

A NEWSLETTER FOR HILLVIEW BAPTIST CHURCH

VIEWPOINTS

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Answers to Prayer - by Pastor Norm Bleick


Illustration by Brian Worobec

In a recent sermon I spoke about the psalmist who was in a state of despair and depression due to circumstances beyond his control. Psalm 42 extols the psalmist's desire to return to Jerusalem so that he could return to his Levitical duties and be immersed in the worship of YHWH. The Psalmist provides four strategies to overcome his current situation:

1. praise God wherever you are,
2. remind yourself of the reasons why you can embrace hope,
3. remember the promises of God, and
4. pray.

Prayer is a profound mystery. Why does a sovereign God who knows what we need before we ask (your Father knows what you need before you ask him – Matthew 6.8 ESV) still compel us to ask? And, of course, the greatest mystery or problem with prayer: why doesn't God answer certain prayers, especially our prayers for loved ones to be healed?

Someone once said that there are three answers to any prayer: yes, no, and not yet. It's the second one that can do violence to our faith. About 20 years ago my friend's wife was diagnosed with cancer at the beginning of October. She passed away near the end of November. Same year. Everyone prayed ardently, arduously, without ceasing. She still died. She was relatively young; she was a devout Christian, consistent in word and deed. She was adored by her husband, children, and grandchild. Why didn't God heal her? Didn't He hear our prayers? Were we doing something wrong? Was there sin in the camp (cf. Joshua 7)? The answer to those questions is. "None of the above."

Sometimes there is more at stake, a greater purpose, a reason that defies, and sometimes offends our sensibilities. When we are in deeply emotional places, painful places, our spiritual life preserver is faith. When we pray, we believe that God hears and answers our prayers. Sometimes we must wait longer than we might care to, but eventually we see the fruit of our prayers. Sometimes we don't. In those moments, days, years, we still cling to faith.

And what do we believe? What we believe is anchored in what we know. We know that God loves us. God's love for us finds no greater demonstration than Calvary.

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Answers to Prayer

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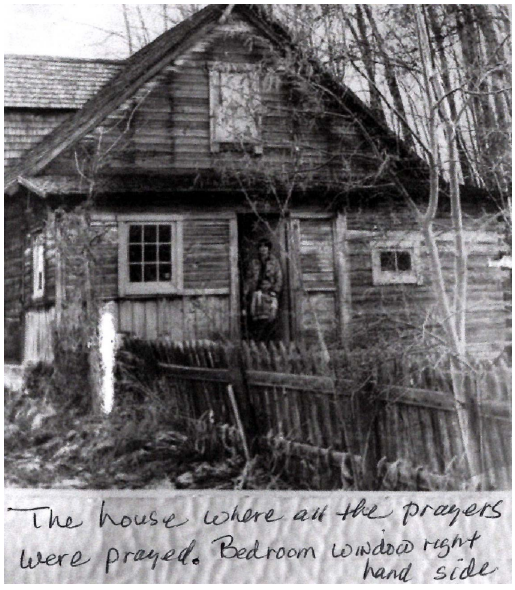
We know that God sees all, knows all, and directs our paths (Psalm 37.23). We know that sometimes God allows us to experience hardship for a greater purpose; such were the trials of Job. We know that God is neither indifferent to our sufferings, sorrows, and ordeals nor is He incapable of seeing us through the valleys of life: Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me. But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. - 2 Corinthians 12.8-9 ESV

Faith requires surrender. When we place our faith in Christ, we confess our sin and our need to be forgiven. By faith we declare that we depend on Christ to justify us, the Holy Spirit to sanctify us, and the Father to guard our lives and guide us. We trust that whatever befalls or besets us fits into His greater plan.

We surrender all, even our need for answers. We put our trust in the one who is able because, suffer as we might, we are not ashamed to be called the children of God, for we know whom we have believed, and we are convinced that He is able to guard until that day what has been entrusted to us against that day.

We trust that whatever befalls or besets us fits into His greater plan.

