

Inside Life

Is death
THE END?

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**A
Grand
Job**



**Helping
the
Grieving**

Inside Life

A magazine of understanding

Number 5, May 2007



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Inside Life

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Printed by Inkprint Ltd

Inside Life is a magazine of understanding. Rather than just reporting on life, **Inside Life** seeks to delve *inside* the marvellous mystery that is *life*, to discover what it is all about. What does life mean? Where did it come from? How can we make the most of it?

Inside Life seeks insight and answers to life's deep questions and challenges, and aims to provide articles of lasting hope, help and encouragement for successful living in today's fast-moving world.

Inside Life is published four times a year, free of charge as a community service.

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ISSN: 1177-3693

Our Cover: Photo taken in Hamilton Cemetery. Monuments and tombstones mark the places where human beings are put to rest after their lives end. But what happens after that? Is the grave the absolute "dead end"? Or is it a doorway to another form of existence beyond this life?

Photo by Richard Seelye



Photo: Richard Seelye

Is Death the END?

By Rex Morgan

“It’s not that I’m afraid to die,” said American comedian Woody Allen, “I just don’t want to be there when it happens.”

Just like Woody Allen, we may not want to be there when our death happens. Dying is something we try to put off as long as possible. But unfortunately we must all attend our own funeral. We are all terminal, you might say. As some wit has put it “Death is responsible for 100% of all recorded fatalities worldwide. And it has no cure.”

There is a story about an old lady who went to a monumental mason to order a stone for her husband’s grave. After explaining that all she wanted was a small one with no frills, she told him simply to put the words, “To my husband” in a suitable place. When the stone was delivered, she saw to her horror this inscription: “To my husband – in a suitable place.”

But seriously, what happens when we die? Do we go to another

“suitable place”? Is death the *end* of everything – or the *beginning* of something new and exciting? When your coffin is buried six feet under, or slides into the crematorium, is that the finish, and you’ll never know anything else? Or will there be another life? If we will continue to live in some shape or form, what will it be like?

People have always wondered about questions like this. One of the most well known writers on the subject of death and dying, Dr Elisabeth Kubler-Ross, wrote “Since the dawn of humankind the human mind has pondered death, searching for the answer to its mysteries.”

Some beliefs about death

The pyramids of ancient Egypt are impressive testimonies to belief in the next life. The Egyptians mummified dead bodies because they thought the body had to be preserved and protected so the person’s soul could live forever. They built enormous pyramids to protect the bodies of their kings. Beside the mummies they placed

offerings of food and drink and items of value to the king, so he could use those things in the afterlife. Some of the tombs were surrounded by a large number of graves of servants, often women and dwarves, who were sacrificed to serve the kings in their next life.

Buddhists believe that existence is a continuing cycle of death and rebirth. Each person’s position and well being in life is determined by his or her behaviour in previous lives. For example, good deeds may lead to rebirth as a wise and wealthy person. As long as people remain within the cycle of death and rebirth, they can never be free of pain and suffering. But they can break out of this cycle by eliminating any attachment to worldly things, thereby gaining a kind of perfect peace and happiness called Nirvana.

Hindus postulate that when the body dies, the soul is reborn, or reincarnated, as either an animal or a human being. As with Buddhism, it is considered that our deeds determine how our souls will be

reborn in our next incarnation.

Islam teaches that Allah will judge everyone after their death and, according to their deeds on earth they will be sent to heaven or hell. The Muslim heaven is a garden with flowing streams, luscious fruits, richly covered couches and beautiful maidens.

The traditional Maori belief was that on death the soul left via Cape Reinga for Hawaiki, the land of the ancestors. If the rituals of death weren't properly performed the soul might return as a wandering spirit to trouble those living.

So there have been many ideas and beliefs put forward to explain what happens after death, and these traditions have been accepted by millions of people. I think most of our readers would agree that some of the beliefs mentioned above are patently wrong. For instance, it is clear that the Egyptian dead didn't take the opportunity to avail themselves of the food and drink left for them. Their personal objects have been found in the tombs untouched (except by tomb robbers!).

But many of these ideas are actually very difficult to refute. For instance the ancient Persians believed the soul crossed over a bridge where for three days the good and evil spirits struggled for it. To the modern New Zealander, this doesn't sound like a plausible scenario, but can it be proved or disproved? Not really, because after physical death any further activity of the "soul" is a matter of the "spirit world", and is not



Freeze a Jolly Good Fellow

Cryonics (from the Greek word *cryos*, meaning cold) is the practice of freezing and storing bodies at the time of death, in the hope that future technology will allow them to be defrosted and prepared for another instalment of life.

Since 1967, over 1000 people have had their bodies frozen cryonically. A few companies offer the service on the internet. The body is frozen slowly, and eventually stored upside down in liquid nitrogen inside a stainless steel canister. One website offers the services of cryonics professionals who will wait by the bedside during a terminal condition and to minimize brain damage will begin cooling and cardiopulmonary support immediately upon pronouncement of death. The hope is that the person can be revived when future science can cure all disease, rejuvenate bodies to a condition of perpetual youth, and be able to reverse all damage caused by the cryopreservation process.

People go to great lengths in an attempt to prolong their life or to gain an opportunity to live again. The human desire to keep living is very strong. Cryonics amounts to an effort by humankind to engineer a resurrection. But there are a number of pitfalls to consider. Let alone the problem of whether or not the technology will become available to thaw people out, and all diseases will be conquered, it is not generally accepted that current methods preserve the brain well enough to even permit revival in the future. And if the brain is revived, what about the person's identity and personality? Questions arise as to whether qualities like that are located in the physical brain.

