

seed



VOL. 6 NO. 1 | APRIL 2010

THE MIRACLE OF COINCIDENCE

ACKNOWLEDGING THE DIVINE
IN LIFE AND DEATH **3**

BREAKING OUT OF SURVIVAL MODE

WHY THE GOAL IS TO THRIVE
NOT JUST SURVIVE **13**

SPIRITUAL VITAL SIGNS

MODERN MEDICINE SERVES AS A GUIDE
TO GAUGE OUR SPIRITUAL WELL-BEING **6**

ALSO

MAKEOVER / THE DANCE
WE DON'T HAVE THE FULL PICTURE
CORNY JOKES / POETRY / DEAR SEED
HAPPENINGS / AND MORE

THE EDITOR

In February, Seed members gleefully escaped the city and trekked to Pennsylvania to learn the key to daily spiritual survival: relying on the Holy Spirit. The overnight retreat reminded us that it is He that fills, nourishes, guides and enables us to accomplish all that we must each day.

Experiencing the quenching taste of the Holy Spirit only exposes the parched condition of our lives. Too often we feel dry, empty and directionless. News of natural disasters, current and imminent conflicts around the world, unending schoolwork, strained relationships and personal problems leave us stressed and drained. Past wounds and current dilemmas make us wonder about our life-journey—where exactly are we headed? And will we make it?

Submissions to this semester's issue shared a common theme: an acute awareness of past hurts and wounds. As human beings, we have invariably been touched by pain and grief in various degrees, bringing us to our knees, but also compelling us to seek out our Healer. We hope our experiences and expressions may draw you to the One who offers true healing and grace. Read, rest and enjoy!

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THE MIRACLE OF COINCIDENCE

ANGELA CHANDRACOMAR

In my life's work as a nurse at a cancer hospital, I see and hear of so many "medical miracles" that make me revel at the timing and precision of coincidental events, leading to certain "moments of truth" in the lives of the individuals experiencing them. I've seen patients admitted for symptom management (e.g. chemotherapy-related dehydration and decreased appetite), where something as simple as unrelated back pain that had been long ignored led to the discovery of a tumor compressing against a nerve which could have been detrimental had it not been discovered and treated at that instant, rather than at a much later time when the symptom (and disease) would have worsened. I've seen patients who were bedbound and barely responsive on day one of hospital care, and then two weeks later, they are walking-talking miracles of a doctor's surgical hands, a nurse's diligent care, a physical therapist's direction, a family member's hope, their own will power, and who knows what other forces beyond human recognition.

As life should go, I have also seen the opposite, where a person comes in to the hospital physically and mentally strong, but experiences one unexpected challenge after another, leading him down a path of ultimate spiritual and bodily demise. Some experience these creative "tests of faith" as an awakening of spiritual consciousness, where everything in the universe and life that had led up to these moments of reckoning, finally correlated and made sense. While others choose to see them as "bad karma" or as cards cruelly dealt by God from a deck of suffering.

Of course, everyone interprets life through different eyes and hearts; however, as humans, it is our innate tendency to try to control the events (and people) in our lives. Nevertheless, often embedded in our existence

are obstacles or conditions in which we are forced to relinquish this control. To give up such power is a humbling and profound experience in itself. Sometimes, the road you've been avoiding all along is the one you're destined to take. If so, what then is God, or the Universe, trying to tell us? What are we expected to learn from such "awe"-full experiences in our lives?

BE STILL AND KNOW THAT I AM GOD...

PSALM 46:10

The famous medical philosopher/doctor Deepak Chopra once said that by taking some time to be still and silent in such moments of movement and chaos, one gains access to "the field of pure awareness... the ultimate ground of creation where everything is inseparably connected with everything else." (from *The Seven Spiritual Laws of Success: A Practical Guide to the Fulfillment of Your Dreams*, Amber-Allen Publishing, 1994)

A friend of mine who volunteers for a Hospice (where dying people are cared for) once said to me that through her experience with death and dying, she has gained so much insight on life. About two weeks before that, a dying patient whom I had taken care of told me the same thing.

We wake up each day expecting it to go a certain way, only to discover the naïveté of our presumptions. If only we learn to detach ourselves from the outcome of things beyond our control can we hope to better appreciate the miracle and synchrony of subtle coincidences, and bear witness to the beauty in all of life's tragedies, and see (or feel) God in the details.

2. THE EDITOR
3. THE MIRACLE OF COINCIDENCE
ANGELA CHANDRACOMAR
4. POEM
BIANCA VANDERMEULEN
5. MAKEOVER
ELAINE TSUI
COMIC
JANICE CHUA
6. SPIRITUAL VITAL SIGNS
ANNA CHOI
8. SALVATION IN JESUS
MARY J KIM DIAZ
AD LIB
REY SORIANO
9. WE DON'T HAVE THE FULL PICTURE
BUT GOD GIVES US SOMETHING
MOLLY BRENNAN
10. THE DANCE
TERESA DOMBACH
11. POEM
NINA CONCEPCION
12. DESTINY IS THE BRIDGE YOU BUILD
TO THE ONE YOU LOVE
ANONYMOUS
13. FACING DEATH WITH GRACE
STEPHANIE T VILLEDA
14. DEAR SEED
15. CORNY JOKES
MARY J KIM DIAZ
16. MOST HOLY
STEPHANIE T VILLEDA
17. THE HOLY SPIRIT
AD LIB
REY SORIANO
18. BREAKING OUT OF SURVIVAL MODE
TREVOR AGATSUMA
19. THE PRAYER
ANONYMOUS
20. 21ST CENTURY PHILOSOPHY
JAMES KIM
21. REDEFINING "LOST"
YVETTE SHIN
22. HAPPENINGS

What words will I put on today? A glimmer-gray accessory of cheap hellos, or white-angelic lights strung like teeth across my neck so pearly white, to complement the color of sophistication?

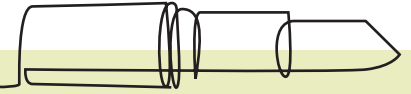
Perhaps an eye-blue satin jacket, tailored well to hug the form of me, and hold me when I twist and turn. I could dig up, dust off old glass-gold slippers, in which I used to wobble up and down the bedroom floor—practicing, you know. But those don't fit me anymore.