More From My Grandmother's Prayer - Gulag Survivors - by Gloria Swain



My Grandmother's home. My sister Sharon and little brother Bob are In the doorway

In 1993, and in answer to my grandmother's prayers, I found myself flying across Siberia on a mission trip. As I wrote in the October issue of Viewpoints, my grandmother was from Russia, and prayed constantly for the homeland she loved.

The purpose of my trip was to tell my grandmother's people about the love of Jesus. We arrived in the City of Irkutsk the night before our crusade was scheduled to begin in the stadium. We had the entire next day free. However, relaxing and sightseeing was not on the agenda. The crusade director wanted the gospel to go to as many places and people as possible during our time in Siberia. He hired a bus and made arrangements for us to travel into the country to visit a government run facility for gulag veterans.

A gulag was a soviet run labour (i.e. prison) camp. Although closed down, their skeletal remains were strewn all across Siberia. Some elderly men and women that were released after many years of hard labour in those prisons had lost contact with all family members and had no place to go. The government built facili-

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More From My Grandmother's Prayer - Gulag Survivors - by Gloria Swain



A camp similar to the place Gloria visited! ed

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ties to house these people and provide them with the bare necessities.

After about an hour's drive into the countryside we came across one such facility. It was situated on a parcel of land surrounded by a forest. The building reminded me of something my grandparents kept their cattle in when they first immigrated to Canada.

Upon our arrival the residents started to come out to meet us. They were all elderly and all had visible handicaps. Limbs were missing from some of the men and the women could barely walk. There were no chairs or places for them to sit, so they just sat on tree stumps or on fallen logs while we got ready to sing and bring them the gospel. Tears slid down many cheeks as we hugged them, prayed with them to receive Jesus and just sat and held their hands. At the end of the meeting the crusade director asked if there were any other people in the building and the female director of the facility said there were 6 men in the "death room", but we would not want to go in there. The crusade director was not easily swayed! We came this far and everyone must have the opportunity to hear about Jesus.

He and the Russian translator were led into a room that was large enough to have 3 single beds end to end in two rows. The beds filled the small room. A minute later the Russian translator came running out of the building retching. He refused to go back inside. The crusade director asked me if I would go in with him and translate a simple message about the love of Jesus to the six men who were dying. As I entered the room the stench of human waste was overpowering. However, I did not flinch and stood in the middle of the room and looked down at the human beside me. A boney hand was raised towards me and I held on to it as I spoke a simple message of God's great love for these men.

After the message the 6 men prayed in barely a whisper to accept Christ. As I looked down at the man whose hand I was holding I realized he had no legs and was laying soaked in his own urine, his skeletal body barely covered up with a bed sheet. I looked deep into the bluest eyes I had ever seen. As the tears poured down his face they started to pour down mine too. I have never forgotten that man and even now, 40 years later, I often think of him. I wonder how much longer he lived in those filthy conditions and how soon Jesus came to take him to a much better place.

As we were getting ready to board the bus to go back to the City, I noticed the facility director standing over by a tree looking utterly miserable. Something in my spirit told me to go and talk to her because she needed Jesus. There was no way I was going to talk to that battleaxe of a woman alone. I went up to my roommate, Cara, and told her that we needed to talk to that woman. Cara took one look at her and said, "no way, you go talk to her if God is telling you to do so". After much hesitation and struggle in my spirit, I slowly started to walk towards the facility director. In fear and trembling I asked her if I could pray with her. She broke out into tears and began to tell me the story of how her only child, a daughter, was killed as a teenager. She could not get over the grief of losing her daughter and was angry at everyone, even God if in fact, he did exist.

During the prayer she broke and prayed to accept Jesus. Afterwards she entered the bus where the rest of the team were waiting, and told us how the Government provided funds to look after the Gulag survivors. But she only spent the bare minimum on the survivors and kept the rest of the money for herself. She repented and cried and asked us for forgiveness and promised that things would change from that day onward. As our bus drove away she stood and waved a white handkerchief in our direction, with a big smile on her face. In answer to my grandmother's prayers more of her people came to Jesus!

Christmas Fun Comes Early - by Gloria Swain

SHOE BOX PACKING PARTY

On the afternoon of October 15th in the church you would find 7 faithful party goers ready to start carousing and filling shoe boxes for Samaritan's Purse. The supplies had either been contributed or purchased by funds donated by individuals.