So there are real doubts surrounding the validity of the cryonic experience and its ability to effect a viable resurrection. On the other hand, the Christian Bible says that resurrection has already happened, and is promised as freely available to believers. Is that a plausible idea? The accompanying article explores this subject.

something that can be observed through any of the five senses.

No physical answer possible

This is the great difficulty with trying to identify what happens after death. All we can see physically is that the heart stops beating, the lungs cease breathing, and the body becomes a lifeless, motionless corpse. No scientific observation or experiment can determine what happens to the person after that. The body is dead, but what about the "person" who has just died? Does that "being" continue to exist? If so, it can only be in some spiritual way, invisible to our physical senses, involving the "soul" which (or who) was in that body.

It is axiomatic that for anyone who believes only in a physical world, death is the end and there is nothing

else beyond it. Many people see it that way. But there are others who are not satisfied by that conclusion. In fact, down through history millions of people have believed in an afterlife, and this has been of great comfort to them. Is this just a fanciful illusion, or is there some basis to this belief?

Christians believe that there is a spirit world in addition to the physical creation we see around us. They believe that a God lives in this spiritual realm, and created the physical universe. A reason for believing in the existence of this God was presented in a previous "Inside Life" article, entitled "What happened before the Big Bang?"¹ If there is such a God, and he created human beings, obviously he would know the answer to the age-old mystery of what happens after



Dust to dust: We are made of the dust of the earth and our days pass like sand in an hourglass. Human life is so transient. And after our time runs out — what next? Is this brief interlude on earth all there is?

death. Since scientists don't have the tools to observe or determine the answer, it is interesting to see what God says about it. His take on the "afterlife" is outlined in the Bible.

Christians believe the Bible was inspired by God, and is in fact a handbook he has given to humanity as the source of truth on many aspects of human existence. A previous "*Inside Life*" article entitled "The Bible: Holy or Holey?"² presented a case for the veracity of the Bible.

In considering the question of what happens after death it is only fair to have a look at what the Bible says about the subject. If there is no God, then there is no life after death — end of story. But if there is a God, what does he say about what happens after death? It's worth a look at, because it is the only viable alternative to the notion that life comes to a complete "dead end" when we shuffle off this mortal coil.

A realistic view of life

The Bible is very practical and realistic in its acceptance of the temporary nature of physical life. In its opening pages, talking of the creation of Adam and Eve, it says that we are made of the dust, the elements of the earth.³

A poetic expression of the fleeting nature of life was penned by the psalmist in these words: "As for man, his days are like grass, he flourishes

like a flower of the field; the wind blows over it and it is gone."⁴ Another biblical author wrote: "Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes."⁵

We are like the puff of vapour that forms when we exhale on a cold morning. A fleeting wisp of wind that disappears almost instantaneously.

The Bible view is that each of us is pretty insignificant in the grand scheme of things, when you think of us in comparison to the vastness of the universe, and in the light of the countless aeons of history. A humbling perspective, but hard to argue with. Yet on the other hand, paradoxically the Bible shows God attaches infinite worth and value to every human being. But that is another subject.

"Everyone has to die once" is the candid declaration of the scriptures.⁶ The Bible often alludes to the transience of life. But it also goes on to refer to what happens after death, and it is the only book with the authority to do so, if indeed it was inspired by God, as only he could be privy to the answer to a question like this!

Thousands of years ago, the Old Testament writer Job asked the question: "If we humans die, will we live again?"⁷ He proceeded to give the answer that he expected one day to be resurrected. "I know that God lives, and eventually he'll take his stand on earth. And I'll see him, see God myself, with my very own eyes. Oh, how I long for that day!"⁸

Many other Bible passages talk about the hope of a resurrection. One of the most well known is Paul's statement "In a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet, the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable... Then the saying that is written will come true: "Death has

been swallowed up in victory."⁹

Jesus Christ is quoted as saying "I tell you the truth, a time is coming when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live. Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice and come forth..."¹⁰

But Jesus went beyond just talking of this as a far-off future hope and dream. He showed how it worked in *practice* by actually resurrecting someone!

Is death the *end* of everything – or the *beginning* of something new and exciting? Will there be another life?

Resurrections that have already happened

Four days after the death of his friend Lazarus, Jesus confidently approached the cave which was his tomb and called for him to come out. The Bible records that "the dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face".¹¹

Later, Jesus himself, after being crucified and buried for three days was also resurrected.

Most worldviews have to base their belief in the afterlife on untested faith, but the leader of the Christian Church has actually "been there, done that"! Jesus died and later came back to life again.



A race against time

When Albert Einstein died in April 1955 at the age of 76, a heated race came to an abrupt end.

Einstein lost.

In his later years, the famed physicist worked feverishly to synthesise a revolutionary new theory. "I cannot tear myself away from my work," Einstein wrote. "It has me inexorably in its clutches."

It was a race against time, and time won.

A photograph of Einstein's study in Princeton, New Jersey, taken shortly after his death, shows a blackboard full of equations, a desk overstrewn with reams of paper – and an empty chair. The unfinished business is all too apparent.

