

Golden Age Newsletter January 2026

Richard Buessing and Carol Pobanz
January 2, 2026



Golden Age Newsletter

January 1, 2026

Hello Goldies, Welcome! We hope you enjoy!

We welcome all our readers to a new year! This month's Message is from Mr. Frank LaGrotteria titled Spiritual Grounding, a Poem Contribution, Dr. Lewis' How Did God Make the Universe article, the Continuation of a History of Korea which seems apt for what's happening in Korea now, an actual experience regarding Dental service done outside of the continental USA, and some pointers for Skin Care especially during the cold weather! Lastly the Bulletin Board contains guidance for GAC articles.

This Month's Message

Spiritual Grounding



By Frank LaGrotteria

Presently, I'm working at HJ International Graduate School. I have operational responsibility for many of the areas the school has to manage—compliance issues, legal issues, HR, finance... all the things I've done throughout my career in the church. I've been able to work on projects in the non-profit arena and do the administrative and operational work I'm familiar with, and I'm very, very grateful for the path I've had.

I truly believe I've been blessed. I've received so many opportunities to support the Providence in different ways—now here at HJI, but previously with UPF, with Bridgeport International Academy (BIA), with the Universal Peace Federation and all its earlier iterations—stretching all the way back to when I graduated from the seminary in 1994. I've been very fortunate to be part of True Parents' frontline activities during the last 20 years of True Father's life.

All of us have certain principles—cornerstones we come back to again and again—until one day we realize, “Yes, this one is fundamental.” I have eight such principles. I mentioned them briefly in my final speech at Bridgeport International Academy, though I didn't go into much depth at that time. I'd like to take the opportunity with this article to do that now—to communicate these points, born out of my experiences, the challenges I faced, and the conclusions I reached in working through them.

So let's get started.

First Point: *We do the mission*

And that mission is, at its core, to **transmit values**. It's not to make money. It's not to put on an event. It's not to move boxes or handle whatever practical responsibilities land on our desk.

We have many leaders in our movement, in all kinds of fields—and it's so easy to let ourselves be defined by the activity. For almost three decades, I was a conference manager, an operations guy. I lived and breathed getting events off the drawing board and into practical reality—at hotels, airports, banquets—wherever they needed to happen. The temptation is to let yourself be defined by those external responsibilities.

At BIA, for example, it was my job to make sure we enrolled enough students to generate the revenue needed to keep the school open and continue our work. And in many ways, I allowed myself to be defined by that urgency—by that sense of financial pressure.

Well, after all of that, here's my conclusion:

That's not the mission. The mission is *not* simply to raise money or keep your school open, or even just to operate an NGO. Yes, there's a mission statement, but to truly be successful you have to know the **core** of your work. Otherwise, the external pressures will crush you. They'll define you. And you'll miss the mark. For me, the mark is this: **to transmit values.**

At every juncture, in every stage of our activity, we are constantly modeling the behaviors we want to see reflected in society.

If you're facing an enormous responsibility or challenge—something that requires a new skill set, more determination, or a deeper investment—then you model the behavior necessary to meet that challenge. The mission is to model those behaviors. The mission is to show, by example, what a person facing such responsibilities *should* do. It becomes essential that you are always transmitting values.

You could find yourself in a hostile situation, even in an argument. The real question is: *How are you handling yourself?* Did you lose your cool? Did you attack

the other person? How did you compose yourself? That, too, is the transmission of values.

We can't always control external conditions—though we can choose some aspects of our work—but fundamentally, the mission remains the same. And it never goes away. The mission, as I define it, is to transmit values until my last breath.

My mother was like that. In the last stage of her life, down to her final breath, she repeatedly said, *"I will love you forever and pray for you always."* She lived that. She modeled that. And I want to be that kind of person—constantly transmitting values until the end. Even at the very end, you can model how to approach death, how to finish your course on this earth, and what example you leave for your children, your grandchildren, your colleagues, and even the world.

Second Point: *Do No Harm*

This is, in a way, the flip side of everything I just said. We hear the phrase "do no harm" all the time. If you can't add to the situation, at least don't make it worse. In the immortal words of Thumper's father: "If you can't say somethin' nice, don't say nothin' at all."

But our immaturity, our limitations, our habits—these can absolutely make things worse. By how we approach things, how we speak, what we believe, how we manage ourselves—we can unintentionally damage the very situation we're trying to improve. So, at the very least, if you can't advance the mission, **don't harm it.**

Third Point: *When in Doubt, Serve Your Way Out*

No matter how difficult the circumstances around you, no matter how overwhelmed you feel—and sometimes you *can't* help feeling overwhelmed—there is always someone you can serve.

There's always something to clean. Something to repair. Someone to encourage. Someone to write a note to. You will *never* run out of people to serve.

And when you're doing your mission—really living it—there are a million ways to support others. That's why I say: don't make things worse, but you can always make them better. Even if you can't address the big issue, you can address a thousand small ones. They add up. They create the atmosphere, the momentum, the spirit that says: We are here to work. And we will do everything we can to accomplish our mission.

