreme Court of Sri Lanka is reportedly ready to consider the case of Anthony Alexander, the Adventist minister and educator held by the government since March 1998 on suspicion of terrorist activity.

Alexander's attorney petitioned the court on June 3, requesting that the government file formal charges and schedule a trial or, otherwise, order Alexander's release. At the time of his arrest in March 1998 Alexander was principal of the Adventist International School in Vavuniya, in northern Sri Lanka.

"Nothing much took place at the first hearing," reports Wijetunge D. Anthony, president of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Sri Lanka. "The court postponed the case to September 22. We anticipate that it will be heard and the court will make a ruling."

It is reported that after his arrest Alexander was subjected to severe beatings to force a confession. His wife, Saratha, tells friends he is now "all right physically."

Church president Anthony says Alexander is giving Bible studies to about 50 inmates in the prison where he is held. "We are supplying him with literature and Bible lessons," he reports.

Sri Lanka Case Heads to Supreme Court

Earlier this year the General Conference Department of Public Affairs and Religious Liberty initiated an international letter-writing campaign in support of Pastor Alexander.

During a visit to Southern Asia in May Richard Lee Fenn, deputy secretary general of the International Religious Liberty Association, received reports that Alexander, an ethnic Tamil, was tortured and apparently forced to sign a document written in Sinhalese, the language of Sri Lanka's majority—a language Alexander understands but does not read. Authorities then announced that Alexander had "confessed."

A lexander's attorney, T. Gowry Shangary, told Fenn that antiterrorism law allows the government to hold an individual up to 18 months on mere suspicion alone.

According to local sources, the pastor/educator's troubles grew out of a suggestion to the government that Anthony Alexander might be allied with the Tamil Tigers, a group of revolutionaries based in the northern sector of the island nation. For years the Tiger groups have been fighting for an autonomous homeland. They have been known to intimidate fellow Tamils who refuse to oppose the national government controlled by the Sinhalese.—Adventist News Network.

Making Headlines

BY VOLKER HENNING, A PROFESSOR OF JOURNALISM AND COMMUNICATION AT SOUTHERN ADVENTIST UNIVERSITY IN COLLEGDALE, TENNESSEE.

It was a front-page story in newspapers throughout North America and in many countries around the world. Once again tragedy had struck a prominent family. With the death of John F. Kennedy, Jr., a nation turned its eyes to one small piece of geography and focused on one family.

The intense gaze lasted for days. In many respects the focus on this event was not unlike the attention paid to Princess Diana's death a couple years ago. Some people are so prominent that events in their lives attract a veritable media circus.

Yet planes crash almost every day. People lose their lives in tragic accidents literally all the time, and almost no one pays heed. Most of us come and go without much fanfare, seemingly unnoticed by the world around us.

Such anonymity may suit most just fine, but this also points to an imbalance between the seeming importance of some and the obscurity of others. While one has fame and fortune, another seems doomed to a life of obscurity and quiet desperation.

But in reality it is not so. God notices even the sparrow that falls to the ground (Matt. 10:29), and all heaven rejoices when even one sinner comes to repentance (Luke 15:7).

Accordingly, there's as much attention paid to the events in the life of each member of God's family as we on earth pay to those judged by society to be celebrities. What happens to me is front-page news in the New Jerusalem Times in heaven. I may not be much on this earth, but my life is important to the inhabitants there.
Religion in the News

Report: Many View Long-Term Marriage as Fairy Tale

Though most young people still cherish the idea of a big wedding and a happily-ever-after marriage, many now feel it may be only a fairy tale, according to a Rutgers University report on marriage released July 8.

Fewer Americans are marrying, those who do get married are not as happy, and nearly half of married Americans decide to call it quits, concluded the report, entitled “The State of Our Unions: The Social Health of Marriage in America,” by the National Marriage Project at Rutgers.

The project, headed by David Popenoe, a Rutgers sociologist, and Barbara Dafoe Whitehead, a family scholar, is dedicated to preserving and promoting one of the world’s oldest institutions. The report reviewed marriage statistics from the past 40 years.

While studies show that married people are healthier and happier, marriage no longer serves as a rite of passage from adolescence to adulthood. This is because the gap has widened between the time young people become sexually active and when they get married. — Religion News Service.

Historical Note

54 Years Ago . . . World War II Ends

The Review welcomed the end of World War II with three back-page articles focused on the end of hostilities and rebuilding efforts.

Editor Francis D. Nichol aptly described the relief felt around the world as “the peace of prostration, the calm of utter collapse.” Adventist mission work and evangelism around the world had been severely disrupted by the war, many members had been killed or displaced, and many of the church’s institutions had been confiscated or destroyed.

Nichol found in the rubble of war an enhanced opportunity for Adventists to share their prophetic message. “No one now makes light of our preaching on world calamities, as they once did,” he wrote in the August 30, 1945, issue. “High-explosive bombs have silenced all scoffing.”