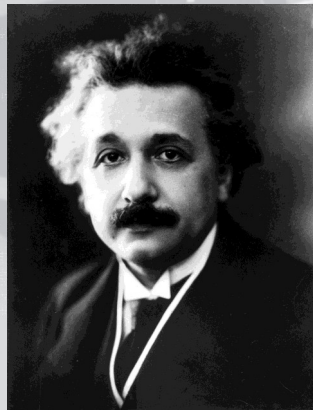
"It seemed that the difference between life and death for Einstein consisted only in the difference between being able to do and not being able to do physics," a fellow physicist had once written.

Will Einstein ever again have the opportunity to "do physics"?

Time and tide wait for no man, observes an English proverb. For most of us, time moves too quickly. We simply cannot find enough time to accomplish all we would like to do in our lives. As we grow older, time seems to whizz by at an even faster rate.

Then, inevitably, comes the end. Authors die leaving uncompleted books, composers leave unfinished symphonies, businessmen die leaving half-built companies, parents die leaving growing children or grand-children.

And then what? Do unrealised potentials die with us? Or are there future opportunities, somewhere beyond death? The accompanying article considers this topic.



AIP Emilio Segre Visual Archives

whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."¹⁵

This promise of eternal life is stated here as only being for those who believe in Jesus. But another Bible passage says that "all will be made alive",¹³ meaning that every human being who has ever lived will be resurrected. What will happen to those who don't believe in Jesus? If they are resurrected, but not to eternal life, to what sort of life will they rise? And what will the "eternal life" promised to the believers be like? That's another fascinating topic. If you would like further information on these questions, please write to PO Box 2709, Auckland.

In summary, there are two general viewpoints on the question of what happens after death. For atheists, this natural lifespan is all there is, and there is no hope for anything beyond it. However, for Christians there is the hope of a resurrection and eternal life beyond that. And as we have discussed in this article, there is historical evidence that this belief is true.

Humankind, uniquely among life forms on earth, possesses an innate sense of the infinite. We seem to be hardwired with the need to extend this wonderful consciousness we now experience. Whether you believe the claims of Christianity or not, surely it is worth looking very carefully at them before you have to attend your own funeral?

The resurrection of Jesus isn't simply a fanciful notion. It is an historical event recorded by a number of authors in documents dating from the first century AD, when it occurred.

There were many witnesses of the events surrounding the resurrection, including a number of Roman soldiers. After this amazing occurrence a writer stated that over 500 people had seen the risen Jesus, and that most of them were still alive at that time.¹² If this had not been true, the Jews or Romans could have silenced the early Christians who began to preach it, by simply producing the body. The early church members were so convinced of the veracity of the

resurrection that they died in their thousands for that belief.

If it was possible for Jesus and Lazarus to be resurrected, it is possible for others to rise again, and in fact that's what the Bible says will happen to everyone who has ever lived. "As in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive."¹³

After he had resuscitated Lazarus from the grave, Jesus said to his sister "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies."¹⁴

What kind of life will people be resurrected to? A clue is found in the most often quoted Bible verse of all. "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that

1. *Inside Life* issue 1/2006. For a free copy, please write to P.O. Box 2709, Auckland 1140.
2. *Inside Life* issue 2/2006. Free copies available at above address.
3. Genesis 2:7
4. Psalm 103: 15
5. James 4:14
6. Hebrews 9:27 ("The Message" version)
7. Job 14:14 ("The Message")
8. Job 19:25-26 ("The Message")
9. 1 Corinthians 15:52
10. John 5:25-28
11. John 11:44
12. 1 Corinthians 15:6
13. 1 Corinthians 15:22
14. John 11:25
15. John 3:16

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Helping the GRIEVING

Do you know how to help a person who's dealing with death — whether his or her own impending death or that of a loved one?

By David Albert

Death is real. It occurs all around us, and sometimes it hits very close to home.

And when it does, death finds most of us totally unprepared to deal with it. We tend to exalt youth, life and energy, and almost deny the existence of old age and death. It's as if we're all pretending to be immortal, and we live as if not thinking about old age will make sorrow and death go away.

There's often anger accompanying the grief of the loss of life. People get angry at God, angry with their relatives and comforters, even angry at the deceased. One widow I know of blurted out to her deceased husband, "How *could* you go off and leave me at a time like this?" Needless to say, the rest of the family members were pretty much at a loss to know what to say. How do you deal with anger — even irrational, displaced anger — at times like that? What do you say?

And then, of course, there may be guilt. "Why didn't I do this or that or say the other thing before he died?" Or, "If I had only thought to do this or not do that, maybe she wouldn't have died."

Four simple things

Here are four simple, basic things you can do to help people in a time of crisis and bereavement, four practical ways to be genuinely helpful to others in their hour of

need: 1) Listen to them; 2) Let them feel what they're feeling; 3) Help them in practical ways; and 4) Learn from them.

You need to know these, because as a friend, relative or loved one, you have enormous potential at such times to either help or hurt. We've all heard of situations where people said the wrong thing and caused deep hurt. None of us wants to add to another's pain in times such as these. We all want to be helpful and competent. But it takes more than just being well-meaning. We have to know what to do.

None of us wants to add to another's pain in times like these. We all want to be helpful and competent. But it takes more than just being well-meaning. We have to know what to do.

Often when we're faced with another person's grief and bewilderment, we desperately scramble in our minds, trying to find the right thing to say. What we often forget is that what the bereaved person needs most is someone who will listen. So the first thing we need to be prepared to do for people in these crises is just listen to them. Nothing you can say or do is likely to be as helpful as simply listening.