So: **Do no harm. Serve your way out.**

Fourth Point: *Believe in the Power of True Love and Forgiveness*

I don't think we fully understand the power of true love. We treat "love" as a nice idea, a sentiment. But the Principle teaches us something more radical:

Love is a power – A real, concrete, transformative power. And forgiveness is also a power—almost a *superpower*. In the real circumstances of life—when you've been hurt, when you've hurt others, when relationships are tangled or strained—the ability to forgive is a profound power.

Never underestimate the power of true love and forgiveness.

[To read more, please click here!](#)









All photos provided by F. LaGrotteria

Dawning of a New Age

Transitions



by Jim Stinard

In life we are all in transit, and as is human,
we work to enhance it.

To improve, to upgrade, to be more confident
to be more brave. To be in better health, to
improve our wealth.

Where is the nirvana? It's always, "I wanna this,
I wanna that," where is the bliss? What did I miss?

There are no easy fixes in this journey through
with its ups and downs, its joy and its strife.
Where is the peace of mind we are working to find?

Each day we must find our way to embrace, it's understood,
all that is pure and uplifting and kind and good.
Herein is our joy, our satisfaction for a life
that is in transition, this must be our position.

Lightning fast goes the day as our life transitions away,
as we work and sleep and shop and play,
love and be loved and look at nature and admire the stars above.

We need to consider the flower, ponder its power.
We must be like them lending our hearts and hands
to bring more love and light into the day.

Testimonies, Tributes and Thoughts

A History of Korea, Part 9

By Michael Downey



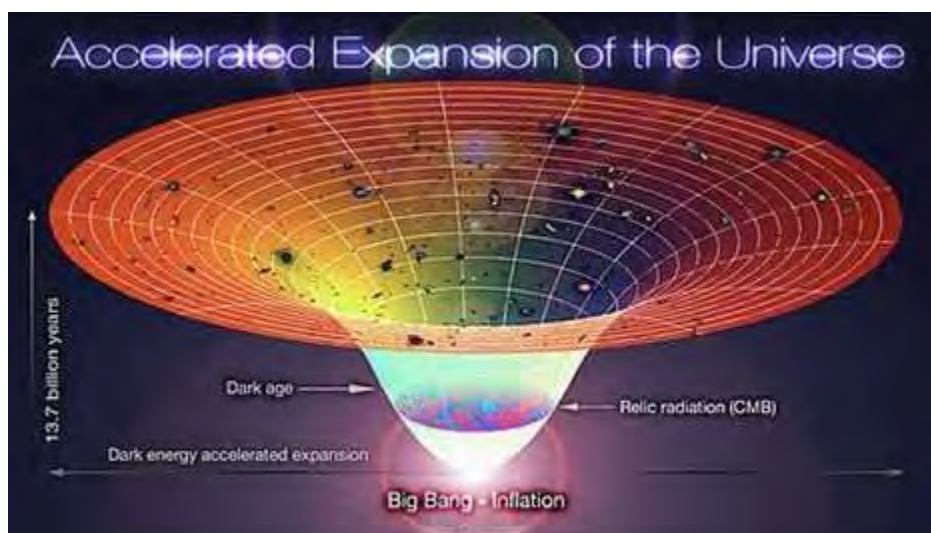
The final days of the Joseon Dynasty were marked by chaos. Koreans often describe their history as that of a small, righteous nation trapped between several large, hungry tigers. This image aptly describes Korea's situation at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries. The two primary tigers were China and Japan.

[To read more, please click here!](#)

How Did God Make The Universe



by Richard Lewis, PhD



A scientific atheist once asked me, “If the universe is made of energy, where did God get the energy to create it?” I replied, “I’m glad you asked—science has actually figured out the answer.”

Because he was a scientist, I explained it quickly in a TikTok-style response, and he liked it. I’ll do the same here, but without technical language.

[To read more, please click here!](#)

Health and Recipes

Dental Vacation



by John Abelseth

About 15 years ago, the estimated cost in Canada for my dental work was about \$40,000. My brother David was using a dentist in Los Algodones, Mexico and encouraged me to check it out.

[To read more, please click here!](#)

Winter Skin Care



Submitted by Christine Libon

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As we age, our skin becomes more fragile and drier. To make matters worse, in winter, the humidity level indoors drops below the desired level due to heated air. This can make our skin itchy, flaky, cracked, to the point where blankets, socks, long sleeves get caught on our already irritated skin. It's important to avoid harsh soaps (years ago I

began using natural, gentler dish detergent and natural orange oil cleaners in the kitchen to save the skin in my hands). Sure, there are lotions and creams we can apply, but it's important to not cause the skin to dry out.

[To read more, please click here!](#)



Bulletin Board

Looking for more Articles



Photo credit: Carol Pobanz

The Golden Age Newsletter began as a small Clifton Senior newsletter about 3 years ago.

ARTICLE GUIDELINES

Purpose: The Golden Age newsletter has been created as a means to keep our elder community connected to one another. Articles are not in any way meant to proselytize or push a point of view.

It is a place to share God's Love – what is positive in our life as a result of finding our Heavenly Parent and True Parents.