I touch my tongue to my lips, and my face blooms pink as I wonder my selection. I have sunflower hats from the springtime and moon-orange skirts from the sky. I have rings of flawed philosophies—and brighter things too, like fingerpaint faces on the sleeves of my blouses, the footprints of children's caresses, before they forgot how to love with their hands. I slip them on and off, and off and on again, again, mood shifting, anxiety sharp and thin, and filling like warm blood my toes.

What words will I put on today?—which, weary and worn, must come off from a bruise-heavy body tonight, to be washed. Why wear again these bright-cloth masks? Can a girl be itself without colorful wings? and still be beautiful, without all these mind-crafted things? My Lord, how I long for the night now already, when your Word is the kiss of sweet lips on pure silence.

1 Peter 3:4
Poem by Bianca vanderMeulen
Photography by Christine Chi

ELAINE TSUI
MAKEOVER



Every year, one of the more popular fashion and beauty magazines parks a "makeover" trailer somewhere on the streets of Manhattan. They then proceed to grab gleeful young women off the sidewalk, whisking them into the trailer for an hour or two, where they then emerge fabulously gorgeous—complete with a new hairstyle, makeup, and spring fashion trend.

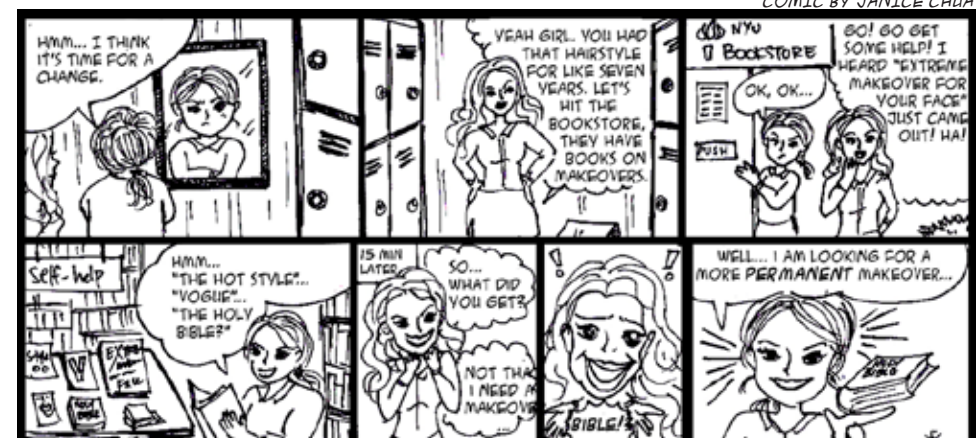
I admit that I was always envious of those lucky people and hoped that one day I'd accidentally walk into the vicinity of one of these "glam-mobiles" and be offered such a deal; a free makeover session and a chance to appear on the pages of a magazine.

I have often wondered about America's obsession with makeover shows on television. We will sit patiently through all the annoying commercials just to wait for "the big reveal" on shows like Oprah. It's as if we want to believe that all it really takes is a few quick tweaks and "poof" we can be magically transformed into "the best me that I can be." In an instant, getting only four hours of sleep is erased, tired stress lines are smoothed out, un-ironed clothes hang perfectly, and we have perfect posture.

What makes us so obsessed with this stuff? Why do we tune in and watch shows like What Not to

Wear and Twitter endlessly about Susan Boyle's new look? Because, in a way, makeover success acts as a glimmer of hope that we are not doomed to remain just as we are. If only for a few moments, we want to believe that we're not just "us." We're a new and improved version of us, not weighed down by our past or what we've been handed in life. The concept of the instant makeover makes us believe in fairytales; it gives us hope that we, too, can be changed in a microwaved instant.

Ultimately it's not really a quick exterior tweak, nip and tuck that we are looking and hoping for, but a total renewal both inside and out. The New Testament states, "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!" (2 Corinthians 5:17) It is our Maker who performs the real makeover—one that can fulfill our deep, innate longing to have every old wound, every painful life encounter, every victimization, every flaw and scar reworked into something beautiful and extraordinary. It is our encounter with God that can make us awe-inspiring, flawless, dazzling, and perfect. And His fix lasts a lot longer than a few pats of powder, a new hairstyle, and some bright lights. It is permanent.



SPIRITUAL VITAL SIGNS

ANNA CHOI

In the medical field, vital signs are comprised of blood pressure, pulse, respiration, oxygen saturation level and temperature. These five components help give caregivers some general information about how a patient is doing in the clinical setting.

But just as these vital signs are taken regularly to know about a patient's physical condition, it may also be necessary to periodically check our own spiritual vital signs as well. After all, we are both physical and spiritual beings. We need to constantly check our spiritual condition to track improvement or need for change in certain areas of our lives. In many cases, our spiritual problems lay hidden unless we make a conscious effort to find and address them.

What are our spiritual vital signs?

BLOOD PRESSURE

» *pressure that is exerted by the blood upon the walls of the blood vessels and especially arteries, and that varies with the muscular efficiency of the heart, the blood volume and viscosity, the age and health of the individual, and the state of the vascular wall*

How strong are you currently pumping out energy for God? Have you had the excitement of doing His work and obeying His will lately? Or have you lost interest in following God's will because you don't think you feel God anymore? Where is most of your energy and strength going towards instead?

PULSE

» *the regular expansion of an artery caused by the ejection of blood into the arterial system by the contractions of the heart*

» *the palpable beat resulting from such pulse as detected in a superficial artery; also: the number of individual beats in a specified time period (as one minute) <a resting pulse of 70>*

How faithfully are you remaining in God despite your circumstances? Have you revealed God's grace in your life by doing good works? Have you had a regular or irregular pulse depending on your current situations or problems? Have you been consistent with Bible reading and prayer? Are you currently in an irregular heart rhythm because you forgot to come to God, or are you stuck in a problem that you tried to solve on your own without asking for God's intervention?