“This is our day,” Nichol concluded, urging church members to renew their commitment to mission in the postwar world.

Adventist Chaplain Ministers to Kennedy Family

A Seventh-day Adventist chaplain, Rear Admiral Barry Black, represented the Navy at the burial at sea of John F. Kennedy, Jr.; his wife, Carolyn Bessette Kennedy; and her sister, Lauren Bessette.

Black, the deputy chief of Navy chaplains, participated in a committal service along with three Catholic Navy chaplains and a civilian priest. Black says that this is the most significant funeral he has attended. Black was in charge of coordinating the logistics and ensuring that the Kennedy and Bessette family needs were met. During the travel time chaplains took the opportunity to console the family and talk about the power of God’s Word.

“I felt I received more than I could give. It was a blessing to see the dignity with which this family was able to deal with the tragedy and how faith was able to provide an anchor for them,” says Black.

Newbold College to Host International Conference on Religious Minorities

As governments around the world wrestle with how to protect the rights of religious minorities, a major international conference at Newbold College September 8-10 will focus on the forces that have shaped governmental policies and practice in Western Europe.

“From Persecution to Pluralism: Religious Minorities and the Enforcement of Conformity in Europe Since the Reformation” will draw scholars from Africa, North America, India, Australasia, Western Europe, and Great Britain to the Adventist college 30 miles west of London to focus on lessons learned from the experiences of small faith communities in Europe during the past 500 years. Scholars will present lectures and seminars at the three-day conference.

On Friday and Sabbath, September 10, 11, a special celebration commemorating the 125th anniversary of J. N. Andrews’ departure for Britain and Europe as the church’s first official missionary will conclude the conference. Church leaders from the British Union, the Trans-European Division, and the General Conference will participate in the celebration and in an afternoon seminar that will examine what lessons the Seventh-day Adventist Church should learn from the experiences of other European Christian minorities.

Persons seeking information may contact David Trim, lecturer in history, Department of Humanities, Newbold College, Bracknell, Berkshire, England; by phone at (from the U.S.) 011-441-344-454-607 or your country’s code for the U.K. plus (01344) 454607, ext. 231; or by e-mail at dtrim@newbold.ac.uk.
dealism clings to me as persistently as the scent of a beloved perfume clings to its devoted wearer; we both feel naked without them. Though I was already 28 years old when I quavered “I do,” it would have been hard to find a more idealistic young bride who did. A whopping 34 at the birth of our first child, I was the last to know that “naive” was stamped in bold relief across my unsuspecting face. (Our domineering new daughter had no trouble spotting it.)

The idealism remains, but the naïveté has been tempered by repeated run-ins with the gritty realities of day-to-day family life—all of which has yielded an assortment of whimsical and (I hope) wise observations and suggestions about the basics.

Courtesy is the gentle lubricant of family life. Laughter is its saving grace; affection its lifeblood. Expect great things when they’re present.

Pray together daily—many times a day. Identify with and pray for each other’s sins, faults, and weaknesses. Practice corporate repentance, and you will become corporately invincible.

Listen.

Cuddling together on the couch and reading Little House on the Prairie is 10 times more fun than watching 99 percent of what’s on TV.

Be a hotbed of cultural revolution. If “they” say you can’t live on a single income, can’t survive without credit cards, and will permanently stunt your children’s social development if you deny them quantity time with their peers, don’t believe “them.” Let the Word and the Holy Spirit be your guides, and make your own way in life.

Ingredients of a happy family, according to 5-year-old Jenny: Jesus; Sabbath school and church; lizards and horny toads; sand, when the car runs; worship time, pies without sugar; birthdays, camp meeting; Barbies, Grandma and Grandpa, having babies (whose, we’re not sure; we have no plans).

Tickling is good for the soul.

Unless the house is on fire, a rattlesnake is on the back porch, or the driveshaft fell out of the car at milepost 63, smile when Daddy comes home from work. It means a lot to him.

Husbands, never underestimate a woman’s need for personal intimacy, love, and affection. If you do, it may be at the expense of her confidence and respect.

Wives, never underestimate your husband’s need for physical intimacy, support, and companionship. If you do, it may be at the expense of the affection you so deeply desire.

When you think you’ve listened long enough, listen some more.

Though it’s fallen into some disrepute of late, the old adage “Children should be seen and not heard” has a lot going for it. A family cat and at least one family dog are vital to a family’s mental health.

Hormones are not a figment of anyone’s imagination; treat each other’s with respect.

Elements of a happy family, according to 7-year-old Becky: Jesus; love; cheerfulness, not crankiness; watching Myrtle (the turtle) eat; Christmas; Bo (the Australian shepherd); Ben (the mutt); and Sam (the pampered cat); joy; flowers; the Bible; a clean house for Mom.

Even if it means doing without, always show hospitality.

If your words are “right” but your spirit is not, repent quickly and seek forgiveness. If your words and your spirit are right but are misunderstood or unappreciated, give the Holy Spirit time to work—and stand your ground. A false peace is a hollow peace.