Motto: "This is the Dawning of our New Age" – We are always in the process of redefining ourselves as we grow older and as we add experiences to our lives. Therefore, we must consider how God can use us even when we may be decreasing in our physical capabilities.

The e-newsletter is broken down into eight sections:

1. A Featured Message of Inspiration – Helping others to feel hope and inspiration for the establishment of CIG.
2. "Unification Thoughts" – any educational article on the "Fifth Realm of Heart" – Grandparents' heart
3. History Byte – A short article on a positive memory, a funny or affectionate story about experiences in the church with True Parents or with brothers and sisters or an article about the development/experience of helping to develop one of True Parents' providential projects or events.
4. Arts and Culture – A sharing about one's talents, hobbies or interests and how this relates to sharing God's love (to family, community, nation or world).
5. Tributes and Testimonies- a personal testimony of one or more life learning experiences or a Tribute to a spouse, friend, or leader

6. Health – An article that relates to health (physical or mental), possibly providing a link to an article you think might be interesting or important to other seniors.
7. I Love being a Grandparent – stories about grandparenting or about things to do with grandchildren
8. Recipe – Preferably a healthy recipe along with 2-3 paragraphs about what makes it a good or memorable recipe.
9. Book Review – report on a book that inspires thoughts toward a world of peace
10. Bulletin board – reports on personal activities, or request help on a project

Did someone forward this to you? Subscribe to the Golden Age Newsletter [here!](#)



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We often think, “I need more skills. I need to do master coding. I need to understand AI. I need another degree, another certification.” And yes, those are valuable. But let me say clearly: **true love and forgiveness are powers at least equal to those skills—if not far greater.**

Believe in the power of true love. Don’t treat it like a side note or a cliché. It is a real power. And you can actually use it. But you have to have it—the capacity to love others and forgive them.

God has done the same for us. So why can’t we do it for other people? That is the real secret of forgiveness.

People often say, “*I can’t forgive that person—they hurt me so badly.*” All right, but what do you think God thinks about that? He loves and forgives us. He doesn’t condone our sins, but He still loves and forgives us. And He doesn’t just love and forgive *me*—He loves and forgives *everyone*. So, are we somehow greater than God? Have we been hurt more deeply than God Himself? Do we really have the right to withhold forgiveness?

Of course, getting to true forgiveness is a process. It requires deep reflection, introspection, and an honest inventory of our own situation. Working our way toward forgiveness is difficult—sometimes *wickedly* difficult—but it *is* possible. And it is powerful. Not holding something against someone else liberates your own heart, and it also frees the other person. So, believe in the power of true love and forgiveness.

Fifth Point: Stay in Your Lane

I’ve heard arguments both for and against this phrase, but I’m a big believer in systems thinking. I wrote about it in my seminary dissertation, and I’ve appreciated the work of Rabbi Murray Bowen, a psychiatrist, who developed the Bowen Family Systems Theory. Along with Rabbi Edmund Freidman, a family therapist, and leadership consultant. These two Rabbis both described how human beings live within systems.

The human family is the prototype—the archetype—of all human relationships. In a family, each person has a position: the father figure, the mother figure, the child, the siblings. Each role is unique. Everything is not interchangeable. Each person carries certain responsibilities, and the success of the system depends on people staying in their lane—doing what is theirs to do.

This doesn’t mean neglecting anything. It means understanding your role, embracing it, and doing everything in your power to fulfill your responsibility.

We often run into trouble when we start criticizing others, compensating for others, or even overcompensating by doing someone else’s job for them. It may feel helpful in the moment, but in the end it isn’t. When you do someone else’s responsibility, you free them from having to do it themselves—and they lose the challenge and growth that their role requires.

But when you discipline yourself to stay in your lane, you indirectly push the other parts of the system to do the same. Your consistency helps clarify what others must do. When you do your job well, it becomes obvious what still isn’t getting done—and who needs to do it.

This is why staying in your lane is so important. It grows directly out of systems thinking. And this applies far beyond the family. The family model appears everywhere:

- in schools
- in workplaces
- in government
- in all human communities

The scale may increase, the structure may become more complex, but at heart, humans “do family.” It’s in our physical DNA and our spiritual DNA. God made us that way, and we practice family wherever we go.

Bowen and others point out that this is not without structure. Much depends on *differentiation*—being able to hold your own responsibility while recognizing what belongs to others. The success or failure of any system depends on individuals maintaining that boundary. This reflects the Principle’s idea of the self-purpose and the whole-purpose. Each role is distinct and narrowly defined, yet at the same time each role contributes to the larger whole. Fulfilling your individual responsibility strengthens the entire system.

Of course, sometimes life requires intervention—if there is danger, or risk of real harm. But the *ideal* is that each person fulfills their responsibility, and the collective unity that results creates a healthy, functioning system.

Sixth Point: Unite the Public and the Private

We live in an age—especially in America and other developed nations—where everything revolves around the individual. The message we constantly hear is: “*Do what makes **you** happy. Put yourself first. Sacrifice whatever or whoever you need to in order to get what you want.*” But this mindset creates a deep imbalance. When we prioritize only our private desires—our personal comfort, our personal gain—we lose sight of the public dimension of life: the good of the family, the community, the nation, and the world.

