



Faith on the line

A Journal for Those Who Dare

Winter 2003

Volume 8 Issue 1

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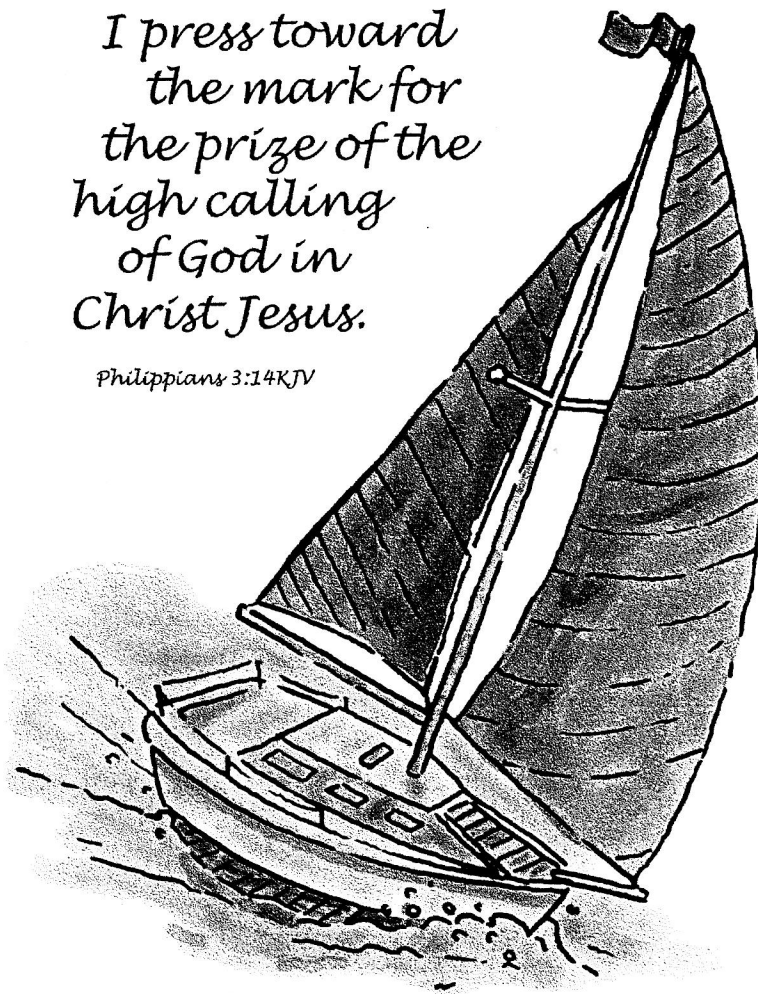
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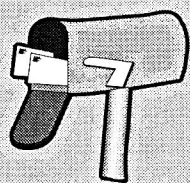
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*I press toward
the mark for
the prize of the
high calling
of God in
Christ Jesus.*

Philippians 3:14KJV



From the Mailbox...



We welcome your comments and opinions. If something in our newsletter or material has impacted you, we'd like to hear from you. We can be contacted by fax, mail or email. Please see the last page for this information.

Q: I thought a lot about the free will God gave us. He gave us the free will to choose between Him and Satan. My question is, if we choose to do His will fully, what do we need our own will for? We actually don't need it anymore, if we are doing His will, do we? I mean, doesn't God want us to think for our selves? Trying to think logically, when I do His will, I will think like Him (maybe), so our own thinking and willing can be thrown away. Is thinking and willing in this case the same thing? I hope my question can be understood. I asked many people, they couldn't answer me and often finished it with: "This is something which you can't understand, only God knows why." I'm not satisfied with this answer.

Hi. Thanks for your question. I have sympathy for your feelings. Logically, it really doesn't make much sense that our will should become subject to God. But spiritually, it

makes sense. God is the author of life and God's will is complete. Subjecting our will to God by choice brings our thoughts in harmony with God's thoughts and our will in harmony with God's will. If our will becomes God's will, have we then given up our free will or has God's will become our will? The Bible says to this issue, "I delight to do thy will..." Ps 40:8. If God is the Author of all things, then He is also the Author of the free will. But a free will contrary to the will of God leads to death and destruction and bondage. Therefore, I suggest that you rejoice in your free will, as long as it is subject to God. Paul talks about being servants to righteousness and servants to unrighteousness. (Rom 6:18-20). Either way, we remain servants. But seen spiritually, a servant to righteousness is free, but a servant to unrighteousness is in bondage to sin. Hope this helps.

Prof. W. J. Veith

Dear Br. Veith:

Just by chance, we discovered your videos and were very impressed. We ordered them all immediately and are very thankful to God that you speak so openly on these subjects. We wanted to show your series in our church, and asked our pastor, but we have just learned that we will not be permitted to show your videos. We are very disappointed. But we will show your series at our home in small Bible study groups to those who have interest to watch. Please continue to preach and lecture as you do. We will pray for your work that God will give you strength. We wish you God's richest blessings and hope that Jesus comes soon.

C. & E. B

Dear AD:

Greetings from sunny S. California! First of all I want to thank God for Brian Neumann's ministry in music, and I want to thank you for arranging Brian Neumann to come to our church last week. It was a big blessing to us! He presented to us eye-opening facts about the spirits behind the music that we hear every

day and also the right music to worship our God! Even though he had to shorten and combine some topics (many times he was almost out of breath in catching up with the time), because of an unexpected situation and program change in our church, nevertheless, it was powerful! Please send him my big thank you for his efforts and willingness to adjust his time to fit with our church schedules. He has a kind heart! And I am grateful to be able to meet and work with him on this seminar in our church. Praise God for what He has done and is doing through him ... D.D.

I am interested in your site. Thanks and God bless you for your labour.

A.B.

Thank you for being faithful and serving God and others with your website. It is ministries like yours that are impacting the world and families for Christ.

S.W.

I appreciate and am being enlightened with the "Voices of a Dying Planet" series.

R.T.

This seminar was more than thought-provoking - it was powerful! Brian's influence is still being felt in this area. ... There seems to be at this time a turning of the tide, be it ever so slight, in the direction back to spiritual sanity when it comes to music and worship. It is the desire of many here that Brian will return to speak to a large segment of the youth and adults in this area as a result of this current activity of soul searching on this topic. After the series I asked my youth what they thought of the presentations - each one said that as a result of the meetings they had thrown out much of their music and that they very much appreciated what Brian had to say. Please convey my heart felt thanks to Brian and all those who work to make these meetings possible.