Home is the best place in the world for making babies, birthing babies, educating children, feeding and entertaining family and friends, and, I suspect, the best place to die.

When you think you’ve heard it all and can’t bear to hear one more ridiculous, infuriating word, calm down and listen some more.

Never give up on each other. No matter how strained the relationship, how desperate the straits, how hopeless the outlook, we can rejoice that our omnipotent Saviour “is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them” (Heb. 7:25, NIV).

Leslie Kay, her husband, and their children enjoy family life in Chloride, Arizona.
You silly little chick. You should stay closer to your family.”

Five-year-old Cam softly chided the baby chicken as Cam squatted in the sweet timothy grass watching the new bantam chicks. One in particular would wander far from the rest of the family. Daddy Banty strutted about acting proud of his nine new babies, and the mother hen kept a watchful eye on her little ones.

The summer sun shone warmly on Cam. A meadowlark burst into flute-like double notes from a split-pole fence post nearby. Down near the pond he could hear Cheer, the red-winged blackbird, proudly singing his name—“Chee-er! Chee-er!” Ordinarily Cam would have loved to go looking for Cheer. But not today! These perky little newcomers took all his attention.

Seeing the family tabby cat, Mr. T, creeping through the tall grass toward the chicks, Cam clapped his hands to send the cat away. Mr. T would just love a mouthful of little baby chicks, he thought to himself.

The bantam rooster and hen noticed the cat at the same time, and the mother hen clucked. The yellow chicks hurried under her wings.

Cam laughed out loud because the chicks looked so funny puffing out from under mother hen’s wings. By then Mr. T pretended he wasn’t even interested in a meal, and moved off in another direction.

Just then Mother called Cam to lunch, and he started toward the house. Suddenly he heard frantic clucking from Mother Banty. He turned just in time to see a large red-tailed hawk swoop down toward the chickens. Before Cam could move, Mother Banty rose screeching, with feet spread, to meet the enemy. Although she was only one quarter the hawk’s size, and its cruel talons could easily crush her life from her, she didn’t think of her safety. She wanted to save the baby chick that had wandered away again.

The hawk was clearly surprised by the fearless mother and veered to the side, then rose with slowly flapping wings and sailed away. The bantams squawked for a long time as they gathered the little ones.

When Cam told his mother what he had seen, she said that the mother hen reminded her of Jesus. He was willing to be hurt and even die for all His children—even those who sometimes wander away.

Family Time

On Tuesday (or whatever day you like), invite your family to worship God together.

✍ Take your Bibles and at least one piece of paper. If there are more than three at your worship, form two groups. Using a Bible concordance, find the word “hen.” Draw a shared picture with the others in your group, illustrating one of those verses. Each person should draw at least one object. Color the picture and write the verse neatly underneath. Sign your names and decide whom you will give it to on Sabbath.

✍ Choose someone to play the part of the mother hen. Put a blanket over that person’s shoulders, and have them sit on a cushion on the floor. Have the person acting the part of the mother hen read the first verse of the song “Under His Wings” (The SDA Hymnal, No. 529). When they read the chorus, they can put out their arms, and the family will all get under their “wings.” Now sing the last verse together. (Something else good to sing together is “When a mommy [or daddy] calls, ‘cluck, cluck,’ who comes running?”)

✍ While still under the “wings,” ask each person to offer a sentence prayer thanking Jesus for taking care of each one in the family.
Grappling With Mystery

Current observations in astronomy are forcing some scientists to think the unthinkable.

BY MICKEY KUTZNER

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Gen. 1:1, NIV).

These first few words of inspiration make a strong declaration that the universe was fashioned by an intelligent designer. As we observe the beauty and complexity of the world around us, the evidences for a designer seem compelling to many of us. The intricacy of even the most simple life forms, the depth of human relationships, our appreciation for art and music, and the "just right" conditions for the earth to support life all argue for the existence of a Creator-God.

When we look into the night sky, either with the naked eye or with powerful telescopes, it is natural to wonder what evidence there might be in the rest of the cosmos for God's creative hand. The psalmist has written that "the heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands" (Ps. 19:1, NIV). So where is the evidence that God created this vast collection of galaxies we call the universe?

Over the past few decades astronomers have been noting many "coincidences" in the cosmic picture supporting the view that the universe must have been designed in order for life to be present. The notion that the universe must have properties consistent with conscious life forms existing within it is referred to by cosmologists as the anthropic principle.

An intriguing aspect of the big bang model is that the existence of life in the universe depends critically on a very delicate "fine-tuning" of many of the properties of the universe in the early stages of the cosmic expansion. All of these properties are found "coincidentally" to have values that make it possible for astronomers to exist and make observations. Let's take an example and play "what if" games, in which we ask what would happen if we were God at the creation of the universe and tweaked one of these parameters to see what the outcome might be.

What Would Happen If . . .