A healthy life unites the public and the private. It doesn’t reject the individual, but it doesn’t worship the individual either. Your private life—your personal passions, talents, hopes, and dreams—matters. But your public life—your duties, responsibilities, contributions, and sacrifices—matters just as much. They are not meant to compete with each other; they are meant to harmonize.

When you live only for your private self, you become isolated, anxious, and ultimately unfulfilled. When you live only for the public, you risk burnout, resentment, and losing your sense of identity. But when the two are integrated—when your personal strengths support your public mission—you become whole. You become powerful. And you can truly serve others without losing yourself. In other words, **a life of purpose requires both personal integrity and public responsibility.** The more we align those two realms, the more joy and meaning we discover.

My experience has taught me that the public and the private have a *perfect* relationship with each other. When we understand this, we can clearly recognize what needs to be done—and when it needs to be done.

Sometimes, we have to sacrifice. We don’t like that word. None of us likes being told we *have* to do something. But there are moments when we must sacrifice ourselves for the sake of others. That’s the core of the relationship between the public purpose and the private individual. You can’t sleep all day if your children need their clothes washed, or a meal, or a ride. You give up some comfort for someone else’s well-being. That’s a small example, but it points to something much larger.

It’s not about someone restricting our freedom. It’s that we naturally want to support the greater purpose—if we understand it. We need to know *when* the time for sacrifice has come, instead of complaining that our comfort zone is being disrupted. In our society today, we often get this backwards. We’ve become self-centered, even narcissistic, championing our personal needs while treating the needs of the larger whole as secondary. In reality, it’s the opposite. *Living for the sake of others* means recognizing the greater purpose and sacrificing when needed.

There is a deep interplay between the public and private. When we get that order right, we succeed. True Father has said many times that a person with a clear conscience—someone who understands the greater purpose—knows what to do. They’re not confused or conflicted.

Of course, we also need sleep, food, and basic care. We aren’t

Of course, we also need sleep, food, and basic care. We aren't always serving the whole; often we're taking care of ourselves. But these two aspects—public and private—are not opposites. They are complementary. And when we understand their relationship, we can be genuinely happy and satisfied in making sacrifices for the greater good.

Seventh Point: *Have Faith*

The next point is simple to say but hard to practice: *Have faith*. Faith is not just something that some people have and others don't. Faith is part of our human responsibility. It's not enough to have skills, work hard, put in the time, follow instructions, overcome limitations—though all of that matters. In the Principle, we talk about the 95% and the 5%. God does 95%, and we do 5%. Part of that 5% is faith. Not blind or foolish faith, but realistic faith: you have done everything you possibly can, and now you trust that God is involved in the outcome. You don't simply say, "Well, now it's in God's hands," as if stepping back is enough. Instead, by making your utmost effort, you open the door for Heaven to work with you. I've experienced this hundreds of times. I call it "getting to the end of your giving"—emptying yourself out, doing everything possible to accomplish the goal, leaving no stone unturned. But even that isn't enough. You must also *believe*. That is part of responsibility.

The Eighth Point: *Never Give Up*

The last point is straightforward: *Never give up*. *Never, never give up*. I believe we have responsibility until the last breath we draw on this earth. As our circumstances change—our health, age, abilities—yes, things may slow down or shrink. The circle of what we can do may get smaller. But at every stage of life, there is still a responsibility we can fulfill. It's not a checklist we finish early. It lasts until the end. Even someone struggling with illness or cognitive decline still has some level of responsibility—something left to offer—until their course is over.

In Summary

Here are the points we reviewed:

1. Our mission is to transmit values.
2. Be part of the solution, not the problem.
3. When in doubt, serve your way out.
4. Engage the power of true love.
5. Stay in your lane.
6. Unite the public and private.
7. Have faith.
8. Never give up.







Transitions >

Frequently Asked Questions

Registration Questions

Q: I don't see any welcome email, did my registration go through?

Find the

Airtable Questions

Q: I registered but it says I need to create an airtable account, how do I do that?

Find the answer

System Questions

Q: I forgot to bookmark my dashboard page! How do I find it again?

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History of Korea, Part 9

by Michael Downey



photo credit: Michael Downey

The final days of the Joseon Dynasty were marked by chaos. Koreans often describe their history as that of a small, righteous nation trapped between several large, hungry tigers. This image aptly describes Korea's situation at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries. The two primary tigers were China and Japan.

Both nations had long histories of preying upon weaker neighbors. Korea may have been both weak and politically naïve. As the “younger brother” to imperial China, Korea remained locked in a tributary relationship. Meanwhile, Japan was on the rise—defeating China in the Sino-Japanese War and Russia in the Russo-Japanese War. Japan's victory over a major European power filled it with confidence and ambition.

Japan set its sights on the rest of Asia through its vision of a *Great East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere*. Its principal rival was China. Both shared imperial ambitions. China had long viewed itself as the “Middle Kingdom,” expecting allegiance and tribute from surrounding nations. Japan, newly empowered, was ready to replace European colonial powers as Asia's dominant imperial force.