RESPIRATION

» *the physical and chemical processes by which an organism supplies its cells and tissues with the oxygen needed for metabolism and relieves them of the carbon dioxide formed in energy-producing reactions*

How intimate are you with God? Do you start your day by thanking God and acknowledging His presence in all things that you do? Have you been faithful to your personal devotion to God through prayer and studying His words intensely? Do you live and practice the word of God by serving and loving your neighbors and family members? Do you spend time with God and listen to His voice?

OXYGEN

» *a reactive element that is found in water, in most rocks and minerals, in numerous organic compounds, and as a colorless tasteless odorless diatomic gas constituting 21 percent of the atmosphere, that is capable of combining with all elements except the inert gases, that is active in*

physiological processes, and that is involved especially in combustion

» *something that sustains or fuels*

How much of the Holy Spirit is in you? Do you feel that God is within you regardless of the situation you are in? Are you joyful and thankful and confident that you are His chosen people? You can be confident of this because through Jesus Christ, God gave us the Holy Spirit as a gift according to His promise.

TEMPERATURE

» *degree of hotness or coldness measured on a definite scale*

» *the degree of heat that is natural to the body of a living being*

» *abnormally high body heat <running a temperature>*

How warm is your heart towards God and others? Do you consider yourself hot-tempered and easily irritated by things around you? Or are you cold-hearted and indignant to others as well as self-centered? Is your heart lukewarm in following and believing in Jesus? Do you know what your heart feels and yearns for?

The questions above may not cover all the things you want to ask yourself to improve your walk with Jesus. But it is a start. Begin to assess where you are spiritually and decide which step to take next in your spiritual journey—a journey to the Kingdom of God.

Remember, we are created in God's good image for a very good purpose. We are meant not only to live out a short lifespan on earth, but also to live spiritually in preparation for our real home in heaven! We need to struggle constantly to grow both physically and spiritually. To know more of Jesus and grow in our faith, it is essential that we all start by taking our spiritual vital signs today!

All definitions courtesy of www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary

salvation in

JESUS

2009 was a hard year. The economy crashed. Overwhelming numbers of people lost their jobs. Wars took place in the Middle East. Natural disasters occurred around the world. There were floods in Asia, forest fires in California. Last but not least, swine flu caused a panic all over North America and the rest of the world.

On a smaller scale, I discovered last year that many of my close friends come from pasts of pain, physical and sexual abuse, wounded hearts and scars from childhood—myself included. Even those of us who have accepted Jesus Christ into our hearts as our savior are still wounded and plagued by past trauma, suffering and guilt.

The year 2009 was a year that I personally realized the power of sin and the weight that it has over humanity. Sin is the root of all the world's evils—things such as greed, cheating, and murder. It causes people to hurt each other, even abuse their own children. This sin has been carried down from generation to generation and it gives Satan such pleasure because he has convinced the world, the world that God originally had created in perfection, to love sin.

But God sent His beautiful Son, Jesus—so sinless, perfect and pure—as a living sacrifice, to overpower and cast out the sins of this world. Jesus walked this earth and endured Satan's temptations, yet was able to resist them all. He was completely human yet completely divine, a lovely incarnation of our beloved Lord God in heaven—and He loved us so much that He died on the cross so that our sins would be forever washed away, a feat impossible for anyone else to accomplish. All He asks for in return is for us to love others and to love Him, as He loves us.

So, despite the hardships of 2009 and any of the years before or after that, Jesus brings joy and hope for the future in the salvation He already gave us. All we need to do is accept His salvation and love Him.

MARY J KIM DIAZ

» *In Mark's Gospel, after Jesus fed 5,000 men with five loaves of bread and two fish, the disciples went ahead of Jesus and sailed to Bethsaida. In order to catch up with them, Jesus (in my opinion) cheats a little bit and walks on water. He meant to pass by them, but they saw Jesus on the water, they cried out, were terrified, and thought he was a ghost (not necessarily in that order). Jesus says to them,*

» "Take heart; it is I. Do not be afraid." And he got into the boat with them, and the wind ceased. And they were utterly astounded, for they did _____." *Ad lib your own conclusion to this verse.*

continued on page 17

WE DON'T HAVE THE FULL PICTURE,
BUT GOD GIVES US SOMETHING MOLLY
BRENNAN

Several years ago, I wrote a paper on the historicity of the Biblical Exodus. It was one of the best papers I had ever written; I put a lot of effort into my research and genuinely enjoyed the work because it was a subject I had long been interested in. Biblical archeology is a field that was first developed in the nineteenth century to use scientific procedures to prove the Bible's historical accuracy. Today the field is much more secular in tone, but that doesn't mean that archaeological discoveries never support the Bible. They can and do, but with one important caveat: you won't find the "proof" you want.

Consider the Exodus: there is no account of it, either in Egyptian texts or other sources in the region, nor is there any record outside of the Bible that mentions Moses. That would seem to be a short and depressing end to the story: no proof, no Exodus, period. Yet this would be too hasty; just because there is no proof for the Exodus beyond a reasonable doubt does not mean that there exists no evidence whatsoever. We do know a lot about life back then thanks to the number of written records and artifacts that date from that time. Using what we have, we can actually piece together enough evidence for an "Exodus event" which a number of scholars agree may have occurred.

The consensus that the Exodus story is based on real events that occurred in and around the lands of Egypt and Canaan circa 1250 B.C. is based on the following points which archeologist Donald Redford calls "unassailable": (1) there is an early memory of pastoralists from the Levant (the land bordering the eastern Mediterranean Sea) entering Egypt with Jacob as an ancestral figure; (2) they briefly multiplied; (3) Egyptians began to resent these foreigners; (4) at some point the pastoralists leave Egypt and return to the Levant. (*The Anchor Bible Dictionary Volume 2, Yale University Press, June 1992*) Moreover, although Exodus was written hundreds of years after the fact, some scholars agree that it may be based on an actual event, as there is no other way to explain many of its details that reveal a knowledge of Egyptian geography and society that probably could not have been invented.