Imagine increasing the gravitational force. If you were throwing a ball upward, a stronger gravitational force would pull it to earth much more rapidly and it would not rise as high. For the expanding universe, a stronger force of gravity would cause the expansion to come to a halt and collapse on itself relatively quickly. A less, an enhanced gravitational force would cause stars such as the sun to burn out in short order.

What if the gravitational force were significantly reduced in strength? Then the universe would expand relatively fast and, like the ball thrown from the surface of the earth, the
various parts would spread out so rapidly that stars and planets would never form. Also, the formation of atomic nuclei from protons and neutrons in the first few minutes of the early universe depends critically on the density of these particles. A rapid expansion rate would effectively cut off the formation of nuclei by making the density too low. Thus the strength of the gravitational force must lie within a narrow window of values in order for us to exist.

If any other of the forces of physics were changed significantly, the effects would also disallow our existence. If the electromagnetic force were much stronger, the positively charged protons within nuclei would repel each other so strongly that nuclei would be unstable and again only hydrogen would exist. A weaker electromagnetic force would be insufficient to allow chemical bonding to take place. The complex organic molecules necessary for life could not stick together in such a universe. We would have to say goodbye to chemistry as we know it (and to chemists as well).

The list of “what if” scenarios for the universe that would extinguish the possibility for life goes on and on, and includes small adjustments in the masses of electrons and neutrons compared with the mass of protons, the imbalance of matter versus antimatter in the early universe, and more. Hugh Ross has compiled a growing list of 26 characteristics of the universe that are critically adjusted to make living beings possible. Slightly tinkering with any one of them makes life impossible. The probability for each of these characteristics falling within the bounds that allow the existence of life is small, but these small probabilities must be multiplied together to determine the probability that all lie within appropriate bounds, yielding an incredibly small probability for such a situation to arise by pure chance.

Of course, this does not constitute absolute proof of God’s existence in the sense that mathematicians view proof. Still, it gives one pause for thought. Had the incredibly improbable not happened, we would not be here to ask these big questions. The famous British astronomer Fred Hoyle, who is not a theist, was instrumental in uncovering one of these critical characteristics of the universe with small probability of chance occurrence and wrote that “a superintellect has monkeyed with physics, as well as with chemistry and biology.”

What’s Been the Response?
There appears to be at least three philosophical responses to the “coincidences” sketched out above.

One response, favored by many scientists, is to subscribe to the so-called “weak” anthropic principle, which suggests that we just happen to find ourselves in a universe where by chance all the forces of nature have just the appropriate strengths to produce life. According to the weak anthropic principle, chances were far against this happening, but fortuitously it did. To make the chances greater, proponents of the weak anthropic principle frequently suggest the possibility of multiple universes, of which our universe is one of very few in which all the parameters are just right.

A second response by some scientists is to believe that our understanding of physics will continue to advance until at some point in the future a “theory of everything” will be developed. This theory of everything, once developed, would explain why the four fundamental forces have the strengths we find them to have and why these other “coincidences” exist. A worthy goal of physics, to be sure. But it will not answer the ultimate question as to why the universe was set up in the first place, to obey a theory of everything that allows life to exist.

The third response, based on the “strong” anthropic principle, states that the only feasible universe permitted by the laws of nature is one that allows the possibility of life residing in it.

WOW! Distant galaxies as imaged by the Hubble Space Telescope (HST). Approximately 1500 galaxies can be seen in this image. Multiplying this view over the entire sky gives the total number of galaxies within view of the HST as approximately 10 billion!
A ccording to this principle, the universe has been fine-tuned to satisfy some demand for life to be included. Within this framework it becomes possible to believe that a Creator-God was involved in planning an environment suitable for us. Ellen White revealed who the design engineers of our universe were. “Every manifestation of creative power is an expression of infinite love,” she said. “The Sovereign of the universe was not alone in His work of beneficence [creation]. He had an associate—a co-worker who could appreciate His purposes, and could share His joy in giving happiness to created beings. . . . The Father wrought by His Son in the creation of all heavenly beings.”

This beautiful picture makes a vital link between Creator and Redeemer. The same hand that created us also accepted the nails that impaled them to the cross in order to save us.

Of course, the final answer to the questions raised by the anthropic principle lie outside the realm of science. We have only one universe at our disposal, and so the usual rounds of testing and experimentation required by the methods of science are not possible in this case. Universes that do not satisfy the anthropic principle can never be observed.

Where Do Scientists Come Out?
The response of the scientific community to this data has been varied. Noted cosmologist Stephen Hawking, Lucasian professor of mathematics at the University of Cambridge, has devoted a great deal of time to considering naturalistic mechanisms that might have caused the big bang. He dismisses the anthropic principle, using surprising reasoning: “The human race is so insignificant, I find it difficult to believe the whole universe is a necessary precondition for our existence. Clearly the solar system is necessary, and maybe our galaxy, but not a hundred billion other galaxies.”