D.M.



Creation to Restoration Part 2

By Dr. Walter J. Veith

Evidence for Design

Wherever we look we find evidence for design. The marvel of life, the great variety of life forms, the miracle of flight in birds and insects all have inspired designers and engineers to try and emulate the successes so apparent in nature. The flight of birds has inspired the aeronautical world and even the so-called primitive dragonfly has inspired flight engineers to design the helicopter. Even the feathers that are used in flight present design features that could not possibly have evolved gradually. The list of biological wonders in the organism and cell organelle world that smack of design is endless, but for the purpose of this discussion we will only look at a few examples.

The genome: The greatest evidence for design in the biosphere lies in the genome. Genetics and evolutionary principles are at loggerheads with each other. From the beginning of these sciences they were opposed to each other, since Mendel clearly demonstrated that individual characteristics were carefully conserved and Darwin, not being aware of Mendel's work, proposed change of inherited characteristics as the nurturing ground for evolution. Today we know that variations induced by the environment are not passed on to the next generation, as Darwin believed in his time. Individuals exposed to the sun get darker, physical activity enhances muscular development etc. but these traits are not inherited. Mendel also showed that genetic recombinants may have latent features which can resurface at a later stage, thus showing that the traits were not lost but could enhance or decrease variation in the phenotype in accordance to the level in which they were expressed. The genome is thus conservative yet versatile.

The scientific fraternity proposes that mutations are the nurturing ground for providing new and exciting genetic material, but only the opposite has been shown to be true in actual observations and experiments. In the fruit fly *Drosophila* alone, some 3000 mutations have been identified,³ and all of them are either harmful or have no effect, but none



*"In the beginning
GOD
created the
heavens and the earth."*

Genesis 1:1

of them produce more successful fruit flies. The most important nurturing ground for evolution thus seems hopelessly inadequate, or rather counterproductive, to the evolutionary process. In addition, we need to remind ourselves that natural selection cannot create anything. It can only select from what is already there and then only if it is expressed in the phenotype. The entire genome thus exudes design, yet DNA is not alive. It is a dead molecule and needs the machinery of the living cell to make copies of itself. The information for that cell is, however, in the genome, and the DNA is simply the carrier of the information. In order to read the information, you need the equipment to unravel it and translate it and the information for that equipment is in the DNA itself. No matter how one looks at it, design is the only solution for the dilemma.

The cell: If we progress from the genome to the cell, we see that the cell is not just a chance blob of fortuitous molecules come together to form protoplasm. It is rather an intricate machine with marvelous order and elements of design. In 1996, Michael Behe, a working biochemist, published the book *Darwin's Black Box*.⁴ Behe pointed out that the cell, far from being a 'simple little lump of albuminous combinations of carbon', as thought in Darwin's day,

was actually an entire factory, filled with molecular machines of astounding precision and complexity. Within these complex structures, there are numerous individual microstructures and cellular systems in which vast numbers of parts and enzyme systems work together in such a way that they will only function *if every single piece is in place*. **Removal of even one link in the biochemical systems does not reduce the efficiency; it eliminates the function of the organelle entirely.** He called this situation 'irreducible complexity', and it is totally inconsistent with the evolutionary concept of gradual change over time. Only design could account for such complexity.

Darwin himself, in *The Origin of Species*, stated that precisely such a situation would disprove his theory:

*If it could be demonstrated that any complex organ existed which could not possibly have been formed by numerous, successive, slight modifications, my theory would absolutely break down.*⁵

The living machinery of cells proves precisely this point. There are myriads of processes that are of this nature and that require closely coordinated biochemical sequential reactions, each governed by intricate feedback systems, which in turn require receptors which will activate them at precisely the right point in time. It is not within the scope of this article to elaborate on the finer details of these processes, but even some of the simpler biochemical pathways such as the production of some amino acids which require closed systems are highly complex and organized. The enzymes involved in the production of these amino acids are also coded for by genes and need the very amino acids which they themselves have to produce in order to exist in the first place. The probability of the complex machinery such as RNA or DNA or viable enzymes coming about by chance is so mind bogglingly remote as to be non-existent. To cite just one example, the probability of just the smaller of the ribosomal subunits (consisting of 1500 nucleotides) coming about by chance is 10^{903} and this figure is so large that it is beyond comprehension (remember that 10^{80} is the estimated number of particles in the known universe).

Organs: Organs such as the eyes, ears, kidneys and others show levels of complexity that smack of design. The brain is a mystery of ingenuity that baffles the greatest intel-

lects on earth and makes even the world's super computers look like feeble toys by comparison. The electrical design and storage capacity of the nervous system is a further mystery which is astounding. There may be up to one hundred trillion synapses in the brain, and each one acts as a filter, a signal disseminator, and a calculator ensuring the flow of and the filtering of information. The capacity to store information is infinite and to crown it all, the brain makes it possible to appreciate beauty, it makes us creative and makes

us beings capable of moral judgments.

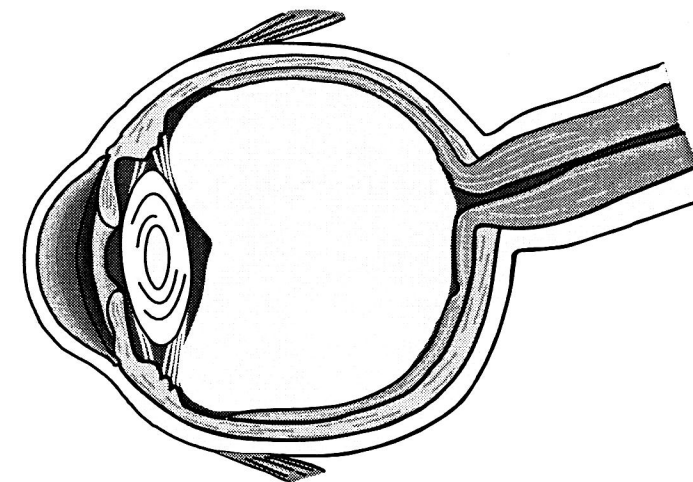
A comprehensive study of all the intricate design details in the various organ systems found in the animal kingdom would require untold volumes of books, and then we would still be limited by our incomplete knowledge of these systems. As a comparative physiologist, I have always been fascinated by the numerous complex systems, which require clockwork precision at both

the anatomical and physiological level. Systems such as the countercurrent exchange and multiplier systems, which are found in the gills of fish, the lungs of birds and in the kidneys of mammals also require full structural development before they will function. One wonders how such systems could have evolved gradually over time since in the case of the counter current multiplier system in the kidney, for example, no halfway developed system would work. These counter current systems make for highly efficient oxygen exchange, and in the case of the countercurrent multiplier systems of the mammalian kidney, they create the capacity to concentrate urine against concentration gradients. The systems have to be complete before they work and this implies design.