From left to right - Uma, Margaret, Tracy, Irene and Donalda

About 150 boxes were all made up and ready to be filled, thanks to Russ and Donalda. The various items to be included were laid out on the tables, ready for us to carefully pack them into the colourful shoeboxes. This is a skill requiring both patience and dexterity.

Happily we grabbed a box and began to fill it with items according to the age and sex of the child. There were school supplies for the older kids and colouring books and crayons for the younger kids. Other items included some hygiene products, socks, hair clips, balls of various sizes, toys for boys and toys for girls, along with many stuffed animals. Each box also contains a letter expressing greetings from Canada with many hugs and expression of love.

After an hour of filling boxes we had a snack break, with food and coffee supplied by Donalda. Then, back to the party for another hour of packing. Unfortunately, that was about all the time of standing and walking our old bodies could take.

When all was said and done 82 boxes were filled. However, as the week went on, Irene, Uma and Donalda met again and the final box count was 142. We were able to pack more shoeboxes because of a larger than usual financial donation.

In the end it's not what is in the boxes that counts, but what results from the boxes. When the boxes are distributed, the children are invited back to learn about Jesus.

When I attended a Leadership training course a few weeks ago, I heard stories of how entire communities came to Jesus because of the classes the children attended after receiving the shoe boxes. Thank you for your contributions and commitment to this project.

God Bless Donalda and Russ Nelson for their faithfulness and commitment to overseeing and managing this effort during these past few years. And God Bless each one of you!

IT'S ALL ABOUT JESUS!



Margaret so satisfied and thrilled at filling one box! Time for tea!

You too can participate - free boxes are in the foyer, - fill them and return by Sunday, November 8th



Irene admiring school supplies and reminiscing about her wild days at school.

Garden Works - by Gloria Swain

COMMUNITY GARDEN ENDS FOR ANOTHER YEAR

On Saturday afternoon, October 10, as the snow was falling, a few of our Community Gardeners met for our year end reunion. Among them was a new lady in the community who was interested in obtaining a plot for next year.

We had a round table discussion of what we planted, what grew well and what didn't do well. All in all it was the best year ever for our community garden, with potatoes, carrots, beets and cucumbers being the best growers. Not far behind were yellow beans, tomatoes, zucchinis and, of course, the beautiful sunflowers. Celery, romaine lettuce and other greens were also planted and they all did well.

Larry gave a brief overview of how the soil was prepared this spring, with more compost being added and tilled. Howard gave an update on the watering system. We only had to use 300 liters of City water this year. The rest of the water was provided by the rains we had.



Illustration by Brian Worobec

He explained how the two tanks worked to collect and distribute the water. Howard also reported on the 12 bags of good compost he obtained free of charge from Canadian Tire because the bags had a hole in them. Talk about God's provision and being at the right place at the right time.

We still have the problem of vegetables being stolen from the planters. Janice told us that while she was harvesting her garden, a lady pulled up in her vehicle and helped herself. Janice tried to explain how the garden worked but the lady ignored her and simply drove away with the stolen food. Solange was very disappointed that her Romaine lettuce was taken along with some potatoes and carrots.

A visitor from Tofield said at their garden they had signs indicated which plots were rented and which ones were for community. They didn't have any problems with stolen vegetables. This is something we may consider for next year. We also planted 2 plots for the Food Bank and were able to harvest a big box of potatoes for them.

As the snow continued to fall outside, we sat and talked inside the Church, drank hot chocolate, ate Tim Bits and dreamed of great big green thumbs for next spring.

Mirror, Mirror OFF Wall - by Gloria Swain

A few months ago, I woke up to find a big mess of glass in my ensuite bathroom. The mirror had come unglued, fell and laid shattered in a million pieces. I cleaned up the mess and then decided to pray about getting a new mirror. I was in no hurry about replacing the mirror as I didn't really use that one. However, when my sister came to visit a few weeks ago she got on my case about a new mirror. I just kept telling her that God would provide, I would wait for Him. She just rolled her eyes at me. What else is new, it's always about God. While she was here, I had a dream that God had a mirror for me at Value Village. I was surprised at the dream as I never go to Value Village. More eye rolling when I told my sister about my dream.