Of course the Seventh-day Adventist worldview holds that there are unfallen worlds scattered throughout the universe. In this sense the creation of billions of other galaxies is not seen as “wasted” effort.

Other astronomers are more accommodating to religious viewpoint. George Smoot, leader of the team that used the COBE satellite to first detect the cosmic “seeds” of the early universe, referred to the irregularities in the sky as the “fingerprints of God.” Robert Jastrow, founder of NASA’s Goddard Institute and director of the Mount Wilson Institute, notes that “the essential element in the astronomical and biblical accounts of Genesis is the same; the chain of events leading to man commenced suddenly and sharply, at a definite moment in time, in a flash of light and energy.”

Jastrow used some very colorful imagery when he described how distressing the implications of fine-tuning the universe’s beginning can be to a trained scientist: “For the scientist who has lived by his faith in the power of reason, the story ends like a bad dream. He has scaled the mountains of ignorance; he is about to conquer the highest peak; as he pulls himself over the final rock, he is greeted by a band of theologians who have been sitting there for centuries.”

A few have even found enough evidence in the data to move from a position of unbelief to a position of theism. Allan Sandage, one of the world’s leading observational cosmologists, was reported to have recently told a gathering of cosmologists that contemplating the majesty of the big bang helped make him a believer in God, willing to accept that Creation could be explained only as a “miracle.”

Recent decades have brought about a definite shift in the thinking of the scientific community from dismissing the notion of God as Creator to at least entertaining the concept of design. Even for agnostics and atheists there is a sense of mystery as to why the fundamental forces are so interconnected.

In view of the careful planning required to assemble a universe that harbors life, our prayers of thanksgiving for each day of life take on new significance. It seems that the more we learn about the universe, the easier it becomes to believe in God as designer. The more we contemplate Creation, the more awesome and limitlessly powerful our God is revealed to be.


2 For this illustration I am indebted to the article of Jo Trefil, “Was the Universe Designed for Life?” Astronomy, June 1997, p. 54.


6 Ellen G. White, Patriarchs and Prophets, pp. 33, 34.


9 Ibid., p. 116.


Mickey Kutzner is professor of physics at Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan.
Walking with my wife and offspring in San Francisco, I eyed a storefront sign that locked my knees stiff.

“City Lights Bookstore!” I howled.

Having grown up in the sixties and seventies, filled with a mad desire to write fiction, burning with an obsessive love for poetry, and ignited by a feverous wanderlust that took me around the world by the tender age of 20, I felt like a medieval crusader in Jerusalem who thought he’d just found the spear that lanced Christ’s side.

Opened in the early 1950s, City Lights became the center of the beat generation (from which the word “beatnik” was begotten), often considered the forerunner to the hippie movement. Jack Kerouac, Allen Ginsberg, Neal Cassady, and William S. Burroughs, these were the avatars of beat, a fractious explosion of hedonistic defiance against a world that seemed devoid of meaning to men who longed to find some, even if, in the end, they looked for it in all the wrong places.

The uncontested Bible of the beats was Jack Kerouac’s On the Road (1957). Recounting the years when he, Kerouac, took a series of cross-country trips, On the Road is a spasm of frenzied secular spirituality in which these characters, however awed at life, struggle to make sense of it.

“I had traveled eight thousand miles around the American continent,” wrote Kerouac, “and I was back in Times Square and right in the middle of rush hour, too, seeing with my innocent road eyes the absolute madness and fantastic hoohair of New York with millions and millions hustling forever for a buck among themselves, the mad dream—grabbing, taking, giving, sighing, dying, just so they could be buried in those awful cemetery cities beyond Long Island City.”

It was atheist apologist Anthony Flew who argued that even if there was no meaning to life, there was meaning in it. Though human existence was, as a whole, purposeless, one could derive purpose out of each moment itself, even if nothing existed beyond the moment itself. On the Road is essentially about people who, knowing no purpose to life, sought it only in it itself, in one another, and in the moments they experienced.

“The only people,” wrote Kerouac, “for me are the mad ones, the ones who are mad to live, mad to talk, mad to be saved, desirous of everything at the same time, the ones who never yawn or say a commonplace thing but burn, burn like fabulous yellow roman candles exploding like spiders across the stars and you see the blue centerlight pop and everybody goes ‘Awww!’”

Of course, a “spirituality” (Kerouac always insisted that the beats were “spiritual”) that existed just “for the moment” must inevitably self-destruct into hedonism, exactly what happened to the beats. However much On the Road glamorized the partying, spontaneity, and sensuality, these things eventually destroyed them (and sometimes those they loved). Kerouac died from abdominal hemorrhaging brought on by alcoholism; age, 47. Neal Cassady, after a rainy night of drunken partying in Mexico, fell asleep on a railroad track and died in a hospital the next day; age, 42. William Burroughs, bragging about his marksmanship, put a glass on his wife’s head and did a William Tell act that killed her with a single shot.