I wanted to talk

Notice how one newly widowed woman wrote of her experience in the days and weeks just after her husband died:

"Alone in my house, I longed for someone to call. Watching from my window, I desperately hoped every car slowing down, or footsteps approaching, might be a visitor. Anyone would have done. *I wanted to talk.* But if they came and spoke on any subject other than the one most on my mind, then equally I longed for them to leave and sometimes fear I made it obvious."

More than anything, this widow wanted to talk to someone — *anyone* — who would simply listen. People dealing with death and dying often have a lot to say and an urgency to say it. They're experiencing powerful emotions and often feel as if they're going to go crazy if they can't tell someone what they're going through. They need to talk, and they desperately need someone to listen. Can you do that? Can you keep your mouth closed and your ears open?

Sometimes you won't know how to respond or what to say. Then try not saying anything. There's a power and a beauty in silence. There's also the message: "I'm here. I'm with you. I don't know what to say, but I won't run away, and I'm going to hang in there with you the best I can." That message will be remembered long after the words are forgotten.

Let them grieve

The next thing you can do for those in the shock and sorrow of death and dying is let them feel what they're feeling. In other words, don't try to talk them out of their feelings or push them away from their feelings. We can do that, if we're not careful, with phrases like: "You mustn't feel that way, dearie." "Buck up and be brave." "Cheer up, honey; everything will work out in the end." "Don't cry. It's time to quit crying and move on now."

Advice like that usually comes not from trying to meet the other person's needs, but our own. It comes from our inability to deal with their feelings, our discomfort at seeing their tears, hearing their grief. Don't tell grieving people not to grieve. They *need* to grieve. Don't tell them to stifle and choke back their tears and not cry. They *need* to cry.

Modern investigation into the subject of grief and what is commonly called "grief work" confirms what the Bible has said for many centuries. Long ago, the apostle Paul said: "Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. Live in harmony with one another". Can we do that? Be of the same mind? Weep with them rather than tell them not to?

Let them feel and express what they're feeling inside — the anger, the hurt, the fear, the guilt, the sorrow. It won't hurt you to hear it, and it will very likely help the other person beyond words to express. Don't expect their words and thoughts to be rational and logical. They'll have ups and downs and sometimes wild mood swings. Grief has a logic of its own. It often makes sense across time — and getting through it *does* take time.

One woman who had just lost her child to a sudden illness and death said to those who were trying to calm her down, "Don't take my grief away from me." Some may not understand those words, but they make a lot of sense. She had just lost her child. She was *entitled* to her grief. She *had* to grieve. She would have been doing violence to her

mind and her body to try to keep it in and hold it back.

Don't tell grieving people not to grieve. They *need* to grieve. Don't tell them to stifle and choke back their tears and not cry. They *need* to cry.

Let people grieve their losses. Don't try to take their grief away from them. Let them cry and weep and mourn for the dead. It's healthy and wise to do so. It actually speeds the recovery process, while stifling the emotions only delays it and prevents it. You won't help those grieving by walling them off from their true feelings, so let them feel what they're feeling.

Help in practical ways

The third suggestion is simply to help in practical ways. In times of grief, we sometimes make the mistake of

focusing on a person's mental or emotional needs, and forget his or her physical needs for simple things like food, transportation or paying the bills.

While someone is going through such a crisis, certain simple tasks can be difficult or unfamiliar — like balancing the chequebook or getting the car serviced. To the bereaved, mundane tasks seem almost irrelevant and very tedious and hard to do. All these ordinary tasks of daily living still need attention, but some of these things may seem difficult, virtually impossible, for the person in a state of shock and grief. How can you help in these practical ways? There's a simple way to find out — just ask them. Ask, "Is there anything you need?" Or, "Is there anything you want me to do?"

Something like getting a spouse's clothes out of the closet for the funeral, or contacting the relatives, may be needed and appreciated beyond



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words to express. Remember that the grieving person has been hit a severe blow and has, in most cases, greatly decreased energy for even simple tasks. That person needs to be able to lean on you for support — sometimes quite literally. Let people in grief lean on you for whatever you can reasonably supply at this critical time.