Korea was Japan's first target.

Japan had long cast covetous eyes on the peninsula. The Yamato state traded with, borrowed from, and eventually plundered the early Gaya Confederacy—later claiming it as a colony. As Japan's internal politics evolved, Korea suffered repeated attacks from Japanese pirates known as *Wako*, which were resisted by both the Goryeo and Joseon dynasties.

In 1592, Japan launched a full-scale invasion of Korea. The invasion was eventually repelled with significant assistance from Ming Dynasty forces. As a tributary state, China was obligated to help Korea and grew accustomed to intervening militarily. It became convenient to station troops permanently in Korea. When Japan invaded again in 1596, Korea—better prepared and supported by Chinese forces—repelled the invasion more quickly. Japanese ambitions to conquer China consistently involved first controlling Korea as a land bridge.

In 1894, when the Tonahak Rebellion threatened Seoul, Korea

again called on the Qing Dynasty for assistance. China sent 2,500 troops. Japan, angered that it was not informed, dispatched its own forces. In 1895, 8,000 Japanese troops landed in Incheon, marched on Seoul, captured Emperor Gojong, and installed a pro-Japanese government.

Japan's modernized army and navy, strengthened by the Meiji Reforms, dealt decisive blows to Qing forces. China sued for peace, signing a treaty that renounced its claims over Korea and paid a massive indemnity to Japan. Japan emerged as the dominant power in East Asia, positioning itself to control Korea.

Throughout the early to mid-twentieth century—and at other times in history—the Japanese Imperial House promoted the idea that Mimana (the Gaya Confederacy) had been a Japanese colony and that Koreans and Japanese shared a common ancestry. This narrative was used to legitimize Japan's imperial conquest of Korea.

Emperor Gojong and his wife, Queen Min, were effectively trapped. Gojong sought assistance from China, while Queen Min turned to Russia. To counterbalance Japanese influence, she invited Russian advisors and investment. This move obstructed Japanese ambitions, and they resolved to eliminate her.

Under the direction of the Japanese ambassador, a plot was organized, and Queen Min was assassinated. Gojong was subdued, and Japan consolidated its control. Japan's subsequent victory over Russia further cemented its dominance. The Eulsa Treaty reduced Korea to a Japanese protectorate, transferring many governmental, economic, and diplomatic powers to Japan. This led directly to Gojong's forced abdication in 1907 and the formal annexation of Korea in 1910.

Colonial Rule and Resistance

Japanese colonization deeply scarred the Korean people, with consequences still visible in South Korea today. Reactions varied. Emperor Gojong was confined within the palace and repeatedly attempted to escape to establish a government-in-exile. He died in 1919 under suspicious circumstances.

His death sparked the March 1st Independence Movement. Religious and civic leaders issued a declaration demanding independence from Japan. The declaration was read publicly across the nation, igniting peaceful demonstrations. Protesters raised their hands and shouted "*Mansei!*"—meaning "ten thousand years" or "long live Korea."

The demonstrations were nonviolent; the Japanese response was brutal. Police and troops beat and shot demonstrators, creating martyrs. The most famous was Yu Gwan-sun, a 16-year-old girl who became an icon of the movement. She was arrested, tortured, and died in Seodaemun Prison in Seoul.

Although the movement was crushed, it announced Korea's demand for independence to the world. It later inspired Gandhi's nonviolent resistance in India and Martin Luther King Jr.'s civil rights movement in the United States.

Resistance continued. A provisional government was established in Shanghai. Earlier, Korean patriot An Jung-geun assassinated Japanese Governor-General Ito Hirobumi. A devout Catholic and devoted son, An accepted his fate and was executed in Japanese-occupied China.

Armed resistance flourished in Manchuria and China, though not within Korea itself. After March 1st, Japan tightened its grip, pursuing full assimilation—turning Koreans into Japanese. The Korean language and surnames were banned, and Koreans were forced to adopt Japanese names.

Religion Under Occupation

The relationship between Christianity and the occupiers was complex. Most Protestant and Catholic churches were led by foreign missionaries whose teachings were Western and thus viewed as anti-Japanese. Japan imposed restrictions on church teachings, viewing the Old Testament as subversive because of its themes of liberation after suffering.

Some ministers were arrested, churches burned, and many Christians joined the resistance. Others cooperated, believing accommodation was the safer path. As part of assimilation efforts, Japan forced Koreans to worship at Shinto shrines. By 1925, all elementary students were required to bow at Shinto altars; by 1935, university students as well.

Some complied out of necessity; others resisted. Many Koreans turned to Christianity during this period. Some devout believers fled to remote areas, where they encountered remnants of shamanism. As often happens in history, beliefs blended. The result was a range of quasi-Christian movements later declared heretical.

These movements were generally rooted in native animism, layered with Taoist concepts and topped by varying messianic beliefs. Practices and ethics from Buddhism, Confucianism, and Christianity appeared in differing combinations.

One loosely connected movement was the *Jesus Church Movement*. They believed the Messiah would return as a man, born in Korea, and that the Fall of Man was sexual in nature, requiring sexual rites for restoration. These beliefs led to their condemnation as heretical.