The Eye: For the sake of this discussion, let us limit ourselves to some of the organ systems that have produced lively discussions in scientific circles. One such system is that of the **eye**, which has received much attention from evolutionists. Some claim that they have solved the issue of its evolutionary development and have found mechanisms to explain how such an intricate organ could have evolved naturalistically.⁶ On a comparative morphological level, one can arrange the various light sensitive organs found in the animal kingdom in a sequence from simple eyespots found even in protozoans to the highly complex structures found in vertebrates and invertebrates. There is a vast difference, however, between ar-

anging a simple sequence of light sensitive organs, and putting together the complex structure which constitutes the vertebrate eye with its auto-accommodation, complex iris structure (somewhat like a video camera), and highly complex nervous connections. The eye in itself does not even explain how one sees, since what happens in the brain to convert the simple nerve impulses into images is a mystery. Scientists have used computer models to reconstruct the possible evolution of the eye, but notoriously absent from these models are the intricate retina, which contains more than 100 million light sensitive cells called rods and cones which enable us to see in dim light, bright light and provide color vision. Also absent from their models are the mechanisms which control the lens and iris, and of course the mechanisms which lead to the perception and translation of the information. The biochemical reactions associated with sight are also fascinatingly intricate.

The retina of the eye has been an issue of hot debate, since it seems to be inside out with the light sensitive disks facing away from the light source and several nerve cells lying in the path of the light. This has prompted numerous derogatory statements, such as '*in fact it is stupidly designed*'⁷, from evolutionists with regard to the concept that the eye needed to have been constructed by intelligent design. The



eye works perfectly as it is, and is a marvel of engineering in spite of the malicious remarks to the contrary which some scientists dare to make. Dr. Steve Jones, Professor of Genetics at University College, London, has even ventured to say regarding the eye: '*The feeblest designer could improve it*'⁸ and he calls it the work of an '*an insensible drudge: an instrument, like all others, built by a tinkerer rather than by a trained engineer*' (one wonders why he does not trade it in for something better). In fact, the eye is brilliantly designed and the retina is inside out for a very

specific purpose. In the area of the retina which is responsible for sharp vision, the fovea, the nerve cells, which elsewhere in the retina lie between the cones and the light source, are almost completely absent, and the nerve fibers radiate away from the central region thus allowing clear vision.

Also there is a good reason for the orientation of the rods and cones toward the pigment region and not towards the light source, which lies on the outside of the retina. These rods and cones are constantly replacing the visual pigment disks and the old ones are disposed of by being absorbed by the pigment epithelial cells. In the rhesus monkey, for example, each rod produces 80 to 90 new disks per day⁹, and since the human eye probably experiences the same rate of replacement, that would mean that some 9000 million disks are replaced daily. Should the retina not be 'inside out', then the pigment epithelial cells would not absorb the disks and the vitreous humor of the eye would rapidly become murky and lead to rapid visual impairment. The pigment epithelial layer could obviously not lie on the other side of the retina so that the light sensitive bits would face the incoming light, since then there would be even more cells between the light source and the retina. Of course, the pigment epithelium must lie exactly where it does lie, since it not only absorbs old disks, it also supplies the nutrients needed for the production of new ones and receives these nutrients from the rich blood supply in the choroids layer right next to it. Obviously, without the blood supply the whole system would break down. If the retina really was 'stupidly designed' and were orientated the other way round as these scientists claim, then the blood supply would also have to be on the inside of the eye between the light sources and the rods and cones, and that would totally disrupt vision.

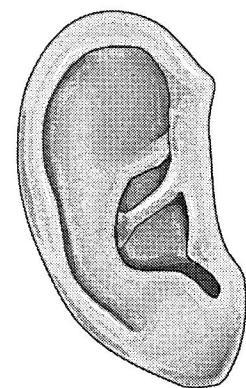
Crustacean eyes are equally astounding, particularly since they work on a different system. They focus light by reflection rather than refraction by a lens. Within these eyes, there are tiny perfectly square tubes with flat and shiny mirror sides, which perfectly focus the light to a central point. The square arrangement is crucial because only with this arrangement can a perfect image be derived from light rays striking from any direction.¹⁰ Scientists have emulated this design in their space programs by incorporating these intricate design features in their telescopes so that they could observe a quarter of the sky at any one time¹¹, but nature is supposed to have produced it by chance.

Ears are a further example of intricate design, and some species in the animal kingdom show absolute phenomenal abilities of hearing and tracking. The sonar systems

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...Continued From Page 5

of whales, porpoises, and bats are some of the most amazing structures on earth, and engineers have studied these systems in order to create detection devices and sounding



devices to use for military or other purposes. Scientists have learnt amazing things, but still have not been able to duplicate the precision achieved by some of these organisms. The US Navy, in fact, uses dolphins to find and track submarines or other submersed objects. The design of the seal's hearing apparatus is equally baffling, and the so-called earless seals, as well as dolphins, have only tiny pinprick holes

for ears, but fat bundles in the jaws and ear canals are shaped like trumpets and conduct the sound extraordinarily well.¹²

Ears do not only record sound, they also provide information about where that sound is coming from. This is achieved by separating the ears spatially so that there will be a time difference and a slight difference in intensity in the recording of the sound by each ear. This information is then used to calculate where the sound is coming from. In tiny insects with incredible capacities for hearing and directional sourcing this becomes an engineering feat which is astounding, since their ears are often only fractions of a millimeter apart. In the tiny fly *Ormia ochracea*, the ears are only 0.5 mm apart yet the fly can source the direction that sound comes from with pin point accuracy.^{13,14} The difference in the time

between the two ears hearing the sound is only 1½ microseconds (millionths of a second) with practically 0% intensity difference. This amazing ability is achieved by coupling the eardrums with a flexible lever, resulting in resonance, which increases the time difference 40 times. The drum nearest the sound then also vibrates some 10 decibels stronger. Finally, the nerves also respond in coded fashion creating a further five fold increase. These masterful design features are already being incorporated into hearing aids and could be used in directional microphone technology.