While at first it seems that archaeology has given us nothing to go on, in fact, God has left us a trail of bread crumbs to follow. We may say these crumbs are worthless because we want the entire loaf, but I think that is to misunderstand the greater lesson here. Part of our faith is just that—faith, the belief in things we do not see. As it says in 1 Corinthians 13:12: "What we see now is like the dim image in a mirror; then we shall see face to face." God has given us what we need to see; now it is up to us to decide to take the rest of it as a leap of faith.

The Dance

Teresa Dombach

He was standing right in front of me, the only other one in the room, but he wasn't the one I wanted to see. I looked to the window, hoping to glimpse the person I was looking for, but he wasn't there.

The one in front of me said, "I'm right here." But I just furrowed my brow. He wasn't the one I was looking for.

I looked around toward the door, wishing it, willing it to open. I wanted to see him walk through. But the door never opened.

"I'm right here," the voice in front of me echoed again. But he wasn't the one I was looking for.

I distracted myself from my disappointment by looking around the room. There were so many things to do. Listen to music. Read books. Watch TV. Go online. Exercise.

Once again, the one in front of me said, "I'm right here." But you're not what I want — you're not what I need, I screamed in my head.

As if he heard me, the one in front of me desperately pleaded, "I'm right here. Won't you dance with me?"



The music already was playing, so I begrudgingly obliged. Formally, I took his hand in mine, and we began an awkward waltz.

But I still looked over his shoulder at the door and glanced at the window. Maybe the one I was looking for would show up. But the song kept playing.

I began a list of all the things I could do, distracting myself from my loneliness. But the song kept playing.

As the dance dragged on, my hands became warmer to his touch. I took a deep breath, and the stress vacated my body. Relaxing, I leaned in closer to him, closing my eyes and resting my head on his chest.

Suddenly, I realized that the one in front of me was the only one I was looking for.

I placed my feet on top of his, like a little girl and her Father. Instantly, we were twirling around the room as if we were one. Pirouettes and dips, even some leaps.

A giggle escaped my smiling lips. I hadn't heard that sound in a long time.

This pain that's resounding
In my heart it's drowning
A thorn of redemption
caught in high tension,
with the woman I am and the woman I know I
should be.

Why when your love is cascading
I feel like I'm fading?
Far from the shore that I thought promised more
This seed of doubt's growing
It's knowing and blowing
but hell if I'm going
to the place I just mentioned
and despite all the failure
The part where I wail here
I'll toss it off lightly, embrace and despise me
Because I...I know the truth.

In this coldness is boldness,
a river flowing down
Feel the petals of Grace
it's more than profound.
For when I doubt you I bow to
the enemy himself
It's childish I've lied to this
broken creed of hate
Because I know you're the way
I know you're my fate
Your beauty is soothing as it wraps around my core
It's romancing I'm glancing back to that shore
Because the warmth of your light is blinding my
eyes

As it severs and vanishes these cheap petty lies
But Lord catch me, Lord bet me
You'll know I'll return
Your roots make me strong
You whisper to learn
It's the crossroads I'm caught in
The enemy I've bought in
Damn his seduction, his tempting corruption
How far can I go
before I realize, before I paint skies of darkness
and low
and behold your strength pouring out.
Like water, I feel taller, and down with the doubt.

Romance and entrance me
break free and perchance see
that you love me you want me
In my simplest form
you knit me with Grace yet still I'm not sure
The ground underneath me is quaking it's frail,
this rock is a pebble, this rain turned to hail
Your melodies are fluidity
The devil's just cheap humidity
but you're the summer heat serenity
with Grace you've more than lent to me
I take you for granted
I curse and despise you
but your love's firmly planted
I'm pissed, why can't mine too?
I break free from the path I know I must walk
It comes down to courage not simply cheap talk
to trust in the beauty you've painted for me
to see objectively that you really died FOR ME
So as I'm doused in cold water
the world generously supplies
as I tread into darkness and honey dipped lies
I think of your face and I can only bow
to the breathtaking light that comes to me now
So forgive me permit me to walk in that light
To plant such a firmness to take such delight
In the freedom, His kingdom
I run to your arms
Though I'm cold far from bold
I absorb all your warmth.

NINA CONCEPCION

DESTINY IS THE BRIDGE

YOU BUILD TO THE ONE YOU LOVE

RAMBLINGS FROM A BROKEN JAR - ANONYMOUS

Wow. I heard this line while watching *My Sassy Girl: The American Edition* and I was just blown away at how sweet and profound I found this line. It reminded me almost immediately of the Christian Image of God and I standing on opposing cliffs, facing each other, separated by an abyss of sin and death.

*...The gap between the cliffs being too wide to jump across
...The abyss so deep that fear grips me in its cold clutches when I look into it,
as I try to see how far away I am from God.*

Things seem utterly hopeless at this point...but then! A way is made!

In spite of the distance, in spite of the vastness of sins, I find that I can come to God. God loved me so much that he made a bridge so that I can cross this gap...that I can be with my Heavenly Father.

This bridge is Jesus.

In spite of my sins, God destined that I should be with Him...that I should not be apart from Him any longer. When I take time from my "busy" life to wrap my head around this aspect of God's love, I can't help but be amazed.

FACING DEATH WITH GRACE

STEPHANIE T VILLEDA

Have you ever thought about the fact that we may not all be here tomorrow? A young boy of seventeen has had to face that fact sooner than he should have, at least in my perspective. His mother passed away from cancer of the breast, liver, and brain. His mother was 42 years old, with plenty of deserved life left to her, and yet, the cancer got the best of her.

His mother was a very religious woman. She loved God and she led a very good Christian life. She was one of the sweetest women I had ever met. This woman was dedicated to her faith and was dedicated to showing, living, and sharing that faith with her only son and her beloved husband. It pains my heart knowing that this young boy, a senior in high school, will not have his mother physically present for his graduations, for his wedding, and for the birth of his first child.

So, where is God in all of this? Where is the Almighty Savior that said, "You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it" (*John 14:14*)? I prayed that his mother may not undergo physical suffering, but there was the excruciating chemotherapy. I know that her son and husband prayed more than I did, praying for her to stay alive with them. I know that her son was living each day with unending hope that she would

make it through. And yet, when his father sat him down and told him that his mother would undoubtedly pass away, the young boy was so broken by the news that he cried and cried. I know that they are going through probably the most difficult time of their lives. And I know that there is nothing I can do or say to ease their suffering.