That leaves Allen Ginsberg, the only beat I ever saw in person. I heard Ginsberg read his poetry in the Milky Way Bar in Amsterdam a few months before my conversion. However beautiful his lyrics (one poem about burying his New York Jewish father, I, the son of a New York Jewish father, still vividly remember), Ginsberg spent half the time talking about homosexuality.

“He sounded,” I said to a friend as we stepped into the Amsterdam night, “like a tired old man.”

With this background, and with my wife and kids in tow, I entered City Lights. The place seemed dark, cavernous, sour, as if haunted by its sordid past. Afer a few minutes, having bought nothing, we left, and in the liberating California sunlight I felt so thankful that in my own quest for meaning, I found a road radically different from the one that led the beats to such a dead end.
At Rest

He was a veteran of World War II, having served in the United States Navy. He served in the church as a pastor and evangelist in New York, Kansas, Alabama, Mississippi, the Carolinas, the Dakotas, Arkansas, and Louisiana. He is last complete evangelistic series was in Zimbabwe, Africa, in 1991. He is survived by his wife, Ruth; two sons, David and Alan; three daughters, Nancy Kohenower, Wanda Ferguson, and Karen Weber; two sisters, 11 grandchildren; and three great-grandchildren.


CROWSON, Alle–b. A ug. 16, 1920, Water Valley, Miss.; d. A pr. 24, 1999, Burleson, Tex. He served as a pastor, evangelist, and administrator in the Southern Union. In 1975 he became Northern Union ministerial, A SI, and communication director and editor of the Outlook. He continued his work in the MId-America Union after the Northern and Central unions merged in 1980. He retired in 1985. He was also a World War II veteran, serving as an instructor pilot in the A My Air Force. He is survived by his wife, Nancy; one son, David; one daughter, Rebecca; one sister, Ann Henry; and two grandchildren.

She served as an executive secretary for a number of church leaders at the General Conference, A dventist A cademy, the North Pacific Union, Glendale A dventist Medical Center, and O kark A dventist A cademy. She is survived by her husband, G. Charles Dart; two sons, G. Charles, Jr., and Jed; two daughters, Cheri Lutz and Jolene Dart; three brothers, Charles and Earl Vartenek and Tom Bennett; three sisters, Helen Leach, A nnabelle Zager; and Cynthia Vartenek; and four grandchildren.

FERRIS, Glenn Alan—b. May 22, 1947, Harrisville, Mich.; d. May 24, 1999, Chickaloon Bay, Alaska. He served as a pastor for six years before attending medical school. He has had a medical ministry in Alaska since 1993, when he opened the A laska Spine Institute Medical C linic. He is survived by his fiancée, Janine M. etcaffe; two sons, Brent and David; and two brothers, Gary and Larry.

JOE RS, Lawrence E.—b. Aug. 17, 1900, Milwaukee, Wis.; d. June 5, 1999, Reedsport, Ore. A s a physician he served in World War II and Korea in the U.S. Navy for 18 years. He later served as administrator of the Seventh-day Adventist hospital in Jay, Oklahoma. He is also a published author and poet. He wrote the words to the hymn ”H oly Sabbath D ay of Rest,” which is found in The Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal. He is survived by his wife, A nnette; one son, Lawrence II; three daughters, Jeanne M. arie Bunker, Mary Lou Smith, and Linda M. a Summerfield; and five grandchildren.

His long medical career took him from private practice in Kansas to the staff of St. Helena Sanitarium to New England M emorial Hospital as medical director and to other hospitals in Kansas, Florida, Tennessee, Oregon, and California. He is survived by two children; four grandchildren; and six great-grandchildren.

SHO P, Max Wallace—age 87; d. June 11, 1998, Beaver Dam, Wis. He served the church for more than 35 years, first in the Treasury Department of the Review and Herald Publishing Association and later as treasurer of the Southern Publishing Association. A fter retiring he served as bookkeeper for the A dventist Book Center in Madison, Tennessee. He also logged more than 1,000 hours as a volunteer at the T ennessee Christian Medical Center. He is survived by his wife, Irene; four daughters, Jackie Golick, Nancy Chapat, Tina Shoup, and Laurie Hert; one sister, June Omasan; seven grandchildren; and seven great-grandchildren.

SOHM, Emma Ilene—b. Nov. 3, 1938, Washington, Ind.; d. Mar. 29, 1999, Gasquet, Calif. She served as an elementary teacher in Massachusetts and Indiana and also as a missionary in Thailand. She is survived by her husband, George; two daughters, Mary Mosher and Shari Sohm; and her father, Roy Gross.

SORENSEN, Ervin Leslie—b. Nov. 10, 1920, M innesota; d. Dec. 16, 1998, Carmichael, Calif. Since starting as a pastor in Minnesota in 1940, he served the church in numerous capacities as pastor, teacher, administrator, and professor of religion. He served in India for 16 years and in the Far Eastern Division for three years. He taught at Pacific Union College and Loma Linda University. He is survived by his wife, Ruth; two children; four grandchildren; and six great-grandchildren.