Scientists have learnt amazing things, but still have not been able to duplicate the precision achieved by some of these organisms - such as the sonar & hearing apparatus of dolphins and seals.

Co evolution or design? If we look at the marvelous relationships that exist in nature between animals and plants then it is hard to envision how such harmony could have come about by strategies and counterstrategies of co-evolution. Numerous plants can only be pollinated by specifically adapted insects that in turn are nurtured by the plants themselves. Evolutionists explain these relationships by suggesting that the two co-evolved. However, what if the fortuitous mutations were out of synchronization? Then the species would not survive. Moreover, considering the millions of such relationships which exist in the world, the likelihood of them having come about by chance are so remote as to be non-existent. In the protea flowers and fynbos flowers in general (the most diverse group of plants in the world), each of the thousands of species is pollinated by highly specific beetles which inhabit only those types to which they are adapted. These highly specific symmetrical arrangements speak of design. Further examples are the highly specific species of wasps that pollinate the various species of figs. Then there are further significant problems with some of the evolutionary paradigms regarding the co-evolution of plant insect relationships. Petrified forests in Arizona contain what are apparently bees' nests, but these nests were then made more than 100 million years before the supposed evolution of the flowering plants on which the bees depend for survival.⁴¹

The co-evolution of so-called anti herbivory phytochemicals (secondary compounds that plants produce to prevent herbivores from eating them) is a further problem, since the various herbivores would then have to evolve counterstrategies in order to still be able to continue utilizing these food sources. Evolutionists envisage a constant strategy and counterstrategy between plants and animals. Some plants

produce toxic substances which some animals seem to cope with and others not. Moreover, plants produce secondary compounds which prevent overgrazing as well. These compounds (such as tannins for example) are concentrated in the young leaves and buds and the animals tend to avoid these tissues, thus ensuring growth of the plants. Moreover, plants can increase the levels of these compounds in the older leaves as well, which happens when the leaves are broken, eg.

during grazing. The broken leaves release pheromones which induce the non-broken leaves of even nearby trees to increase the levels of these deterring compounds. Generally speaking, this ability thus prevents overgrazing, since the animals find the

higher levels less palatable and move on to non affected areas.

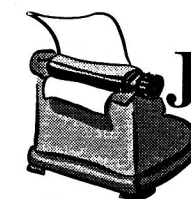
Instead of supposing such delicate strategies as evolving over millions of years, it seems logical to assume that such a finely balanced system is the result of a superb design. Firstly, only certain animals are adapted to certain specific compounds and they choose the plants with those compounds as their food source, thus ensuring even distribution over the wide varieties of food sources (for example, the specialized feeders such as the koala bears that are attracted to the eucalyptus oils which other species avoid). Secondly, by concentrating deterrent compounds in sensitive tissues, the plants ensure continued growth and propagation, and thirdly, by increasing the levels in areas that are generally eaten only after the grazing has actually begun (such as when the older leaves produce pheromones that induce them to increase the levels of deterrent substances), overgrazing is avoided. This is a brilliant system that speaks of design. If it was really a case of anti herbivory strategies, then surely plants would have developed toxic compounds that would kill the herbivore and thus prevent all further herbivory.

By Professor Walter J. Veith

To Be Continued

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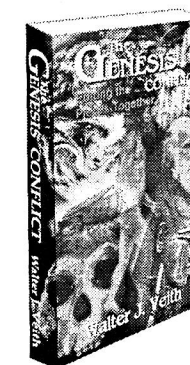
⁴¹ *Daily Telegraph (London)* May 26, 1995, p.5



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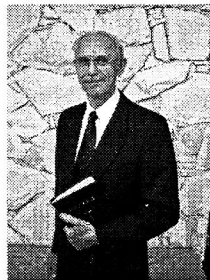
when champions are few - this will be our test. At this time, we must

AMAZING DISCOVERIES UPDATE

We have received numerous requests to have Brian Neumann return to North America for lectures in 2003, and his schedule is packed. The following should help those who wish to hear him in person:

- | | | |
|-----------------------------|------------------|---|
| February 14-16: | Armstrong, BC | music seminar (updated) |
| February 21,22: | Sacramento, CA | music seminar |
| February 28-March 1: | Meadow Vista, CA | Spirit of Prophecy seminar (2003) |
| March 5-11: | Bakersfield, CA | music seminar, Bible prophecy & last day events |
| March 14-16: | Tulsa, OK | music seminar |
| March 21-23: | Fort Worth, TX | music seminar |
| March 25-30: | Bronx, NY | music seminar |

For exact locations please call the office at: 604-572-9457



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More Than A Friend

by Richard O'Fallon

*This sermon is part of
an audio series
entitled The Price of Unity*

I once preached a sermon entitled, "Can We Make the Gospel Simple?" Too many of us want to just get to the point. "Just give us the bottom line," we say. This perspective is probably due in part to the fact that we are accustomed to watching television. With so many commercials breaking our concentration and programs lasting usually only half an hour, our attention span is getting shorter and shorter. Have you noticed there is a word we use a lot, especially in a religious context and usually when we pray, and that word is "just." We tell the Lord we "just" want to tell Him this or we "just" want to tell Him that. Sometimes we are "just" thinking this or "just" wanting that. Have you noticed how often we use that word? I don't know how this came about. It may have something to do with our impatience to get to the point, to get down to nitty gritty. It's as though we are saying, "Lord, I don't want to waste your time or mine, I just wanted to say . . ."

I agree that in spiritual things we ought not to beat around the bush. We need to get down to business. But there is a danger we forget that the spiritual part of our lives is not something that can be solved in half an hour with commercials in between.