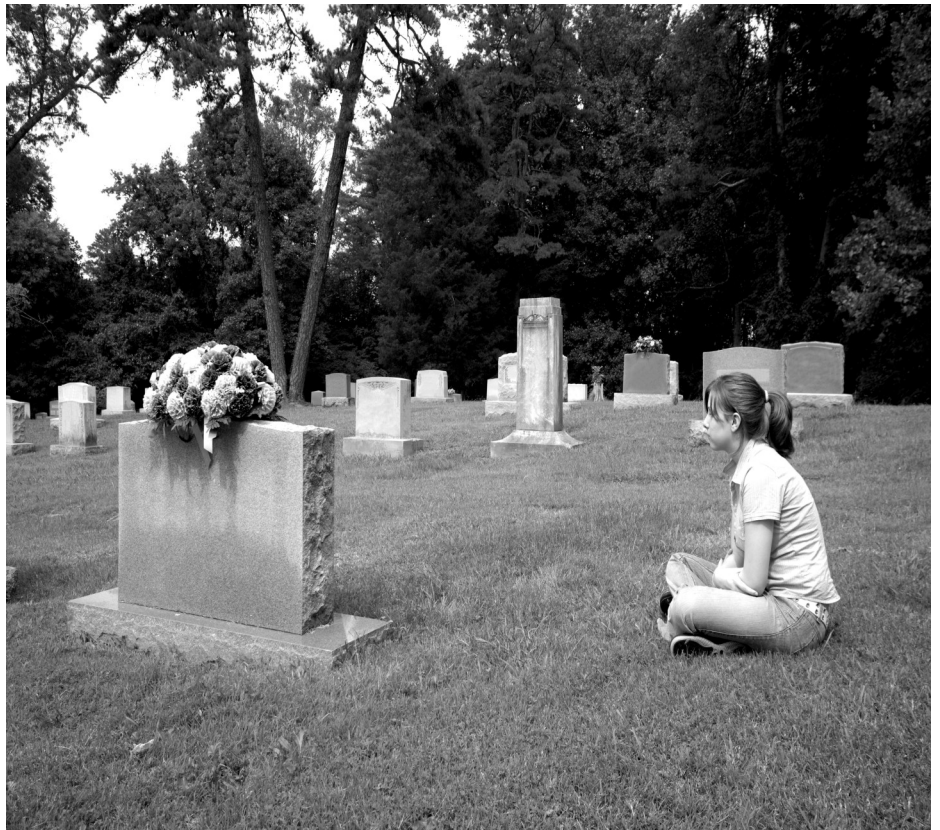
If they're having a hard time even identifying their needs and asking for help, ask yourself, What would I need if I were in this same position? Then check to see if they want your help in that area. "Can I help with the kids?" "Do you want me to answer the phone?" Sometimes the need is obvious and apparent. "Let me make the meals for you for a while."

To a person weakened and fatigued by shock and grief, little things really mean a lot, so look for practical ways of helping such people and giving them some relief.

Learn from them

Fourthly, there's a way we can benefit from people facing the most severe of all life's trials — we should learn from them. People in touch with death and dying are coming to grips with their own mortality. And even though they're having a rough time handling it, they may be more in touch with reality than you are.

Let's face it, death is an inevitable part of human life. Whether we want to face it or not, we're *all* going to die someday. We're all mortal human beings, and people who are dealing with that fact can be powerful teachers if we're ready and willing to



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hear what they have to say.

People who have had a brush with death are often wiser and more in touch with the things that really matter. You can learn a lot from such experiences — or from others who have gone through them.

For many people, the lessons learned through the trials of sorrow, loss and grief have brought invaluable gains in understanding. From these experiences, their lives have been permanently changed for the better. Faced with death and coming to grips with the shortness of human life, many people begin for the first time to ask some searching questions about life, death and the possibility of a life hereafter. The lead article in this issue of "Inside Life" considers some of those issues.

We all love and cherish life. Our lives and the lives of our loved ones are precious and important to us, as they should be. But we need to understand that these short, mortal, perishable lives we prize so dearly are neither the final form nor the highest form of life. At their best, they only begin to suggest what wonderful plans God has in mind for us in the future.

Thoughts about Grief...

"He that conceals his grief finds no remedy for it."

-- Turkish Proverb

"Tearless grief bleeds inwardly."

-- Christian Nevell Bovee

"The risk of love is loss, and the price of loss is grief. But the pain of grief is only a shadow when compared with the pain of never risking love."

-- Hilary Stanton Zunin

"Happiness is beneficial for the body, but it is grief that develops the powers of the mind."

-- Marcel Proust

"Grief makes one hour ten."

-- William Shakespeare

"If you suppress grief too much it can well redouble."

-- Moliere

"Friendship doubles our joy and divides our grief."

-- Swedish Proverb

"Given a choice between grief and nothing, I'd choose grief."

-- William Faulkner



Does “Intelligent Design” *belong in Science class?*



By Dennis Gordon

In the last couple of years the concept of Intelligent Design (ID) has really hit the news headlines. Articles in major weeklies like *Time* and editorials in other magazines and newspapers have discussed the pros and cons of the controversy, which has been raging especially in the United States.

What is Intelligent Design? It is the idea that, because the universe and life are so complex, they must be the deliberate creation of a higher power. That power is not usually named as God by ID enthusiasts — the point of Intelligent Design theory is merely to introduce the notion of a Designer into the science classroom, as a counter to evolutionism, without necessarily making a statement about who the designer may be.

Predictably, the scientific community has reacted very strongly against this. They say it is merely a ploy to introduce the creationist interpretation of origins into education. [Strictly, Creationism is a particular interpretation of Genesis 1, the first chapter in the Bible. What might be called “young-earth creationists” argue that the universe, earth, and all life were created in just six days about 10,000 years ago. But the term is usually also applied to “old-earth creationists”, who accept scientific evidence that the universe is billions of years old but nevertheless argue that God created all there is by separate acts of fiat (“Let there be ...”) during those billions of years.] Most scientists, on the other hand, including many Christian scientists, point out that science cannot prove the existence of God, therefore invoking him to

explain something in nature that we may not yet understand, in fact explains nothing. To do so brings all scientific enquiry to a halt.

Ironically, these scientists may have scripture on their side. Jesus Christ himself specifically said, “God is Spirit”. What this means is that God, who created time, space, and matter, is himself outside time and space and is non-material, therefore he cannot be detected by the tools of science. He cannot be seen, measured, weighed, quantified, or objectified.

Science is simply inadequate to the task of pointing to any one difficult-to-explain gap in scientific knowledge and saying, “There, this definitely, measurably, objectively proves beyond all doubt that God is responsible for the existence of ... the fundamental forces of nature, star formation, proteins and nucleic acids, living cells, complex organs like the eye, species, and so on.” This doesn’t mean God may not be behind all these things — it’s just that the scientific method cannot prove it one way or the other.