After World War II, branches of these movements existed in both North and South Korea. The Israel Monastery led by Kim Baek-moon was well known. Moon Sun-myung was a member and disciple of Kim. They traveled together to Pyongyang in 1948 to meet others in the movement. Moon remained there until the outbreak of the Korean War in 1950.

War, Liberation, and Division

During World War II, Japan forced Koreans into labor in factories and mines under brutal conditions. Over 110,000 men were conscripted, and another 100,000 volunteered to fight for Japan. More than 50,000 were killed. American forces encountered and killed them as Japanese soldiers.

Japan also forced Korean women and girls into military brothels, mainly in China. Many were required to service dozens of men per day. A small number of these women are still alive today and protest weekly outside the Japanese Embassy in Seoul.





The Japanese army committed mass executions of Korean civilians in Korea, Manchuria, and Japan. The Japanese government has consistently minimized or denied these atrocities.

When the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki ended the war, Korea was liberated. Liberation Day is celebrated on August 15th. Koreans remembered who resisted, who collaborated, who lived, and who died. These memories shaped the postwar years.



Global politics dealt Korea a cruel blow. The United States accepted Japan's surrender south of the 38th parallel, and the Soviet Union accepted it in the north. Japanese officials departed, but the U.S. military—unprepared and unfamiliar with Korea—retained many former Japanese administrators, causing deep resentment.

The U.S. refused to recognize the Shanghai-based Provisional Government led by Kim Gu and disbanded the popular People's Republic of Korea. Refugees flooded south, and accusations of collaboration erupted. The left embraced Marxism; the right supported monarchy and elite privilege.

The issue was handed to the United Nations, which called for nationwide elections. Kim Il-sung refused participation in the North. Elections were held in the South under UN supervision, with a reported 95% turnout—the first time Koreans voted. Despite opposition from leaders like Kim Gu and a boycott in Jeju, a constitutional assembly was formed.

In August, it established 대한민국, the Republic of Korea. In the North, Kim Il-sung established the People's Republic of Korea with Soviet backing, claiming authority over the entire peninsula.

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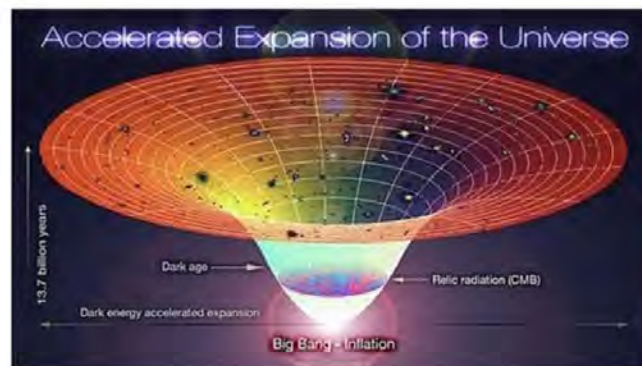
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How Did God Make The Universe

by Richard Lewis, PhD



All photos submitted by R. Lewis

A scientific atheist once asked me, “If the universe is made of energy, where did God get the energy to create it?” I replied, “I’m glad you asked—science has actually figured out the answer.”

Because he was a scientist, I explained it quickly in a TikTok-style response, and he liked it. I’ll do the same here, but without technical language.

Big and Small Numbers

First, we need to talk about very large and very small numbers. Look at the number written as 10^6 . Which part seems more important—the 10 or the 6? Most people think the 10 matters most, but they’re wrong. The 6 is the key, because it tells us how many zeros there are. 10^6 means 1,000,000—a 1 followed by six zeros. Scientists write numbers this way because it makes extremely large or tiny quantities easier to handle. For example, one-millionth is written as 10^{-6} , which means 0.000001. Modern physics goes even further and uses what are called natural units. In these units, the speed of light is set to 1. When we do that, ordinary measurements become enormous:

- One second contains about 10^{44} tiny time units
- One meter contains about 10^{33} tiny length units

This system helps scientists describe extreme events, like the birth of the universe.

Spacetime

Next idea: according to Einstein, space and time form a single reality called spacetime. Spacetime is not a traditional “substance” like matter, but it *is* physical and dynamic. It can bend and curve, and those curves affect matter and energy. Mass bends spacetime, and spacetime tells matter how to move. In this sense, spacetime is not just a background or a concept—it is a fundamental part of reality. Some physicists even think it may emerge from something deeper at the quantum level. Modern physics suggests that light and matter are not separate substances, but rather energetic patterns—twists in space along the time axis.

- Light behaves like open waves
- Matter behaves like closed loops

Because space has three dimensions, these twists can involve one, two, or all three directions—usually called x, y, and z—along

with the time direction that we all move through.

Quarks, Gluons, and the Strong Force

The twists that involve all three spatial directions are special.