For some reason, I was never in a hurry to look for a new mirror. However, the other day when I was returning home, there was Value Village right in front of me. I decided to stop and check out the mirrors. I found nothing. But as I was about to walk out the door, a glint of light caught my eye. I looked up; there on the wall was a beautiful mirror in a bronze frame. It looked to be the right size. The critical thing about this mirror, the sizing had to be just right. It had to fit between a wall and a cabinet. I got help getting the mirror down and the measurements were taken. Hallelujah, the mirror measured 31" X 43" . The right size for my spot. Not only was the mirror perfect, so was the price $25.00. His ways are perfect and dreams do come true. Glory to our God!

Christmas Cards to Missionaries - by Gloria Swain



Illustration by Brian Worobec

REMEMBERING OUR MISSIONARIES AT CHRISTMAS!

Please, let us not forget about our missionaries during the Christmas season. Many of them are far from home, friends and family. How exciting it would be for them to receive a greeting from Canada. Your Missions Committee is giving you the opportunity to do that. Just write up a card or two and slip it into Gloria Swain's mailbox. We will ensure that the cards are mailed out in time for Christmas at no cost to you.

The Missionaries we sponsor are:
Erin Bergman - Teach Beyond Canada
Lyndell and Paulo Campbell-Requia - Brazil
Sherri Hufnagel - France
Jeff and Sonya Kilmartin - Cameroon
Roman and Vicky Gehring - Wycliffe Bible Translators
Nathan Reich - Youth For Christ - Moose Jaw
Chain of Love Sponsorships - Lorenzo and Alice
Aaron Cranton - Old Strathcona Street Ministry, Edmonton
Lindsay Gelinas - Japan

Deadline date for cards is November 15/26



What to write about? Simple is good. Possible topics -

- The weather in Edmonton, Canada.
- Your plans for Christmas.
- What is happening at Hillview Church.
- A comment on a vacation or a trip that you recently took.
- What you do at Hillview.

Biblical Time and Stars - by Wayne Baker

1. Biblical Chronology and the Age of the Universe



Ecclesiastes 3:11 – "He has made everything beautiful in its time."

Psalm 90:4 states: “A thousand years in your sight are like a day that has just gone by, or like a watch in the night.”
— Psalm 90:4, New International Version (Zondervan, 2011)

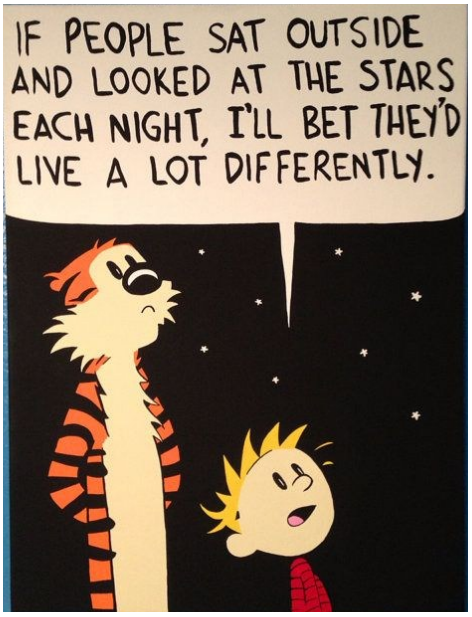
This verse raises an interesting question about how we understand time from God's perspective. When considered alongside Einstein's theory of relativity, it may offer a starting point for exploring the relationship between biblical chronology and the age of the universe. The final phrase, “or like a watch in the night,” is particularly interesting. A traditional night watch was approximately four hours long. If we use this four-hour period as an analogy for a thousand years, then a full twenty-four-hour day would represent six thousand years.

Applying that ratio to the length of a year gives the following calculation:
6,000 years × 365.25 days per year × 6,000 years = 13,149,000,000 years.

This produces an estimate of approximately 13.15 billion years. The calculation is an interpretation of the verse rather than an explicit biblical statement about the age of the universe. Nevertheless, it raises an interesting question about whether biblical language concerning time can be explored in relation to modern cosmological estimates.