You have no doubt heard a reference in the public media to what is called sound bytes. They are short pronouncements that get the attention of the public with very few words. A sound byte may sound deep but actually be shallow. It may give the impression that it is profound but may be of no particular relevance at all. Could it be that we are consciously or unconsciously reducing spiritual truth to sound bytes? We may be taking the deep things of God and making them shallow. The issues that have been a part of this planet for six thousand years cannot be solved in thirty minutes with commercials in between.

There is something else that seems to be happening and that is, given we have a sincere desire to discover truth, the danger is that as we come to a greater knowledge of truth for some reason we feel we must discard old truth to make room for the new truth. John 16:13 is a promise from Jesus himself: "Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth: for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, [that] shall He speak: and He will shew you things to come."

Truth is as high as the heaven, as deep as the sea, and has as many components as the sand along its shores. I suppose we could say that ultimately truth is everything there is to know about God; and inasmuch as God is infinite, truth also is infinite. In another Bible passage, Jesus says that His ways are beyond finding out. Nevertheless, He is committed to guiding us into all the truth that pertains to us in our situation at this time in history.

Did you notice that I said "that pertains to us at this time in history"? There is such a thing as present truth, and that means truth that is especially relevant for a particular time. It is important that we understand this; because although the gospel is everlasting, there is a gospel that is relevant to the beginning of the 21st century, and if we are still preaching a gospel that was relevant to the time of the apostles or to the time of the reformation, though it be a true

gospel it is not a relevant gospel. God has a truth that is always true, but He has always had a truth that was for a particular time.

The promise is that He will send the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit will lead every generation into that particular truth which they need for that time. But here is where we need to be on guard, because all truth is built on truth. Truth that is built

on error is not truth. This means simply that the Spirit goes from truth to truth. To put it plainly, when He leads us to a new understanding of truth for a particular time, take care that you do not throw out previous truth to make room for what we now call the new truth.

Let me give you a concrete example. As health-conscious Seventh-day Adventists, we were not wrong in saying we shouldn't eat catfish. It has never been the will of

If we are still preaching a gospel that was relevant to the time of the apostles or to the time of the reformation, though it be a true gospel it is not a relevant gospel.

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More Than a Friend

...Continued From Page 9

God for man to eat catfish. But neither has it been the will of God for us to be proud and selfish. If we were made aware only recently about God's rules for clean and unclean food, we should not toss out the window His will that His people not be proud and selfish. In the same way it was the will of God for mankind to keep the Sabbath, but it was also the will of God for His people to be kind and forgiving.

I am very thankful that here at the beginning of the 21st century we are finally waking up to the fact that we shouldn't be proud and selfish. But, low and behold, many are taking this to mean that it is now all right to eat catfish. Likewise, we are finally realizing the necessity of being kind and forgiving, but there are some who are taking this to mean that the Sabbath is not important anymore. Have mercy! How can the Spirit lead us into all truth if we keep on throwing out the old truth to make room for a greater understanding of truth? It would be like a block layer taking out two blocks for every one he put in.

I have entitled this sermon, "More Than a Friend" You will soon see why I have prefaced my remarks the way I have. But before I continue, I want you to think about something; and that is, I hope we understand that we all have what is called these days an "attitude" and that attitude is basically that we have this thing against God. The Scripture makes this point very clear. In Jeremiah 17:9 we read: "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" This condition is the result of the initial rebellion that we read about in Isaiah 14:12-14: "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north. I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High."

In 2 Thess 2:7 we read: "For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way."

There is a great mystery that cannot be understood. It can be described, but it cannot be accounted for; and that is that one day the archangel decided he wanted to be equal with God. Of course a painting can never be greater than

the one who painted it. Before it was over, the heart of Lucifer (and all those who are lifted up with sin and pride) had become corrupted. This is our heritage. And the only way it can be rectified is by a clean install, to use computer language.

The point is that in our natural condition we are not comfortable with having someone over us, even if it is the One who made us. If we can't deny that we were created by Someone, then the next best thing is to drag Him down to our level. Of course, it is impossible to actually get the true and living God down to our level, but that doesn't seem to keep us from trying. He doesn't lose when we try that tactic, we lose. He is the same yesterday, today, and forever. **What we end up doing is creating what amounts to a false god. That is, we make gods in our own image.** Friends, we must never forget that we were originally created in the image of God. However, you cannot reverse engineer this process and make God to be like us. The fact that we were created in the image of God most certainly doesn't make us gods.

The theme of some recent evangelistic meetings was man's forever friendship with God. What a wonderful and thrilling thing to contemplate! There is a current ideology which is teaching that, ever since Jesus said to His disciples the words recorded in John 15:15, "Henceforth I call you

not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of My Father I have made known unto you," our relationship to God has been elevated. The fact that we are referred to many times in Scripture as being children of God and other times as being servants of God, seems

to have been superceded by the concept of friendship. Somehow children and heirs and servanthood are out the window, and now we are "buds" with the Almighty.

If this is what Jesus meant when He added the concept of being His friends, then I respectfully suggest this is not a promotion but actually a demotion. If I have to choose between being a friend of God at the expense of being a child of God and a faithful slave of God, then I will stay as I am, thank you. There is no doubt that salvation is about having a relationship with God. But it is not just every relationship or any kind of a relationship. The word relationship as it is commonly used these days is very generic and doesn't mean very much. On one occasion I visited in the home of a person who had left the church and had resumed a worldly

lifestyle, but who assured me they had all that really mattered because they had a relationship with Jesus. You see, the word relationship doesn't mean very much unless you ask what kind of a relationship they are talking about. A couple that lives together before they are married has a relationship, but it is not blessed by God. People who are in a partnership to buy and sell drugs have a relationship, but it is illegal and immoral. I suppose you could say that the devil has a relationship with Jesus. He hates him! So much for relationships.

Salvation is not about having a relationship with God, per se. It is about having a *right* relationship with Him. All that has to do with truth and doctrine will ultimately shape the kind of relationship we have with God. This is why truth and doctrine are so important. Having a wrong concept of who God is, or having even a narrow or very limited concept of who He is, can lead to having a wrong relationship to Him. The crux of the matter, then, is that salvation is about taking a wrong relationship with God and, through Jesus Christ, making it a right relationship.