This actually poses no problem to Christianity. Christian scholars and commentators note that the Bible itself points out that God can only be known spiritually and relationally. While the Bible does clearly say that the creation is God’s handiwork and gives evidence of his existence, this is in terms of general revelation. This is why some Christian scientists have no difficulty with, say, the concept of biological evolution, arguing that God fully gifted the creation with the ability to be and to become. These scientists make a distinction between evolution (a natural process that may itself have been created) and evolutionism (an

atheistic philosophy that denies the possibility of a creator). Whatever the case, many theologians are themselves agreeing that the idea of Intelligent Design does not belong in the science classroom, though it certainly belongs in classes on religion or cultural history.

This is why, on 18 November 2005, the Vatican’s chief astronomer, astrophysicist George Coyne, himself stated that “Intelligent Design” isn’t science and doesn’t belong in science classrooms. While reaffirming God’s role in creation, he said that science explains the history of the universe. Even the conservative US ministry group *Reasons to Believe* recently stated, “As it currently stands, we believe ID should *not* be taught in biology class. That is not to say we think there’s a lack of evidence in the record of nature for the work of an Intelligent Designer. Far from it! ... However, at this juncture, ID isn’t formulated as a scientific theory. To date, ID has not developed an origins model with scientifically testable assertions and falsifiable predictions. No ID theory accounts for the history of the universe and of life. There are no ID predictions about what scientists should discover when they examine the record of nature. Without a testable model, ID cannot guide future scientific investigation.”

Dennis Gordon, who lives in Wellington with his wife Brenda and 13-year-old Adrian, is a marine biologist at a Crown Research Institute. He also serves on the Council of Wellington Churches. Dennis can be contacted at gordonfamily@paradise.net.nz.





Changing LANDSCAPES

By Gael McInnes

Whilst lunching recently at a café in a busy local shopping mall, I was amazed at the changing landscape. Not only had shops changed owners and names, but the populace was much more diverse. I asked myself, "Where have you been?" Working fulltime for the past 40-odd years actually, so lunching out has been a rarity.

It seemed as though I was a 'foreigner' in the land of my birth. Colourful sareed women, two and three generations together, and a turban topped man were sitting at a nearby table, chattering in a language I couldn't decipher. The lady who served me coffee spoke with a 'foreign' accent.

The skin colours of those walking through the mall were all different shades, and made my distinct white colouring, although lightly tanned, pale into insignificance – or did I stand out?

Later on I saw some of 'my own kind', all shapes and sizes, mainly elderly, and alone. Some used walking sticks, others leant heavily on their trusty walking frames, and another 'drove' past on a motorised scooter. I pondered on their situations, the 'aloneness', compared to the three generations. Where were their families, their support systems? Did they have any?

Facing many challenges

A lot of new immigrants have moved into my neighbourhood. The spicy odours that waft daily through my kitchen window sometimes compete and conflict with my own meal preparation.

Rubbish day has brought disaster in the past, as many 'un-recycables' have been left kerb-side for blowing in the wind! A pastime for me has been donning disposable gloves to help keep my cul-de-sac litter free. It's improving, as the message gets through.

My letterbox gets cluttered with all manner of advertising material, despite the 'No junk mail' label. Other times I get nothing at all, even missing out on my local 'Courier', as it appears those delivering cannot read or are confused.

Challenges for sure, but I have made friends with Filipinos, Indians from Fiji, India and South Africa, Asians and Zimbabweans. A diversity of colour mixes and varying degrees of English comprehension. They have come to our clean green country for a better life, to give their children a chance of a good education and available health care. Being involved in both the Education and Health sectors, I can readily see that these groups of people can bring many a challenge.

Ethnic eating places are now part of the local scene, as are the owners of

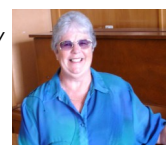
the corner dairies. I have my favourite Vietnamese Bakery and Take-away. Temples of varying ethnic ideologies now dot the landscape, alongside our own Christian Churches. At times I think it makes for a dangerous mix – the unknown, the strange traditions, sights, smells, language barriers.

Meeting the challenges

The challenge for me, as a Christian, is to welcome them, make them feel at home, offer assistance and help integrate them into the Kiwi way of life. The New Zealand flag flies proudly above the house of my Kiwi neighbours. It's comforting.

I'm so grateful that I am able to spend my life in a democratic society, and in peace and comfort. I want it to stay that way. This means living with my neighbours peaceably. Instead of criticizing them and their 'strange' customs, I get to know them, learn from them and respect them. I learn not only to tolerate our differences, but to celebrate them. We all have something to offer to our society and local communities. I don't have to change my belief system to accommodate theirs. But I do need to set the best example I can of being a good Kiwi citizen.

Gael McInnes, who lives in South Auckland, is a recently retired nurse and midwife, experienced in holistic care. Gael worked in diverse health arenas and taught at tertiary level.



It's a “grand job”



© Photographer: Pavel Losevsky | Agency: Dreamstime.com

By Bryony Wood

A few weeks ago I was sleeping fitfully when the phone jolted me out of a dream. Fumbling madly in the pitch dark to find the light switch, I finally managed to grab the phone and held my breath, waiting for the news.

'Isabella Grace, 7lb 11oz, born at five past two, Mum and baby doing great'. Barely half an hour old and already she'd reduced me to tears of joy.