2. The Heavens and the Laws of Nature

Job 38:31–33 records God's questions to Job: “Can you bind the chains of the Pleiades? Can you loosen Orion’s belt? Can you bring forth the constellations in their seasons or lead out the Bear with its cubs? Do you know the laws of the heavens?”
— Job 38:31–33, New International Version (Zondervan, 2011)



These verses raise several intriguing questions about the relationship between the biblical text and our understanding of astronomy.

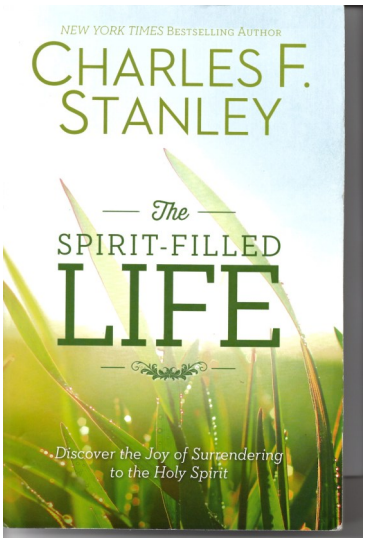
Job 38:33 is particularly noteworthy because it refers to the “laws of the heavens.” This language invites consideration of the regularities and patterns that govern celestial objects. Although the passage does not explicitly describe modern physical laws, it does present the heavens as an ordered creation whose workings exceed human understanding.

Job 38:31 also refers to the Pleiades and Orion. These are recognizable stellar groupings, but they differ in their physical characteristics and long-term behavior. The stars within a constellation may appear close together from Earth even when they are separated by considerable distances in space. Their apparent arrangements can change over time as the stars move independently.

This raises an important interpretive question: what did the author of Job intend to communicate by contrasting the binding of the Pleiades with the loosening of Orion's belt?

This is Part 1 of a series by Wayne on creation, and evolution. It speaks to the accuracy, truthfulness and indeed the wonder of the Bible. Ed

A Book Worth Reading - a review by Kurt Redschlag



Every so often a book comes along that almost seems to have been written specifically for us. It might be because it deals with a subject that is of great interest to us, or perhaps it alerts us to a weak or neglected area of our life that needs to be addressed. One of the books I recently read has both of these elements. It deals with a subject that is central in my life, but it also challenged me to examine a crucial area of my life that needs a spiritual tune-up. My guess is that many of you may need to re-visit this area of your life as well, and I would therefore highly recommend it to you. It is titled

The Spirit-Filled Life,

and was written by the late Dr. Charles F. Stanley in 2014. It is not a shallow make-me-feel-good kind of book, but one that lovingly, yet also sternly, addresses one of the deeper spiritual issues of our lives, and as such, it will resonate with thoughtful and spiritually-sensitive believers.

> "My heart breaks for the men and women who are simply going through the motions - going to church, reading their Bibles, saying their prayers, confessing their sins - but who never enjoy an intensely personal, wonderful intimate and profoundly fulfilling relationship with the living God".
>
> Dr. Charles F. Stanley

This book is a passionate invitation to Christians to move from a dry and mundane "I'm-doing-the-best- I-can" kind of life to one that is rich and vibrant and more in line with the kind of life God intended us to live. As Dr. Stanley wrote in the opening chapter, "My heart breaks for the men and women who are simply going through the motions - going to church, reading their Bibles, saying prayers, confessing their sins - but who never enjoy an intensely personal, wonderfully intimate, and profoundly fulfilling relationship with the living God." This book will appeal to serious Christians who are dissatisfied with the spiritual health of their lives and are honest enough to admit that somehow their lives are sadly "void of the Father's divine influence."

While the author encourages believers to seek a deeper and more intimate walk with God, he also warns that this is utterly unattainable through our own self-efforts and that we need divine intervention. Then through clear and easy-to-understand doctrinal teaching and through some of his rich personal experiences, Dr. Stanley guides his readers to the true source of the abundant and fulfilling life God has promised us, namely, yielding ourselves completely and unreservedly to the indwelling Holy Spirit.

But he goes beyond the Holy Spirit's work in the life of the individual believer, and also stresses the Holy Spirit's vital role in the life and ministry and mission of the body of Christ - the church.

