

*Help! I'm being invaded!*

My astronomy magazine recently informed me that 65 billion neutrinos from the sun pass through my body (and yours) every second. Is that "Help!"? No, because they have almost zero mass and don't recognise your existence any more than you do theirs. They just pass straight through.

That made me think. What else is happening to us that we may not be aware of? God's love for one. I lived my first 22 years unaware of it and scornful of those who claimed to know God, until one day I discovered Him for myself, after being made to think of the feasibility of His existence through a book, "Mere Christianity," by C S Lewis of Narnia fame.

So the fact that we do not experience something ourselves does not mean that it does not exist. The neutrinos still go on passing through us. God's love is still being poured out towards us.

Down the years this issue has been a matter of debate in philosophical circles. Could something be said to exist if there was no one to observe or experience it? It produced in 1924 an amusing imaginary newspaper correspondence (usually attributed to Ronald Knox) regarding the existence of a tree in a certain Oxford College quadrangle. The first letter: "God must find it extremely odd / to see that this tree/continues to be/ when there's no one about in the Quad."

The reply: "I am always about in the Quad/and that's why this tree/continues to be/since observed by/Yours Faithfully/God."

It's no wonder that God, wanting to communicate clearly His existence and purposes, chose to reveal Himself by coming in human flesh and living amongst us. And then He carried out His purposes visibly—born as a baby; preaching and healing; dying on the cross as an act of redemption; rising from the dead and appearing to his followers and others; and finally ascending back to heaven.

All right, you might say, for those who saw Him then. Easy for them—actually even then many did not recognise God amongst them—but not so easy for us. How can we know of His existence? The analogy of the 65 billion neutrinos passing through us might help. We might just believe in them because reliable witnesses in the shape of eminent scientists say they have proved their existence. Many reliable witnesses in the New Testament bear testimony to the acts and teaching of Jesus.

Or we could try to spot the existence of neutrinos personally. You might need 100,000 gallons of dry-cleaning fluid in a mine 1,478 metres below ground to catch a glimpse of them, as did Ray Davis and his team, who discovered their existence. It's rather easier to experience God, as millions have done down the ages, through answered prayer, changed lives, and awareness of His presence.

But at the end of the day it takes faith to believe in God as it does to believe in those neutrinos. The difference is that neutrinos do not want to interact with us, whereas God does. Good Friday and Easter Sunday are shortly upon us, showing just how much God loves us. Whether we acknowledge Him or not, "God is always around in (our own) Quad."

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