What a huge relief. The labour that seemed to have gone on for hours and hours was over and a new little person was now in our family.

A healthy child too, I never take that for granted. A tiny bundle of promise for us to love and unwrap as the years go by.

Isabella is my second grandchild, a beautiful sister for two-year-old

Noah. Quite simply, for me, being a grandma is like being able to eat all the chocolate in the world without the calories. It's like having ten tons of happiness landing on your doorstep.

We've survived

For those fortunate enough to become grandparents, we've survived parenthood and come out the other end, hopefully with some wisdom and experience. We know more about life, love and the universe, and if we are diplomatic, wise and sensitive we can invest into our grown-up children the right love and support that can make their own journeys a little easier.

What kind of grandparent do you want to be? Much of it is a choice we make, but some things are not so simple. Families are often so spread out these days, so it might be 'quality time' rather than 'quantity time' that you have with your grandchildren. But with some effort, dis-

We don't stop playing because we grow old; we grow old because we stop playing.

tances can be bridged with creative thinking. Modern technology can help. One teenager I know has his 'Techno-Gran' who bought a mobile phone and learnt to text so she could keep in touch with her grandchildren. But however you communicate, make it personal — to the child — as often as possible. Letters, e-mails, postcards and telephone calls addressed to the whole family are all fine, but children of all ages feel special if they get something addressed to them.

Working as a team

Ideally, family life should offer us acceptance and safety, a place to

retreat when things get tough, and of course, unconditional love. But all too often family life today is less than ideal and this is where grandparents can step in and help. But be careful. This must be done without undermining the parents' role and destabilising the situation further. You need to be working as a team. Having that extra generation gap can mean communication between the child and grandparent is easier than with the parent. Keeping an open, honest, loving relationship means that you can be the 'bolt-hole' when things get tough for your grandchild — especially a teenager.

One granny I know invites her teenage granddaughter around each month for a special meal, with all the best china and crystal out. It's a three-course posh dinner that makes them both feel valued and has seen them both through tough situations as they chat and share precious time together.

However, being a grandparent does not mean you have to buy your way into a child's affections. It's often the inexpensive — or even free — things done year in, year out, with love and laughter that will be remembered for ever. And of course, the greatest gift to give to any child is time and love.

Going from two generations to three generations is like adding the third dimension to family life.

It's often a grandparent's death that is the first bereavement a child faces. How we face our own ageing, how we deal with illness, increasing fragility and limitations will have a huge impact on them. It is our duty to show them how to do this well, and dispel fears about ageing and death. Show them it is possible to grow older with style and dignity, while still being able to laugh and enjoy every day to the full.



I've learnt so much

Since being a grandma, I've learnt so much about the joys of children that I think passed me by when I was a new mum. Watching a child discover something is like watching creation unfold all over again. We become so blasé about the world, that seeing things through a child's eyes reminds us of the beauty and wonder around us. Stopping to smell the flowers on a walk around the block may add ages to the walk, but with a small child clutching your hand, stopping to smell a perfumed rose, letting it tickle your noses is just priceless. Someone once said 'we don't stop playing because we grow old; we grow old because we stop playing. But excuses to play aren't necessary with a grandchild in tow.

There's an old adage that says 'when a baby is born, so is a grandparent'. While you may have years of valuable experience in the role of parent, being a grandparent is subtly different, and it will take some adjusting to. Your own children probably won't bring up their children the way you would. You have to earn the right to give advice, and even then it should only be given when specifically asked, handed out in tiny packages, which are carefully wrapped in love and approval.

These days too, older people are younger, if you know what I mean! Now we generally work longer, live longer, keep healthier and active

longer. Being a grandparent often happens when you're in the prime of life. It's no longer the domain of the elderly retired couple that have all the time in the world (as if!). Many grandparents are working and have to squeeze family time into an already hectic schedule. The work/life balance keeps on challenging us the more our family grows.

But you can only do, what you can do, and perfecting the art of guilt-free juggling is worth learning!

Going from two generations to three generations is like adding the third dimension to family life. Even though I'm still relatively new to being a grandma I've learnt so very much. I've learned to play again, to dance to nursery rhymes and wiggle on the floor like a snake. I've fallen in love, head over heels in love with someone new; and I'm learning to invest in a relationship that I've waited half my life for. And I intend to use the rest of my life to make the most of it.

Bryony Wood is a mum, grandma, theology student, writer and broadcaster. She lives



in Nottingham, England, and loves visiting NZ to see family, but she hates waving goodbye at Auckland airport.

Put Your Headphones On

By Dexter Faulkner

My teenage son tells me that when he wants to really listen to a favorite CD or MP3, he plugs in his iPod and puts on his headphones. Other noises are blocked out. The sound is like being in the middle of the recording studio. You can catch all the nuances without turning the volume to an ear-damaging level to cover outside noises. It's "total listening", he tells me.

We probably listen more than we do any other human activity except breathe. Listening is important to success in many aspects of life — socially, educationally and in family relationships too.

How would you describe your listening ability? Would you rate it as "total listening", tuning in and out or completely turned off? And most important, how would your friends and family describe your listening ability? Do you listen to others as you like to be listened to?

These are hard questions, but sometimes we should stop and think about them and give ourselves honest answers.

One of the greatest gifts

The value of really listening to another or being listened to is difficult to estimate. Suffice it to say, one of the greatest gifts we can give to our family and friends (or anybody for that matter) is *total listening*.