If deep down in your heart you have a holy discontent with your current life, if you can't "recognize God's fingerprints in the daily affairs of your life," then this book will help to point out the way for you to experience the most satisfying and dynamic life in all the world - t*he Spirit-filled life!*

I find it strange that people are quite willing to shell out $25 to $30 for a good meal at a restaurant that provides their body with a hour's worth of enjoyment, yet who are reluctant to pay $25 to buy a good book that can nourish them mentally and spiritually for days, and weeks and even years to come.

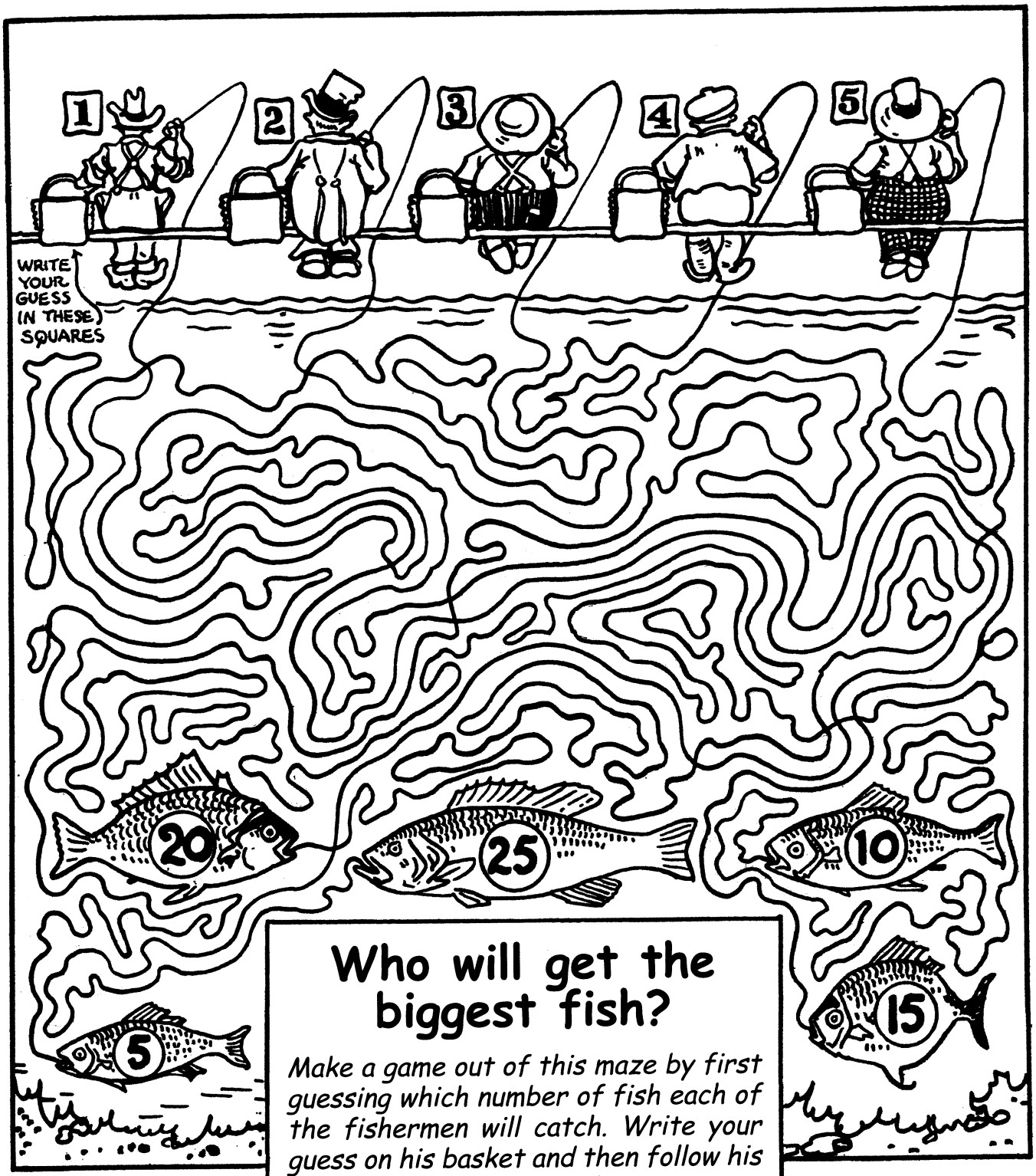
The Spirit-Filled Life is a book to be read and re-read slowly and thoughtfully and in short segments so that it's message can be integrated into your daily life. As you read it, take time to underline important points and write notes in the margins. That makes it easy for you to come back to its salient points again and again. That is also why you should buy it in a *paper* version.