But God, He who creates and ends all things, can. Jesus says "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms... I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am" (*John 14:1-4*).

What is even more reassuring is that the boy's mother never lost sight of God's love, and she knew that God had a plan for her. In Jesus, there is eternal support and love—both for those that have passed and for those that will someday be with Him in the Kingdom of God. The young boy knows deep in his heart that he will get through this, and that he can do so with God at his side. When we undergo our darkest hours, we may feel as though we are walking alone in the world. Yet, the truth is, it is God who carries us through to the light.

DEAR SEED

The God portrayed in the Old Testament seems like a bigoted, merciless warmonger whereas the God depicted in the New Testament appears as a gentle, kind hippie who teaches the world to love their enemies. How can I believe in a God who can't make up his mind?

Dear Seed Reader:

You definitely have described the perception that many people have of the One God Christians worship. But, I would challenge you to actually read those primary sources (the Old and New Testaments). They paint a very different picture of God. For example, the people God deals with in the Old Testament stories are disobedient and rebellious time and time again. Yet, their God, Yahweh, forgives and restores them over and over. After studying other ancient civilizations in graduate school, I found that the Hebrews' God was actually much more lenient and less capricious than other gods in the Mediterranean world at the time.

As for the New Testament, again, I challenge you to read at least the four Gospels (accounts of Jesus' life). This vision of God is often loving and gentle to the poor people who followed Him, but not so gentle to the religious and powerful of his day. I have yet to hear about a "kind hippie" dying a brutal, undeserved death for the sake of someone who had wronged him/her.

Perhaps, your REAL question is your final one. "How can I believe in a God who..." If you can open yourself up to the question in a different way, it may help you decide. Can you ask, "Do I believe in the God of the Old and New Testament, or not?" The idea "GOD," precludes any "made up" human standards for what God can and cannot be. Are you brave enough to open yourself up to God (if He is there) without your own conditions?

It always puzzles me when my praying friends tell me to "leave it up to God." What exactly does this mean? Am I supposed to do nothing but pray day and night, waiting for Him to do something?

Dear Seed Reader:

Well, I think that a life lived "doing nothing but praying, day and night, waiting for God to do something" might be quite an exciting adventure of a life! Imagine what new thoughts God would grant to you, and what insight you would have! I believe that this may be the call for many of the cloistered brothers and sisters, who spend their lives waiting in prayer before God. Have you had any experiences where you prayed, waited on God, and found that He answered you? It is very humbling. Paul (one of the New Testament writers) says that when you pray, "...the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your heart and mind in Christ Jesus" and, "...God will meet all your needs according to His glorious riches in Christ Jesus." Peace, and all needs met.

Not too bad! (from *Philippians 4, NIV*).

Perhaps, you are really posing the question, "What is my responsibility for action?" If this is the case, I believe that God gives us lots of simple instructions for action, even as we "wait" on Him to guide us regarding specific situations. The Ten Commandments, for example. The "Sermon on the Mount" (a lesson about motives). "Love your enemies, pray for those who misuse you." "Turn the other cheek." "Loan, without asking for anything to be returned." "Love God with all of your heart, and soul, and mind, and strength." "Sell all you have, and give it to the poor." There are many life-changing actions to be working on as believers wait for answers about particular prayers. In fact, following the tasks set before us in Scripture often tunes our hearts to hear what God is trying to tell us. Waiting on God reminds us—we serve a God who is active, not passive.

If we have morals and live a good life, why do we need God?

Dear Seed Reader:

Well, I guess the question "why do we need God" supersedes the first presumption ("If we have morals..."). My question back to you is, "What do you want out of life?" If you are satisfied with whatever "morals and good life" that you can imagine, and then act them out TOTALLY, then, perhaps you don't "need" God. But, I have yet to meet someone who sticks totally to his or her own sense of morality and "good." Even an anarchist might make an "organized" step by mistake. If you find that you have everything all sorted out, and that you can live by your own standards, then you might not (in your own mind) need God.

My second question, then, would be "Are your own, self-imposed 'morals and good life' GOOD, or are they simply 'GOOD FOR YOU?'" Are they good for everyone around you as well? Are they faultless? It is a heavy burden to "be" God. Have you considered all of the ramifications of all of your actions and choices? How do you "make amends" when you fail?

In his book *Life Together*, Dietrich Bonhoeffer describes the Christian community as a "hospital for the lame," not a place for window-dressed mannequins. A person needs God when he realize that he are inadequate at knowing how to "do good" and "be God." Those of us who love Jesus as savior have realized our personal need for a savior...that we are lost without the help of the God who helps.

A New York pastor, Timothy Keller, has a great book on this topic: *The Reason for God*.

You have questions, we have answers. With some help from the Good Book and a good portion of divine inspiration, Seed addresses your inquiries, issues and concerns.

CORN-Y kernel of wheat bible jokes

MARY J KIM DIAZ

Which servant of God was the most obvious lawbreaker in the Bible?

Moses — because he "broke" all 10 commandments at once.

What was William Shakespeare's favorite book of the Bible?

The book of Acts.

Who designed Noah's ark?

An ark-itect.

Who was the only man in the Bible who didn't have a father?

Joshua, the son of Nun.

Who is the fastest runner in history?

Adam! Because he was the first in the human race.

Who was the Bible's greatest baby sitter?

David—cuz he rocked Goliath to sleep.

What animal could Noah not trust?

The cheetah

What do angels say when they greet each other?

"Halo!"

MOST HOLY

STEPHANIE T VILLEDA

God of Wonders beyond imagination,
Beyond thoughts or ponderings,
Beyond moments or memories;
You're interwoven meticulously into gorgeous occurrences.
You outshine worldliness; Outdo Yourself on people who continuously condemn Your Holy.

○ Holy, Most Holy!
Your wisdom unlocks doors,
allows those without hope to open virtuous perfection;
allows those without hope to observe honest intention;
allows those without hope to conquer tribulations.