- In light, they are called gluons
- In matter, they are called quarks

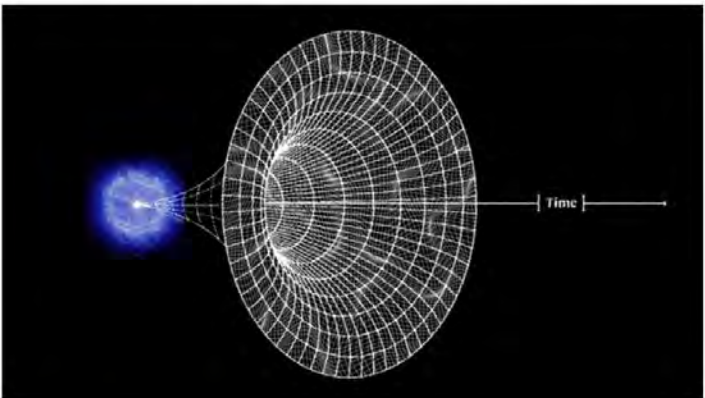
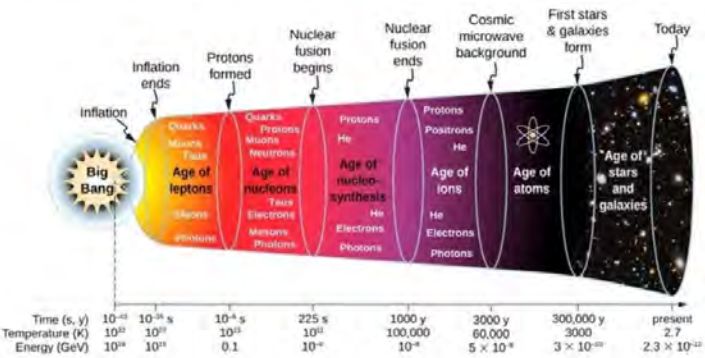
These twists are so intense that they cannot exist freely. They must be tightly confined inside particles like protons. Trying to pull them apart requires an enormous amount of energy. If you attempt it, the energy you put in immediately turns into new particles. This powerful binding is known as the Strong Force. In fact, most of the mass of ordinary matter does not come from the quarks themselves, but from the energy of the Strong Force holding them together. When separated, quarks contain an enormous amount of stored energy.

Inflation and the Origin of Energy

Here is the key point. The Strong Force does not react instantly. Its reaction time is incredibly short—about 10^{-28} seconds—but in the tiny units of spacetime, that is still a long delay. At the very beginning of the universe, everything existed in an unimaginably small and dense speck, sometimes called the cosmic seed. This seed was created by God, along with the Logos, to automatically guide its development toward humanity. During the brief moment before the Strong Force could react, spacetime expanded at an extraordinary rate. This event is known as inflation. In that fraction of a second, the universe doubled in size again and again—trillions of doublings in an instant. By the time the Strong Force finally reacted, the universe had grown by an incomprehensibly large amount. Quarks that were once together had been separated across vast distances. That sudden release of energy, as the Strong Force reacted, is what we call the hot Big Bang, which effectively ended inflation.

The Final Answer

About 13 billion years later, we humans appeared in a now-cooled universe. So, when asked where the energy came from, the scientific answer is surprisingly simple: It came from the structure of spacetime itself. The universe did not need energy brought in from outside. The energy emerged naturally as spacetime unfolded according to its own laws. And all of this, as we understand it, reflects God’s brilliant design of the Logos —the set of natural laws through which creation unfolds.



All images submitted by R. Lewis

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Dental Vacation



all photos credited to J. Abelseth

by John Abelseth

About 15 years ago, the estimated cost in Canada for my dental work was about \$40,000. My brother David was using a dentist in Los Algodones, Mexico and encouraged me to check it out.

So when I got time off from my tech job at the Canadian Red Cross, I flew to Yuma AZ and stayed with him in a Best Western hotel.

Next day we drove 20 minutes to the California border, parked for \$6 and walked across the border three blocks to the dental clinic that he'd been using for a year or so.

Up-to-date equipment - better than I saw at my dentist in Canada, lots of implant surgeon certificates and good English. Using modern equipment, they did jaw scans, not x-rays, showing my serious dental needs. The implant surgeon, and owner of the clinic, discussed my options, quoted prices and, once I decided, started work right away.

I had known from dental x-rays and estimates in Canada that my teeth were on the way out, so that same day I had three extractions. The next morning, 4 four more extractions. They don't mess around in Mexico. Need work? Get 'em done.

Then implants, three of them that same week! Did I say they don't mess around with schedules and reschedules? In one week I had seven extractions and three implants. That was my lower jaw!

Then there was a break for four months for my jaw to heal. In the meantime, I followed a regiment of amoxicillin, pain killers, soft foods and temporary dentures held in place with denture

paste, with surprisingly very little pain!

Then there was another trip to Yuma, staying in an Airbnb and a return to Los Algodones for final fittings and implant-secured teeth – seven extractions, three implants, dentures, two visits – total cost about \$8,000 US. Plus, flights, car rental and Airbnb.

Time for my bank account to recover, though insurance and my parents helped with some of the costs!

Next, the upper teeth also needed some TLC. There were several follow up trips, more extractions, four more implants on the upper jaw. It was thousands less expensive than in Canada or the USA. Finally, I had the ability to chew, no more toothache and a confident smile.