Say, Christmas is just around the corner, so why not spend $24.95 and give yourself a gift - a gift that just might transform your life!

This book is available from Amazon and Indigo (a Kobo version is $8.99). Over the next few issues, Kurt will provide to us a basic overview of prophecy (e.g. The rapture of the Church etc) and another series on using our time, wisely. And occasionally he will tackle some challenging biblical questions. An exceedingly busy and courageous guy! Ed

The Fishing Party

A guessing game.



Who will get the biggest fish?

Make a game out of this maze by first guessing which number of fish each of the fishermen will catch. Write your guess on his basket and then follow his fishing line to see how close you came to your guess.

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Rick's Trivia - All About Cathedrals - by Rick deLeeuw



A cathedral is a church but consists of design features and appearances that are distinctive and impressive. Cathedral design relies on a basic cross floor plan and towering engineering to direct structural weight downward and flood sacred spaces with heavenly light. The size and beauty of a cathedral is seen as honouring to God. There are two variations of the cross.

The Latin Cross: A floorplan where one arm (the nave) is significantly longer than the other. The nave is where worshipers assemble. The perpendicular section or short arms of the cross are called transepts and usually contain chapels.
The Greek Cross: A centralized plan with four arms of equal length, more common in Eastern Orthodox designs.

Since electricity was not around, cathedrals were designed to allow natural light to come in, usually through stained glass windows. Ceilings were designed with large openings, but also constructed to prevent rain from entering the church. Historically, they used candles for illumination.

Cathedral designs evolved through different historical eras, reflecting changes in engineering, religious symbolism, and regional variations. The major architectural styles are:

Early Christian (4th–6th Century): Modeled after Roman civic basilicas, featuring long central halls (naves) with side aisles and a semi-circular apse. An apse is an incomplete or semi dome at the east end of the nave.
Byzantine (6th Century onward): Characterized by massive central domes, rich mosaics, and with a Greek cross floor plans. e.g. Hagia Sophia - Turkey
Romanesque (11th–12th Century): Known for a stout, fortress-like look with thick stone walls, heavy round arches, small windows, and sturdy piers. e.g. Lessay Abbey - France
Gothic (12th–16th Century): Famous for reaching toward the sky with pointed arches, ribbed vault ceilings, flying buttress supports, and large stained-glass rose windows. e.g. Westminster Abbey - London, United Kingdom
Renaissance (15th–17th Century): Revived classical Roman symmetry, geometric proportions, balanced domes, and harmonious lines. e.g. Santa Marie del Fiore - Florence, Italy
Baroque (17th–18th Century): Introduced dramatic, theatrical, and opulent spaces with curving shapes, intense ornamentation, and grandiose altars. e.g. St. Peter's Basilica - Rome, Italy

An exceptional place -

Notre-Dame Cathedral is particularly special because it is a masterpiece of Gothic architecture, the heart of French history, and a resilient symbol of Paris. It took nearly two centuries to build: Construction began in 1163 under King Louis VII and was not completed until 1345. It hosted major historical moments, including the coronation of Napoleon Bonaparte as Emperor in 1804. It also houses revered Christian artifacts, including the Crown of Thorns.
(A fire destroyed the roof and spire in 2019, reconstruction began in 2021. The cathedral reopened in December 2024. The restoration cost over $1 billion CAD and was entirely funded by donations. Joy and I wandered through it in 2026. Without a doubt the most beautiful cathedral we saw during our trip though Europe and we saw a lot of them!. The two pictures are of Notre-Dame taken by Joy. Ed.)