This brings us back to the questions: How shall we relate to God? and Of the three options that are most commonly presented in Scripture, which one is the way to go? Remember, there are those who suggest that anyone who is less than a friend of God is a spiritual primitive. Let's take a deeper look at the matters of sonship, servant-hood, and friendship, and then we can decide which we would prefer.

To do this, we illustrate with a little story. Let us suppose that Bill Gates, who is one of the richest men in the world, had a child. I don't know whether Mr. and Mrs. Gates have any children, but let's suppose that they did. Bill's little boy becomes an heir of his daddy's great fortune. His dad can take him to the office and show him off. But he is just a little guy, and the only thing that matters to him is whether his dad is going to get him what he wants for his birthday.

Microsoft is a huge company. It has all kinds of people to whom Bill has assigned responsibility for keeping the company moving forward. A number of these people have been delegated the right to make important decisions that could involve large sums of money. They can hire and fire and otherwise carry on the business of the company. They

get a nice salary and maybe even some stock options, but they are not Bill's heirs. They do the business of the company and they do it well.

To sum it up, Mr. Gates, for purposes of this illustration, has an heir and hundreds of employees. The Bible would refer to these employees as Bill's servants. Bill also has other people in his life who are neither his employees nor his family members. They are his friends. I don't know whether Bill likes to play golf or not but, supposing that he

did, let us imagine that one day he is out playing a round with one of his best friends. As they go around the course, Bill shares with his friend some of his plans for the company and even asks his friend for his opinion. This friend is not an heir, neither is he authorized to do business on behalf of the company; but the CEO is sharing with him some of his plans as they ride in the golf cart together.

We have three classes of people in this story, the son, the servants, and the friend. Which would you rather be if you could choose to be only one? I would choose to be the son. Though I don't know

what is going on in the company, and though I do not have authority to carry on the business of the company, I have a privilege that no one else has, and that is that Dad is going to leave his fortune to me. If it were not my option to be a son of Mr. Gates, and I were left to choose between being one of his highly paid executives or his golf partner, I believe I would prefer to be one of his servants and have a part in carrying out an important responsibility of the enterprise.

But, thanks be to God, we do not have to choose between the relationships. We have the gift of becoming all three; a son, a servant, and a friend. When we receive Jesus as our personal Savior, we are adopted into the family of God. Listen to these texts (Galatians 4:5): "To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." And in Ephesians 1:5 it says: "Having predestined us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will." That means we become heirs of all He has prepared for His children. Again, in Titus 3:7 it states: "That being justified by His grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life." In no way would I give up the relationship of being a son of God.

And I am not at all embarrassed by the concept of

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being a slave of God. Paul was so proud of being a slave of God that he mentioned it over and over in describing his relationship with his Savior. In Romans 1:1, he writes: "Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God." In the book of Titus he says (Titus 1:1): "Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect, and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness." No, Paul wasn't ashamed to be called a slave of God. When he describes the ministry of Jesus, he even said that Jesus came as a slave. Though the concept may be offensive to some, those who are sons and daughters of God are not ashamed to be servants of God. You see, a servant follows orders, and those who are sons and daughters of God take delight in following the orders of their Savior. As it is written in Psalm 40:8: "I delight to do Thy will, O my God: yea, Thy law is within my heart", and Psalm 119:16: "I will delight myself in Thy statutes: I will not forget Thy word," Psalm 119:47: "And I will delight myself in Thy commandments, which I have loved."

We get into trouble when we emphasize one relationship with God above the others. Although being God's friend is illustrative of some aspects of our relationship with Him, it does not say it all. It is easy to lose perspective when we favor one above the others. For instance, obedience, the bedrock of the Christian experience, becomes at risk. I have a lot of friends, but generally unless those friends are also family or those who work for me, I don't tell them what they must do. If I did, we probably wouldn't be friends very long.

My friends and I share together. We even ask each other for advice. But in an on-going way, we are not much into each other's lives. My friends have their lives and I have mine. This is not what Jesus was trying to develop with us when He said that no longer would He treat us as servants but as friends. He followed it up by explaining that servants don't know what the boss is thinking, they only follow orders.

Jesus was not saying that we should stop being His children or that we no longer have to do what He tells us to do. He was declaring that He was now going to share His

thinking and His plans with us as friends do with one another.

What we have, then, is the best of all the worlds. We are children of God, and so we are heirs of His riches. We are servants of God, and so we do what He tells us to do even if we don't happen to understand it all at the time. And now He carries His relationship with us even a step further. He shares things from His heart with us.

It boils down to this. It is a matter of Who, What and How. Who are we? We are His children. What are we? We are His servants. How does this all come about? In an intimate atmosphere of friendship.

To play off one relationship against another is to short-change the whole. To throw out sonship and servant-hood in favor of friendship is to miss the point. Truth builds on truth.

You never have to throw out one truth in order to make room for more truth. To do that is to remain narrow and shallow. If we are faithful to the light we have, the Lord will give us a greater revelation of truth. He will at the same time increase our capacity to implement it.

Those who are the strongest advocates of making friendship with God everything in the relationship also say that God doesn't expect us to obey what we don't understand. There is no consistent Scriptural authority which states that so long as we don't understand all of the whys and wherefores of the will of God, we don't have to obey. God gave the human race a rather scientifically complicated list of health laws, covering areas from hygiene to diet. It has

not been until recently that we have understood why He gave these rules. For instance, when I was growing up I don't think I ever heard very much about cholesterol. But He knew, and tried to steer our diets away from the problem.

To live by faith is the opposite of the concept that you don't have to obey if you don't understand. Abraham didn't get to realize the promise of God until he obeyed. As long as he tried to obey according to the way he saw things, he did everything wrong. And so it will be with us.

The Gospel is not complicated, but neither is it simple. If it were, we could put it all in one line. It is not simple because evil is not simple. The human heart is like a spider's web. It is extremely complex. Human nature is so at war with God that it will use every excuse and try every avenue to escape submitting to the Sovereign God.

I would not want to leave the impression that I am in any way against a relationship with our God that has friend-

ship as one of its components. Jesus said He was going to treat us as friends, and we are called upon to talk to Him as we do to our friends. Yet it must not start and stop there. Sometimes we hear it said that parents ought to be friends to their children. There are even cases where this has occurred to the point where the children call their parents by their first name. In my older years, my dad and I relate to each other as friends. But there is something between Dad and I that goes beyond friendship. I have a relationship with my dad for the simple reason that I came from him. That makes it impossible for me to relate to him as merely a friend. After all, I don't remember a text that says, "Honor thy friends that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee"!