But recently, it looked like my wife was going to need implants, and we figured, why not try a warmer, oceanside dental experience. We had traveled to Cancun with friends a couple years ago after my spiritual son commented that he had some dental work done there. That was good, but a little far from the Pacific coast, and harder to get to from the west.

Some Google research showed one of the top-rated implant clinics in Mexico, and one of the safest cities, is Puerto Vallarta – a five-hour direct flight from Vancouver. More checks showed competitive pricing and high praise from clients. Well, that was a "no brainer" as the saying goes.

So, we booked a dental appointment, flights, Airbnb, and then let our friends know of our schedule and plan. In minutes their couple booked their trip to join us in Vallarta and we were all set.

The trip was great. While at home, we endured rain and near freezing weather, but in Puerto Vallarta we enjoyed 82° and a relaxing nine days in... nearly paradise??



Our couple, the Abelseths, and our friends, the McHales couple





Our couple, the Abelseths, and our friends, the McHales couple

Perhaps the highlight was a trip on the public transit bus to a beautiful ocean site where the four of us boarded a boat and went snorkeling in the 80° water teeming with beautiful fishes. Not only that, but we were able to see four orcas surfacing, diving, surfacing again. Spectacular! Booked through Airbnb, the cost was a bargain at \$45 each.

Another experience there, booked through Expedia, was a coffee and tequila-tasting trip to a beautiful flower and bird sanctuary. On the very comfortable bus trip to the site, the host pointed out houses owned by famous rich people, various landmarks, and explained that all beachfront property in Mexico is public, not privately owned. He was a wealth of information, listing several well-known movies shot on site.

Both these experiences are highly rated and recommended.

Oh yeah, the dental experience was very good too. In some ways better than expected, as they told Helen that she didn't need extractions or implants, just a deep cleaning. Much less expensive and they saved her tooth as well. Our friends needed more extensive work and were very pleased with the results. They'll be scheduling a revisit for final implant work and brand new teeth!

While I was still working, my health insurance covered the work done in Mexico, to my max of \$1500 a year, so if any of you need work done, check with your provider to see if that's an option.

If you're in the southeast, I can recommend Castle Dental in Algodones:

https://www.castledentalgroup.com/?campaignid=20130990419&adgroupid=148344495359&creative=658540588556&matchtype=e&network=g&device=c&keyword=castle%20dental%20los%20algodones&gad_source=1&gad_campaignid=20130990419&gbraid=0AAAAApnd9-F9gKdRe8eETHk4is5mYz4TE

and in Puerto Vallarta, Esthetic Dentistry:

<https://puertovallartadentistry.com/>

The snorkeling trip in Puerto Vallarta can be booked at:

<https://www.airbnb.com/experiences/3222091?viralityEntryPoint=2&s=76>

For the botanical garden (note that lunch after the tequila tasting is optional and you may want to check out the restaurant at the botanical garden):

<https://www.expedia.com/things-to-do/search?d1=2026-01-12&d2=2026-01-13&endDate=1%2F13%2F2026&location=Puerto%20Vallarta%2C%20Puerto%20Vallarta%2C%20Jalisco%2C%20Mexico&rid=180016&slimSearchKeyword=tequila%20botanical%20coffee&sort=RECOMMENDED&startDate=1%2F12%2F2026&swp=on>

Happy smiles!

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Winter Skin Care

By Christine Libon



photo submitted by C. Libon

As we age, our skin becomes more fragile and drier. To make matters worse, in winter, the humidity level indoors drops below the desired level due to heated air. This can make our skin itchy, flaky, cracked, to the point where blankets, socks, long sleeves get caught on our already irritated skin. It's important to avoid harsh soaps (years ago I began using natural, gentler dish detergent and natural orange oil cleaners in the kitchen to save the skin in my hands). Sure, there are lotions and creams we can apply, but it's important to not cause the skin to dry out.

I found a recipe for homemade body wash that I like (there are several basic recipes on YouTube). I chose this one because I like the ingredients and already had them at home. The link is below at the end of this article.

Also, I realized that for most of my life I have neglected my facial skin. I found an article describing a Japanese daily face washing ritual that deep cleans, moisturizes and stimulates circulation resulting in a healthy glow. I gave it a try using the homemade body wash. After doing it only one time, I see that it works!

The technique:

1. Wet your skin, apply a liberal amount of the body wash (or your choice of cleansing solution) using your hands.
2. Massage it into your face for four minutes.
3. Rinse your face with warm water for two minutes.
4. Rinse your face with cold water for two minutes.

To further increase blood flow, I bent forward for step 2, thus lowering my head.

A similar technique is called 424, which means 4 minutes massaging with an oil-based cleanser, 2 minutes with a water-based cleanser, and 4 minutes total rinsing (2 warm water, 2 cold water).

One more tip, which a friend shared with me decades ago, is to simply break open a gel capsule of vitamin E and apply it directly on your skin. Some body wash recipes include vitamin E

oil, Wishing you a smooth healthy glow.

Body Wash Recipe

https://youtu.be/ISjIYJ_AZEA?si=-kcBzegeKqmYx9xo

< Dental Vacation

Awakening to Heavenly Heart in Our Later Years >

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