SPECHT, Velma Lucille—b. Mar. 23, 1909, Edmonton, A lberta, Canada; d. Mar. 19, 1999, Loma Linda, Calif. She served with her pastor-husband in Montana, Oklahoma, and Oregon. She returned to college and became a bookkeeper for the church in California and later worked as an accountant at Andrews University. She is survived by her husband of 62 years, Walter; one son, Daryl; one daughter, La Rena Taylor; seven grandchildren; and 11 great-grandchildren.

WANG, James Daniel—age 90; b. Hubei Province, China; d. Dec. 24, 1998, Collegeville, Tenn. He served in China as a pastor, educator, and administrator. A fter further education, he served on the faculty of Andrews University as professor of religion and psychology. Later he worked for the Illinois Department of Mental Health. He and his wife operated the Good Samaritan N ursing H ome in Illinois for many years. He is survived by his wife, A nna; one son, John; three daughters, Esther Lau, Ruth Liu, and Rebekah Cheng; 11 grandchildren; and five great-grandchildren.

WASSEN MILLER, Wilbur—b. Oct. 1, 1921, Riesel, Tex.; d. Jan. 16, 1998, New Market, Va. He was a veteran of World War II and served in the church as a treasurer and auditor. He is survived by his wife, Doris; two sons, Kenneth and James; two daughters, Eleanor M. A rsa and Lorna Neumann; and six grandchildren.

WELBORN, Wayne W.—b. June 9, 1913, Laurel, Miss.; d. Feb. 26, 1999, M ount Vernon, Ohio. He was in the publishing work in Mississippi and Arkansas, and a pastor and Adventist Book Center manager in Ohio. He is survived by his wife of 65 years, Hazel; one daughter, Hazel Mallory; one sister, Dot Campbell; three grandchildren; and six great-grandchildren.

WELCH, Donald Andrew—b. July 17, 1913, Climax, Kansas; d. Feb. 16, 1999, Fruitia, Colo. He served as a teacher and also a representative for Loma Linda Foods, retiring in 1975. He is survived by three sons, Wayne, Dwight, and Ron; one daughter, Juanita Vincent; and nine grandchildren.


WILLIAMSON, Jesse James—b. Mar. 25, 1905, Willow Springs, Mo.; d. Aug. 3, 1998, Nixa, Mo. He served in evangelism in the Midwest and Canada. After continuing his education and receiving a doctorate in education, he chaired the Graduate Department of Education at the Inter-American University in San German, Puerto Rico. He returned to the States to work in administration and finance until his first retirement. Coming out of retirement, he became an administrator and auditor for Loma Linda University and retired again at age 75. He is survived by his wife, Margorie; four sons, James J., Philip R., Wayne W., and L. Scott; one daughter, Teresa Williamson; 19 grandchildren; 15 great-grandchildren; and two great-great-grandchildren.

WILLIS, Pearl S.—b. Sept. 29, 1899, Long Beach, Calif.; d. July 31, 1998, St. Helena, Calif. She was a nurse and supervisor at the Glendale Adventist Hospital from 1922 to 1932.
I write this with trepidation. It’s about sex. And it’s not politically correct.

When I was 11 I made a commitment to Jesus and was baptized into the rural Missionary Baptist Church, where most of my relatives were members. I entered puberty about the same time, hormones exploded, and I became very interested in sex. Few books were in our home—none about sex. Grown-ups did not talk about it—except when a group of men gathered in someone’s yard to discuss how the crops were doing. Often they’d get around to telling smutty jokes and rehashing the sexual escapades different men in the community had had. Some of the men bragged about their conquests and visits to prostitutes. My father wouldn’t allow me to stay when the talk became too risqué.

Most of my sex education came from my older cousins. It could be summed up in one sentence: You did it any way you could whenever you had the opportunity. The male cousins my age experimented with each other. The older cousins boasted about their backseat conquests after taking a girl to a movie or a dance. When I was 13 one of my female cousins tried to seduce me. I ran from the house. My reasons for escaping, however, were not as noble as Joseph’s. I was just very frightened. I took a lot of ribbing from my older cousins for not taking advantage of the opportunity.

I had a feeling that the Bible was against sex outside of marriage, but I wasn’t sure. I knew that the seventh commandment said, “Thou shalt not commit adultery.” But that was for married people, said my older cousins. I wish someone had showed me what the Bible said. I was itching to have sex with a girl if it weren’t against the Bible. Several times I tried to read the Bible through, but never got much beyond Genesis.