Again, ask yourself, How is my listening ability? How often do I have to ask people to repeat something they just said? How well do I hear and remember names?

Do you *want* to listen better? If you do, you have already taken a big step in increasing your listening abil-

ity. One way to keep your motivation going is to count the things you learn about your friends and family each time you listen.

Second, avoid interrupting. Concentrate on what is being said. Try to create an atmosphere for communication. You can do this by stopping whatever else you're doing and facing the person talking to you.

One of the biggest problems in listening is that we fail to *focus* on the other person's point of view or idea. It's human nature to want to pass on *our* ideas, feelings, opinions, convictions and jokes. And we want to tell our own thoughts instantly — without even waiting until the other person has finished talking. We interrupt and often change the subject at the same time.

Often the nonverbal interruptions are the most annoying. An impatient look, a sigh, a glance around the room, crossed arms, drumming fingers on chair or table — these and other mannerisms are ways of stat-

ing, without a word: "Are you through now? I'm not really listening and I want to talk or be on my way."

The way to let people know we are really tuned in, with our headphones on, is to listen with our bodies. Stop what you are doing and turn to the speaker with your eyes, ears and the rest of your body.

Listening is a gift you can give, no matter who you are. And you can give it to anyone. It doesn't cost a cent, but it's priceless to a person who needs a listener — and we all do. Whoever you are, you can start today to become a better listener. Concentrate on what is being said and see how much you can learn when you put your headphones on!

Dexter H. Faulkner and his wife Shirley live in Southern California. He is a retired journalist who contributes to several publications worldwide. His email address is faulknerdh@hotmail.com



MARRIAGE SOUP

Provides 2 full helpings

Ingredients:

2 people
1 litre milk of human kindness
1 cup faith and trust in each other
2 tablespoons appreciation
500 mls consideration
1 cup communication
3 teaspoons pure extract of "I'm sorry"
1 cup blindness to the other's faults
100g gentleness
1 overflowing cup love
2 dessert spoons friendship
2 cups laughter
3 heaped tablespoons patience
1 small pinch of in-laws
2 ounces common sense
generous dash of cooperation



Method: First separate the two people from their parents and pour into a well-furnished house. Combine with the overflowing cup of love and 500 mls of consideration. Next blend the gentleness and patience together and beat lightly with a cup of laughter until the mixture is smooth and fluffy.

Now whip the faith and trust into a smooth paste and place over low heat to simmer gently. This is also the time to add tears, dreams, and any other spices you feel will make the dish more flavoursome.

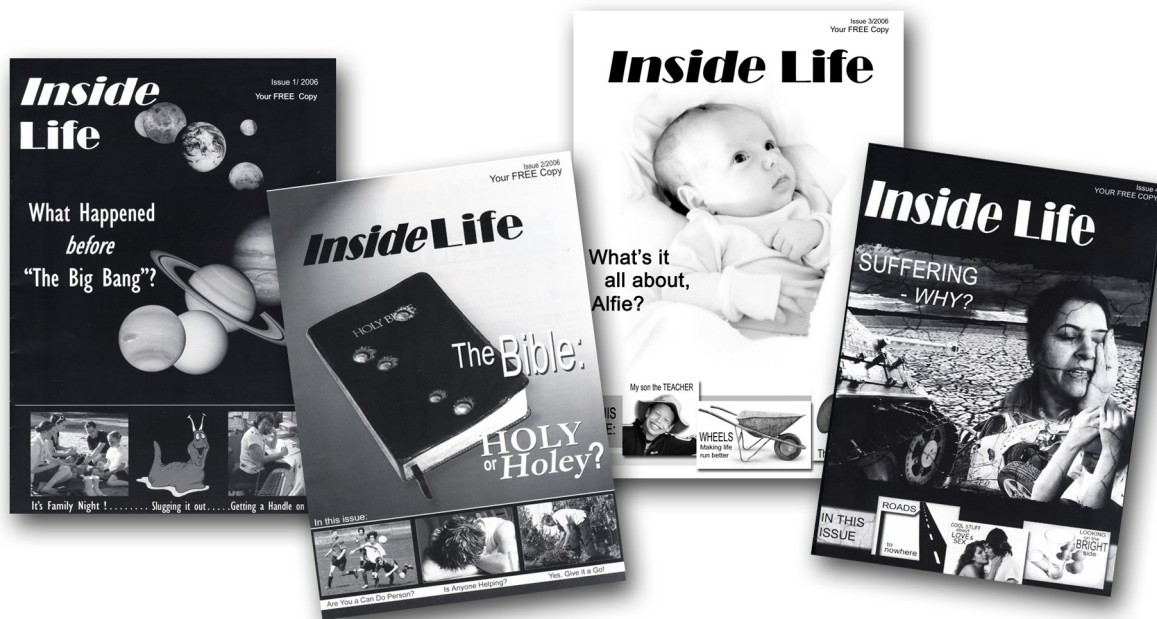
As the mixture simmers, beat the in-laws and the milk of human kindness into a cream and mix well together with the blindness to faults, stirring constantly. Pour the second cup of laughter into the communication and add the common sense. Mix well and remove any specks of jealousy, anger or criticism. Sweeten with generous portions of praise and keep warm with a steady flame of devotion.

Drizzle lightly with the extract of "I'm sorry" and add the dash of cooperation. Boil until tender and garnish with hugs and kisses. Never serve with a cold shoulder. Cook for fifty years and celebrate when golden.



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