○ Holy, Most Holy!
Comfort those without hope; Perforate our souls;
Beckon our Love
to something more of
You... Love develops for You,
only You.

○ Holy, Most Holy!
Forever Your Love for everyone,
Forever You love everyone,
Everyone loving Your forever

○ Holy, Most Holy!
Complete our forever with your

Love Most Holy.

THE HOLY SPIRIT

GOD HIMSELF OR AN
IMPERSONAL POWER?
ANONYMOUS

Jehovah's Witnesses and Mormons believe that the Holy Spirit is an impersonal power that comes from God but is not God himself. Their view is an incomplete one—just the tip of a colossal iceberg. It is a misconception that many Christians seem to possess. We shouldn't be fooled by the visible tip of the iceberg, but rather look deeper into what lies beneath the surface.

Scripture states that the Holy Spirit is a person who can think (1Cor 2:11), feel (Eph 4:30), will (1Cor 12:11), and speak (Acts 13:2). The process of knowing and becoming aware of the person of the Holy Spirit is compared to the growth of a newborn baby. When a baby is born, he is not fully aware of the presence of his mother. Rather, he is only cognizant of the presence of a "nipple" through which he gets food. A baby is near-sighted and cannot recognize the "person" of his mother. But as he grows up, he begins to recognize her, gradually becoming aware of her presence as a person.

By the same principle, when we are born again, we don't easily recognize the "person" of the Holy Spirit. We recognize only the "benefit" of the Holy Spirit. But as we grow in obedience to God, we begin to recognize the person of the Holy Spirit, becoming fully aware of His presence as a person, allowing us to have a more intimate relationship with God.

AD LIB

REY SORIANO

continued from page 8

"And they were utterly astounded, for they did not understand about the loaves, but their hearts were hardened." (Mark 5:51)

WHAT?! The loaves!?!@!\$ The disciples were still thinking about the loaves?! You just saw Jesus walk on water, climb into your boat in the middle of the sea, stop the wind, and you're still thinking about the bread thing?! That was so 12 hours ago! Not to mention, like, 3 miracles ago!

Now, I don't mean to say that feeding 5,000 people with five loaves and two fish isn't impressive. It's mad impressive. But seriously, you could've figured that some people maybe brought bread from home. Or maybe they were all really skinny people who only needed like three crumbs. Or maybe they were all trying to get on Nazareth's Next Top Model and watching their carbs. Plus, anybody can pretend to be full. I do, every time my mom cooks.

Anyway, I think a more appropriate response would have been: they were utterly astounded, for they did not believe their eyes; or they did not use the restroom beforehand; or they did not get how Jesus' hair stayed so fly when it was so windy and humid; or they did a very thorough paint job on the interior of the boat; or they did solve the mystery that is the Rubik's cube. C'mon!

BREAKING OUT OF SURVIVAL MODE

TREVOR
AGATSUMA

At NYU, a big temptation is to succumb to living in survival mode—barely getting through, but not thriving. We have tuition to pay, papers to write, meetings to attend, tests to study for, and relationships to keep up with. And we do all this in the context of having more independence than ever before in one of the most demanding cities in the world.

Everything we have to do and all the ways we need to grow is overwhelming enough, without even considering how God has called us to be a part of His great purpose of renewal. We risk seeing ourselves as slaves to the endless demands put upon us from everywhere, especially from God.

Aware that we are falling short of His calling, we tend to respond with guilt and shame. A natural reaction would be to figure out how to work harder and more efficiently. However that is not the solution God presents us.

"Notice how God is both kind and severe. He is severe toward those who disobeyed, but kind to you if you continue to trust in his kindness. But if you stop trusting, you also will be cut off." (Romans 11:22 NLT)

You may be thinking, "Wait, this does not sound very encouraging." But think carefully about what God's Word is saying. The opposite of disobedience is not obedience but trusting in God's kindness. It is on the foundation of God's unconditional love and kindness that we will find freedom to obediently take part in God's work.

Imagine your father telling you, "If you don't get in the top 5% on your next test then I will be ashamed of you and will want to disown you." You may study hard to gain your father's approval but eventually you will burn out. This is the way the world treats us.

But what if your father said, "I want you to do your best on this test. If you need help, ask me, and I will be with you. No matter how you do you will still be my beloved child." This is how our heavenly Father speaks to us.

The first step to receive this freedom is to tell our Father that you need Him. Make time to be alone with Him everyday. If time is sparse, ask God to open up your schedule. Be willing to wake up earlier if He so leads you. To know how God wants to relate to you read Romans 8. We are not His slaves but His children.

Next, here are some helpful guidelines to aid you in your pursuit of freedom:

- » *Prioritize your time by keeping what is important and dropping what is not; learn that saying "no" to an opportunity is a perfectly good answer.*
- » *Determine which relationships and activities are restorative and life-giving and make them a priority.*
- » *Take a Sabbath; it is one of God's many gifts for you.*
- » *Concentrate on doing one thing at a time; some scientific studies suggest that multi-tasking is a myth.*

My prayer is that God will show His love for us in fresh, new ways as we continue in our paths toward Him.

THE PRAYER

ANONYMOUS

DEAR FATHER, THIS IS YOUR SON/I SEEK YOUR GUIDANCE BECAUSE I DON'T KNOW
WHAT I'VE BECOME/I DON'T KNOW WHO I AM, FEEL LIKE LESS OF A MAN/BUT
HOW CAN THAT BE IF I WAS LED BY YOUR HAND?/WAS THIS ALL PART OF YOUR
PLAN? FATE? MY DESTINY?/AM I HERE BECAUSE OF MY ACTIONS, OR WAS THIS
ALWAYS MEANT TO BE?/MAYBE THIS HAPPENED BECAUSE I WASN'T ENOUGH OR
BEST AT SOMETHING/ OR WAS IT BECAUSE I COULDN'T BEAT MY PROBLEMS, AND AS
A RESULT, AM CONSTANTLY STRUGGLING?/ FATHER, MAYBE I'M FRONTING... MAYBE
I AM WHAT I AM BECAUSE I'M MY OWN WORST ENEMY/ISLAND UNTO MYSELF
HOLDING ONTO THINGS BECAUSE I CAN'T LET IT GO OR LET IT BE/DYING IN SIN,
I'M CONSTANTLY HURTIN'...I SEEK HEALING/LORD, PLEASE HEAL ME... PLEASE
RESTORE FEELING.../...TO MY BROKEN HEART, BROKEN BODY, BURDENED SOUL/
PLEASE BREATHE YOUR LIFE INTO ME AND MAKE ME FEEL WHOLE/FATHER, MY
TIME IS SHORT AND THERE'S SO MUCH MORE THAT I WANT TO SAY/BUT I GUESS
WE'LL HAVE TO SAVE THAT DISCUSSION FOR ANOTHER DAY/ SINCERELY...