Yes, Jesus is "More Than a Friend" as the title of this sermon indicates. At the beginning I said that sin started with the desire to be equal with God. When that happened, what we now call selfishness and pride were born. Since that time the human heart resents God and is in a struggle against Him. All the pagan religions that have ever existed are simply attempts to avoid acknowledging the true and living God and are attempts to create gods that would be more like us, in spite of the text that warns us not to try to make Him like us and the one that says His ways are not our ways or His thoughts our thoughts.

It was some years ago that the time had come for the constituency meeting here in the Florida Conference. This meeting is conducted every three years, during which time the delegates elect the president, secretary and treasurer, as well as the executive committee. There is also committee elected which is responsible for keeping the constitution and by-laws up to date.

This particular year it became known that a certain member of the constitution and by-laws committee was proposing that the Florida Conference remove its reference to Revelation 14 from the constitution because he objected to the words, "Fear God and give glory to Him." He was quoted as saying that he didn't like the idea of fearing God but rather wanted a God you can sit down on the couch with and talk to as a friend. That is a nice concept, but far from complete. We don't worship our friends. Neither did they make heaven and earth.

The prophet Isaiah saw the Lord. It was hardly what could be called an experience like sitting in the family room on Saturday night having a good time eating chips and dip.

Isaiah 6:1-5 states: "In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and His train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphim: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of His glory. And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke. Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts."

Job received a vision of God and said, "I am ruined." Paul saw God and went blind. Both Daniel and John the beloved fainted. You may be thinking by now that I am trying to set you back in your relationship with God. Just when you were beginning to not be afraid of Him any more, I am insisting on the old stereotype that we used to have and that didn't do anything for you.

Forgive me, please. Of course I am not trying to do that. My concern is that in trying to correct an incomplete view of God, we could end up with another distorted view. If the concept of God that we had in the past was one of a cruel

judge, then the concept that now being advocated in many places is that of a wimp who desperately needs our approval or he could be voted out of office.

The mind set here at the beginning of the third millennium is one of self-affirmation, of self-promotion, while it seems to be demoting God to just "one of the boys." Like a young man told me one time, "Me and JC get along just fine." The proud and selfish mind of this generation refuses to acknowledge that it must one day stand before the judgment bar

of a sovereign God Who dwells in unapproachable fire and before Whom angels veil their faces and Who no man can see and live.

In a Sabbath school quarterly not long ago dedicated to a study of the Father, it said, "If Christians view God as a chief accountant, they will not want Him too near. The account book,

This generation cannot face the reality of a coming judgment, and so has created a God Who is well within their comfort zone. For those who live in apartments, we have even put the concept to music with the song, "Have you talked to the man up-stairs?"

We get into trouble when we emphasize one relationship with God above the others. Although being God's friend is illustrative of some aspects of our relationship with Him, it does not say it all. It is easy to lose perspective when we favor one above the others. For instance, obedience, the bedrock of the Christian experience, becomes at risk.

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with its debits and credits, may have too exact a record. It would be better if God were not too close. However if Christians view God as their Friend and themselves as His special possessions, the thought of God's presence will bring vigor and delight to each hour." (December 2, 1998, "My Father and My God")

It is unfortunate that we cannot bear to face God as He really is. Is it necessary to have a Heavenly Father keeping an account of our lives? When I am traveling down the freeway at 60 miles an hour when the speed limit is 60 miles an hour, I am not concerned with the thought of a speed trap. However, if I am going more than 60 miles an hour, I ought to be concerned. We must understand that without our so-called heavenly Accountant or, if you please, heavenly Policeman, there will be no justice, and our very existence in this planet would be in a greater danger than it is already in.

We will not be able to be restored to the place He meant for us in the beginning until we have restored Him in our thinking and appreciation the place that He occupies in the Universe and from which He can never be dethroned or equaled.

If we cannot face the reality of a creator God Who is judge of all the earth, then we have some real problems to resolve. Because that is the reality of it all and the foundation upon which the whole plan of salvation is premised, including His grace, mercy, and intercession.

This generation cannot face the reality of a coming judgment, and so has created a God Who is well within their comfort zone. For those who live in apartments, we have even put the concept to music with the song, "Have you talked to the man upstairs?"

You may say that if God is like I describe, then you don't want to have anything to do with Him. How can you love a God like that? Listen, my friend, it is only when we have a concept of God as He really is that we can really love Him. It is only when we have a concept of God as He really is that we understand the enormous truth that He loves us.

I am convinced that the God that many people have in their understanding is so inferior that it makes forgiveness, grace, and mercy almost meaningless. You see, friendship is usually about being on the same level. I may have a friend who works at the bank, but when I don't make my house

payments and he initiates foreclosure proceedings, could I say, "But I thought you were my friend"? Somehow we seem to equate friendship with a kind of "if I do something wrong, they will get me off the hook" mentality. It is true that our friends will often do what they can to help us when we get into problems, and Jesus is no exception. However, we must be careful not to take advantage of our friends.

Although the Scriptures tell us that God is our Friend, it also commands us to fear Him and give glory to Him, to reverence Him, to worship Him, to humble ourselves before Him, to love Him with all our hearts, and soul, and strength and mind, just to name a few. If we in any way think that somehow our friendship with the Almighty gives us a discount or some kind of an exemption to the rule, we will have completely missed the point and will end up with having created a God in our own image.

The God Who we worship is the One Who has created and sustains around 150 billion galaxies, with who knows how many planets inhabited by who knows how many billions of trillions of unfallen beings. The true and only God demands worship and allegiance. Because He is forgiving and merciful, He has not treated us as we deserve to be treated; but His Spirit will not always strive with men.

The day is coming in which things will be restored to the way they were meant to be in the beginning. In that great day of the white throne judgment, every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the Glory of the Father. Oh, my brother, sister, our God is more than a Friend. Make Him your Friend, but don't do that unless you have first surrendered your life to Him. Make Him your Friend, but don't do that unless by the power of the indwelling Spirit you have determined that you will obey Him in every aspect of your life. Make Him your Friend, but don't do that unless you intend to worship Him with reverence, awe, and respect.