Surrounded by such a social climate and not knowing what the Bible had to say about sexual morality, it’s a wonder I had not had sex before I got married. Either the angels or fear kept me from trying. We moved away when I was 14. I read several good books about sex from the high school library, learned to read the Bible with greater understanding, became a Seventh-day Adventist, read a number of Ellen White’s books and Dr. Harold Shryock’s book Happiness for Husbands and Wives, and took a course entitled Marriage and the Family at Southern Adventist University (then Southern Missionary College). By that time my attitudes toward sexual behavior had changed. I realized that my body was the temple of the Holy Spirit. Sex was reserved for marriage. I did not kiss Helen until we had dated for seven months and I was ready to ask her to marry me. We have been married 47 years. Other than learning that Jesus is my Saviour, marriage to Helen has been the best thing that ever happened to me.

I’m glad there was no gay pride movement when I reached puberty. Most of us had never heard the word “homosexuality.” And “gay” simply meant merry. If there had been a gay rights movement then, I’m afraid most of my young cousins might have thought they were homosexual or bisexual. And if that is what they had thought, that is what they would have become. A person “thinketh in his heart, so is he” (Prov. 23:7).

It seems to me that the gay rights movement has gone beyond a movement for legal rights. Those in the movement want to be proud of their homosexuality. They want to celebrate it. They want society to accept their alternative lifestyle as normal and desirable. They have been successful in getting some churches to defend it as acceptable Christian behavior. Not wanting to offend, other churches have kept quiet about it.

In such a social environment, young people reaching puberty today must be as confused about homosexuality as I was about fornication in my early adolescence. It’s time for the Seventh-day Adventist Church to make clear to its children and youth what the Bible says about sexual morality. It’s time for our Bible scholars to develop Bible studies that treat the subject with the completeness it deserves. It’s more important that our young people be biblically correct than that the church be politically correct, it seems to me.
Years ago I took an upper-division Bible class in the New Testament Epistles. I was one of two girls sitting in the company of some 35 male theology students. I said scarcely a word the whole semester. One episode from that class sticks in my mind—an encounter between my zealous friend Hardy and the teacher discussing the Trinity.

“But I don’t understand.” Hardy’s voice betrayed real anguish.

The professor reviewed the statements he’d just made, but Hardy’s hand shot up again. “I just want to know how it works—the three-in-one part.” Patiently the teacher again went over what we believe about the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

“I still can’t figure it out.” Hardy couldn’t wrap his mind around the massive concept of the Godhead. “I only want to know how it works.” His voice trailed off in dejection.

The professor seated himself deliberately on the edge of his desk. “Hardy, there are some things in this world that your little brain and my little brain can never comprehend. The Trinity is one of them.” Teacher and student faced off, eyeball-to-eyeball. “Some things have to wait until eternity.”

Thrusting his hands into his pockets, Professor M— got up and paced meditatively across the front of the classroom. “And even then,” his gaze included us all, “a mystery may remain. After all, if we could understand everything about God, if we could ‘find’ God, He would hardly be God anymore, would He?”

What makes the story of Job so remarkable is the fact that he “found” God by wholly unscientific means. He had no Bible, no counselor, not even an understanding companion. The debate with his three friends provides useful clues.

Upon their arrival the friends were so shocked at Job’s appalling physical condition that they sat with him for seven days before anyone said a word (Job 2:13). Then began the cycle of “wisdom speeches.” First the fatherly Eliphaz, then the very rational Bildad. Job must have sinned, they said, otherwise he could never be suffering in this way. So all he had to do was repent, and all would be well.

Zophar was dogmatic, mouthing long series of “party line” platitudes, a veritable landslide of harsh words.

Obviously, Job must be evil, he speculated. Then in the midst of his tirade—perhaps unknowingly—Zophar came up with a very significant question: “Canst thou by searching find out God?” (Job 11:7).

The answer is “No.” Intellectual pursuit cannot succeed in truly revealing God to us. He will not permit Himself to be analyzed in a test tube. Carbon dating won’t help. We’ll get no pertinent information off a computer printout. He’ll not set up a Website for Himself on the Internet.

If this kind of quest doesn’t work, how, then, do we ever find God?

There are two ways. First, we find God by loving, not by searching. “Love is from God. Everyone who loves...knows God” (1 John 4:7, NEB). There’s a mystery here. The response of a child to a parent. The devotion of lovers to each other. The loyalty between friends. We know the bond is real, but none of us can explain how it “works.”

Second, we find God through the person of His Son. The life and ministry of Jesus has a thousand facets, each one a different window through which we may glimpse God.

At first Job wanted to speak to God, to challenge the justice of the devastation that had befallen him. A nd in the end God asked him more than 80 searching questions, all pertaining to the natural world. Job couldn’t answer one. “W hat shall I answer thee? I will lay my hand upon my mouth” (Job 40:4).

Job, however, found God by a totally different route. Only by the help of God’s loving Spirit was the tortured man able to say, “I know that my Redeemer lives...[and] in my flesh I shall see God” (Job 19:25, 26, NKJV). That statement is a revelation, a conviction about God that arises from a loving heart.

Will we ever understand how all the arrangements of heaven “work”? Certainly not here now. A thread of mystery may well prevail throughout eternity. I rather hope so.

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