21ST CENTURY PHILOSOPHY

I am under a dark complexion.
Day by day, my heart turns farther from perfection.
Darker and darker my perception seems to be,
Of these streets that my eyes see.

The 21st century "real" world seems so unreal to me.
Like the Matrix, an illusioned reality,
To the black suits and ties,
Our knees bend and the soul dies.

Towering skyscrapers, the new tower of Babel,
Overly pompous we become, of what we can now
able.

A new metropolitan, a new Babylon,
Overshadows us from the Son.

The Light now perverted by the towers,
Just look at the internally dying flowers.
The towers give birth to a new teaching,
One that now and forever may keep us breathing.

Maintaining our survival is the new monetary king,
Ruling through a world economy in the making.
Striving on our individual interest,
We no longer act on our brothers' and sisters'
behest.

Everyday we grow smarter,
But from His lessons, we grow farther.
The nation prides in its rising GDP,
But is blind to its decline in socioeconomic-equality.

Walking down these streets, I feel like Siddhartha.
And find motivation to act like Mother Teresa.
But hopelessness looms in my darkened heart,
Oh how my weak faith has kept me apart.

I tried to be wary so as not to fall.
But like the others, my knees bent, merely able to
crawl.
Oh Lord, heal me as u did the lame,
And deliver me from the devil's corrupt game.

Remind us of the compassion You once taught,
To bring to the streets where it is sought.
Break these barriers of inequality and injustice,
And let the true Light shine once more on the rest
of us.

In *The Prodigal God* (Dutton, 2008) author Tim Keller takes the Bible's most famous parable and presents it from a radically different perspective, challenging preconceived notions about what it means to be "lost."

Lost and found

Yes, you know the story. Spoiled younger son demands his share of the estate. He takes off and squanders it all on wild living. He comes back to his senses and returns home repentant. The father forgives and reinstates him immediately, throwing him a lavish feast. And they lived happily ever after. Right? Wrong. The story actually ends with a tense confrontation between the elder, "obedient" son and the father. Enraged by his father's extravagant outpouring of love, the elder son complains bitterly about his own unrewarded, unrecognized loyalty toward his father.

Redefining Lost

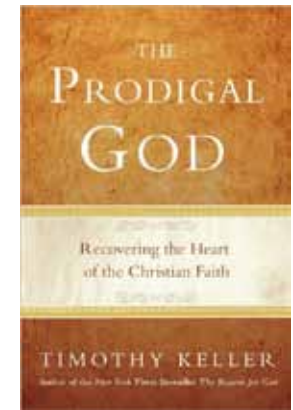
Both sons—the wandering younger and the insincere elder—were equally lost. Proximity is only a secondary issue; it is possible to be lost in a far away land as well as lost in plain sight. What matters is where one is in relationship to the Father. The Parable of the Lost Son cleverly exposes how sin can manifest in those who are shamelessly belligerent and those who are inwardly defiant.

The Lost Boys

The intended audience for this story was not the morally corrupt but the religious elite, the Law-abiding Pharisees, as represented by the elder brother. Much like the elder son, the Pharisees possessed a false sense of self-righteousness due to their tireless compliance with the Law. Though their behavior was impeccable, even exemplary, their hearts and motives were entirely self-serving. To Jesus, they were lost and did not even realize it.

The Prodigal God

God's response to our "lost-ness?" Unconditional love and astonishing humility. For the younger, a robe, a ring and a feast fit for a king. For the elder, a humble, heart-wrenching plea from a father desperate for his



REDEFINING "LOST"

YVETTE SHIN

firstborn to realize how loved he is. Both demonstrate God's prodigal, or reckless, love for a world of lost sons. He will hold back nothing—nothing—to see his beloved ones reconciled and restored to their rightful place. Jesus, in his life and especially in his death, is the ultimate expression of God's heart. The cross shows us that our God is a prodigal God.

Land of the Lost

Lost sons abound. They are living la vida loca on campuses nationwide. And they are sitting in church pews every Sunday at 11am. Had Jesus spoken this parable today, the intended audience would not be the wild child and party animals of the world, but the Church, the people of God. Just like the Pharisees, we are in danger of becoming obliviously lost in our own self-righteousness. Worse, our ignorance to our own condition deems us useless to the millions of lost younger sons who never find their way home. And so, it is we Christians with whom the Father stands outside the house, pleading for us to come inside and to embrace younger brothers everywhere. For, it is only when we realize our propensity to become lost that we, along with our lost younger brothers, can have hope to be found.

24HR PRAYER ROOM



NYU PRAYER ROOM / 2ND FLOOR, KIMMEL BUILDING

MARA MEASOR The NYU Prayer Room is here! A little oasis oozing with the Spirit's goodness has finally opened on the second floor of Kimmel, next to the Ticket Central booth.

When Elijah prayed, fireballs came down from heaven. When Abraham prayed, God saved his friend (not even a good friend...). When David prayed, God forgave him. When Esther called her people to pray, the whole Jewish race was saved. When Isaiah prayed, God promised to heal His people. When Paul prayed, churches blossomed. What's going to happen when NYU starts to pray as one body? (Hint: something along the lines of God saving, forgiving, and fulfilling some promises...)

We're now inviting all students to commit to one hour of prayer each week in the oasis, so God can enjoy a sweet-smelling aroma continuously rising from the smack center of NYU.