We will not know and understand ourselves, and so be able to deal with the reality of this existence, until and unless we understand and know Him, Whom to know is life eternal. We have studied the abnormal until we have accepted it as normal. We have studied sin until we have accepted it as an incurable fact of life. There will be no hope for us in our fallen condition until we study who God is, His holiness, His sovereignty, His majesty, that He is the Creator and so the Judge of all that He has created and made. From there we then are able to appreciate, though we will never comprehend, His love, His forgiveness, and that He is merciful and long suffering and abundant in goodness and truth.

We seem to have gotten the idea somewhere that if we

could somehow bring God down to our level, it would make us look better and give us hope. Nothing could be further from the truth. The more we misunderstand the truth about God, and the more we in fact seek to conceive of Him as being like us, the more we are sealing our fate and making it impossible for Him to work in us, both to will and to do His good pleasure.

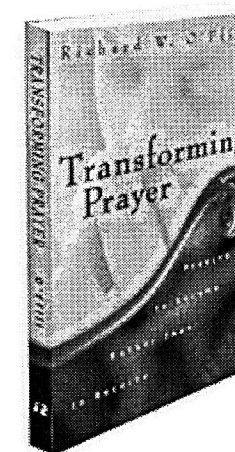
We will not be able to be restored to the place He meant for us in the beginning until we have restored Him in our thinking and appreciation the place that He occupies in the Universe and from which He can never be dethroned or equaled. He is indeed high and lifted up. His Glory does indeed fill the temple, and His glory will not be able to fill the temple of our hearts until we see Him as high and lifted up. When we describe the Father in terms like this, we may immediately tend to feel that there is in some way a difference between Him and the Jesus Who walked the earth as a man two thousand years ago. But we must understand that Jesus is verily the God Who communicated with man in the Old Testament, and we are talking about the One Who set the top of Mt. Sinai on fire. His glory was completely veiled when He was here as a man, except for some moments when He was revealed on the Mount of Transfiguration. You will remember that when He stood on trial before His accusers who had beat Him and spit on Him, He said the next time they saw Him it would not be this way. The Scriptures tell us that when these very people see Him next time, they will cry to the rocks and the mountains to fall on them and hide them from the face of Him Who sits upon the throne.

It is not my purpose to try to bring back a concept of God that might have driven people away from Him. **A right concept of God will attract sinners who want out and will repel sinners who like themselves the way they are.**

We must not tinker with the Almighty. We must not try to play up one of His attributes and play down others. Though this does no damage to what He intrinsically is, it does huge damage to us and to what we may become when we have a clear concept of who He is.

He is our Friend, of that there can be no doubt. But you have never had a Friend like He is for the simple reason that our friends are not our Creator, our Savior, the Lord of heaven and earth, the Judge of the quick and the dead. Only when we see Him as He really is will our friendship with Him be what it was meant to be and what it must and will be, as the power of the Holy Spirit of a crucified and risen Savior is being implanted into our hearts and lives and we are, in fact, changed before our very eyes and the eyes of those who we love and with whom we work.

Books worth reading



TRANSFORMING PRAYER

By Richard O'Fallon - The theme and the underlying premise on which this book is based is that the first purpose of prayer is not to get but rather to be. You will see the importance of putting first things first in your prayers and of seeking first the kingdom of heaven and His righteousness.

"But what about my physical and material needs?" Don't worry; our Lord has promised that if we will be more concerned about being than about getting, all the other things we have tended to worry about for so long will be added unto us! 134 pp

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By Dr. Cathy Burns (758 pages). In this most fascinating and extremely well-documented book, you will discover some little known facts about one of the most well-known men of the 20th century - Billy Graham - as well as several of his influential and powerful friends. Go inside Graham's tent meetings and crusades, his visits to other countries and his friendship with many Presidents and national leaders. Find

out about the other side of this unusual man. Written by a non-Adventist and does contain some misunderstandings about hell, but otherwise an excellent book.

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Amazing Discoveries Report

The year 2002 has been a year full of changes, growth, and tremendous blessings from the Lord. Dr. Walter Veith has held nine campaigns throughout the world including three in North America. Brian Neumann has also shared in seven different locations in USA/Canada, as well as holding seminars in Australia and Germany.



Our website continues to reach out to intellectuals, atheists, and the secular world with on average receiving 5700 visitors per day, with our most popular pages being the clips of Dr. Veith's lectures, the archaeology articles, the health recipes, and the antichrist article. The top seven countries from which people are accessing our site are: Canada/USA, the UK, the Czech Republic, South Africa, Australia, Netherlands, and Italy.

Starting in January of this year, we have embarked on a new and exciting project to expand the outreach of this ministry. From Monday to Friday on KARI 550 AM people in northwestern Washington and southwestern BC can hear Pastor Victor Gill on a half-hour radio program featuring all of our Seventh-day Adventist truth. We are excited about this opportunity and the possibilities of reaching more souls for Jesus! Other speakers are also in plan for the radio program, and we are investigating the possibility of also airing some of Dr. Veith's lectures on satellite TV.

These new projects have been taken on solely by faith that God will provide the necessary means to keep it going. Your financial support in 2003 is urgently needed, and we ask you to prayerfully consider a donation to this ministry. May God bless you and your family in 2003 as you work to hasten His soon coming.

Our Mission is:

1. To share the gospel in the context of the Three Angels' Messages
2. To show the harmony between science and the Bible with special reference to our Creator God
3. To share the Health Message (the right arm of the Third Angel's Message)
4. To place the message in the context of our day with special emphasis on the deceptions which would detract from these messages
5. To reach out to intellectuals, atheists, and the secular world as well as strengthening and confirming the church in the pillars of our faith and certainty of the prophetic Word
6. To introduce people to the remnant church of God who keep the commandments of God and who hold to the testimony of Jesus Christ.



Faith On the Line is the official quarterly publication of Amazing Discoveries Charitable Foundation, a Seventh-day Adventist based non-profit organization, addressing theological, political, economic, and scientific issues from a Biblical perspective. Copies are sent to all who request them. Requests should be sent to the address below. A suggested minimum donation of \$17 CDN or \$11 US would be appreciated.

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