I know, I understand, an hour sounds like such a long time to talk to an invisible God. But this is not just some challenge we should accept as good Christians, it's a privilege not to be missed! You have a full hour to tap into the boundless resources of heaven and pull them down to apply in your life, on this campus and in this city. (Literally, in the room we are trying to explore different ways to make heaven-meeting-earth an hourly occasion.)

Details: There are sign up sheets in the room. Overlapping sign-ups are totally encouraged. If the room is locked, talk to the people at the desk in the office next door and they'll open it for you. Feel free to email marameasor@gmail.com for any questions. we are hoping to spark a 24/7 prayer week if not in the spring then in the fall, so surprise us with an email if you feel God tickling your heart to be involved!

FEB 14-15



SEED SPRING RETREAT
SPRUCE LAKE RETREAT CENTER / CANADENSIS, PA

MARA MEASOR "The Baptism of the Holy Spirit" is an intimidating theme for a spring retreat—for those who don't know the Spirit is a mighty but gentle person who is ever eager to show up in our everyday lives.

And that's exactly what the group of Seedlings who went on the weekend trip to Pennsylvania quickly found out, so the daunting task of decoding the Spirit's operations soon became an opportunity to learn just how to cooperate with this Wonderful Counselor.

The Holy Spirit must feel ignored by so many Christians, because as soon as Seed invited Him to the little house on Spruce Lake, He promised to attend. The Spirit was present throughout the praise and worship, and the mere fact that nobody screamed and cried in total confusion proves the Spirit must have been there to give understanding.

As Yvette and William Shin offered their two cents worth (or full two dollars, really) on the Spirit's person, Seedlings began to see the importance of being thoroughly and consistently soaked in the Spirit. "We need to be pickles. Not cucumbers," William insightfully shared. Only by the Spirit's power can Christians explode their potential as light-bearers in this dark and scary world.

Perhaps the most comforting lesson of all was realizing though we may never fully understand the Spirit's magnificence, that doesn't stop Him from taking our hand and walking us through the rest of our days.

MAR 9-12



SHECKY'S GIRLS NIGHT OUT

KAM LEONG Shecky's Girls Night Out provided another fun shopping experience to all New York City fashionistas. Held at Mercer Street, the event offered designer clothes, cocktails and beer, beauty treatments and other freebies for a small entrance fee. An additional treat—a fabulous goodie bag filled with assorted beauty and health products—was available for purchase. Women from all five boroughs lined up for the 4-day event. Google Shecky's for their next visit to New York and don't miss out on the fun.

APR 5-12 AGAPE WEEK



HUMAN TRAFFICKING



DOUBT NIGHT



INTERFAITH PANEL



CONCERN WORLDWIDE'S
FUN RUN FOR HAITI

AGAPE (N)

» [ah-gah-pey] the sacrificial, unconditional love of Christ.

AGAPE WEEK (N)

» an annual celebration of the sacrificial, unconditional love of Christ at NYU.

BIANCA VANDERMEULEN To express the boundary-breaking nature of God and his explosive grace, "Love Without Borders" was the theme of Agape Week 2010! April 5th-12th was a week of diverse and campus-engaging events ranging from a hip-hop concert to a Q&A about doubt. It was a time for all who wanted to experience the Lord of Heaven and Earth in His fullness—after all, "God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world but to save the world"—no borders attached.

Monday, April 5

Human Trafficking: What's Love Got to Do With it?

Jonathan Walton, Columbia grad and modern-day abolitionist, spoke about debt bondage, sexual exploitation and labor slavery to open this year's Agape Week event. As students and consumers, attendees were counseled to leave a mark on the system that supports the 32-billion dollar and 27-million victim industry of human trafficking. Things we can do to help:

- » Investigate the labor practices of the manufacturers and business we patronize
- » Support Restore NYC (the only rehabilitation center for sexually exploited women in NYC)
- » Push our favorite companies to go slave-free
- » Visit slaverymap.org to learn more about this important issue

Wednesday, April 7

Doubt Night, St. Joseph's Church on 6th Ave.

Is Agnosticism a viable ideology? This and other important questions were addressed at Doubt Night on April 7 at St. Joseph's Church.

Speakers: Christian philosopher Peter Kreeft (professor of Philosophy, Boston College), Veronica Kearney, president of the Atheists, Agnostics and Freethinkers club at NYU, and Jonathan Simon from the NYU Philosophy department.

Thursday, April 8

Inter-faith Faith in Christ: How non-Christians saw God in Jesus

An Atheist, a Muslim and a Jew... It sounds like the beginning of a bad joke. Actually, it is the very accurate description of Thursday evening's three panelists who captivated attendees with fascinating narratives about their personal journeys to Christ.

Speakers: David Wood (former atheist), Nabeel Qureshi (former Muslim), Sid Roth (Jewish follower of Christ).

HAPPENINGS

TREVOR AGATSUMA
KEITH AKSEL
JOE BAYLON
MOLLY BRENNAN
ANGELA CHANDRACOMAR
CHRISTINE CHI
ANNA CHOI
CHRISSE CHUA
JANICE CHUA
NINA CONCEPCION
TERESA DOMBACH
STEPHEN GONSALVES
MIA HUANG
JAMES KIM
MARY J. KIM DIAZ
SUSANA KIM
YOHAN KIM

JOHN KOO
KAM LEONG
MARA MEASOR
HANNAH NO
JOHN PARK
JOSEPH SHIN
WILLIAM SHIN
YVETTE SHIN
HYEWON SONG
REBEKAH SONG
REY SORIANO
TIFFANY TENG
ELAINE TSUI
BIANCA VAN DER MEULEN
STEPHANIE T. VILLEDA
SUSAN YANG

SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR DEAR SEED CONTRIBUTOR

"YOUR VERY LIVES ARE A LETTER THAT ANYONE CAN READ BY JUST LOOKING AT YOU.
CHRIST HIMSELF WROTE IT—NOT WITH INK, BUT WITH GOD'S LIVING SPIRIT;
NOT CHISELED INTO STONE, BUT CARVED INTO HUMAN LIVES—AND WE PUBLISH IT."

-2 CORINTHIANS 3:2-3 (THE MESSAGE)