through models" (p. x). Teilhard de Chardin observed that the scientific understanding of love would be as significant as the discovery of fire.

The titles of the book's three parts best describe its contents: what is unlimited love; scientific, ethical, and religious perspectives; and, developing a scientific field. The last of eleven chapters lists the 21 funded projects (at a cost of $1,730,000) selected from 85 submissions. Notes and an index complete the volume.

A companion volume to *Unlimited Love* is entitled *Research on Altruism and Love: An Annotated Bibliography of Major Studies in Psychology, Sociology, Evolutionary Biology, and Theology*. This book contains four annotated bibliographies: (1) religious love and science; (2) current research on personality and altruism in social psychology; (3) altruism and love in biology and evolutionary psychology; and (4) helping behavior, religious organizations, and voluntary associations.

Post is president of the Institute for Research on Unlimited Love, professor of bioethics in the medical school at Case Western Reserve University, and author of *The Moral Challenge of Alzheimer's Disease*. He thinks that "In the final analysis, unlimited love is what God has for each and every one of us, and this is good news" (p. xii).

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Letters

Patriarchal Ages in Genesis

I was very interested to read Carol Hill's article "Making Sense of the Numbers of Genesis" (*PSCF* 55, no. 4 [Dec. 2003]: 239–51), and I would fully support her conclusions. However, I feel that she has considerably *understated* the case for a symbolic interpretation of the ages in Genesis 5 and 11 by failing to notice various other mathematical patterns in which the number 7 is prominent. I explored these in detail in my MA Dissertation *The Genealogies of Genesis: A Study of their Structure and Function* (London Bible College, 1989, unpublished), and at a popular level in *Discovering Genesis: Crossway Bible Guide* (by Richard and Tricia Johnson [Leicester: Crossway Books, 2001], 46–7; 62–4). Let me briefly mention the relevant facts, although for the sake of simplicity I will only look at the patriarchal ages "at death."

It should be noted that ages are given, or can be calculated, for each generation between Adam and Moses. These are as follows:

Genesis 5		Genesis 11		Elsewhere	
Adam	930	Shem	(600)	Abraham (Gen. 25:7)	175
Seth	912	Arpachshad	(438)	Isaac (Gen. 35:28)	180
Enosh	905	Shelah	(433)	Jacob (Gen. 47:28)	147
Kenan	910	Eber	(464)	Levi (Exod. 6:16)	137
Mahalalel	895	Peleg	(239)	Kohath (Exod. 6:18)	133
Jared	962	Reu	(239)	Amran (Exod. 6:20)	137
Enoch	365	Serug	(230)	Moses (Deut. 34:7)	120
Methuselah	969	Nahor	(148)		
Lamech	777	Terah	205		
Noah	950				

The ages in brackets are those which are not given directly in the text, but which can easily be calculated.

If one adds these 26 generations together, the total is 12,600 (= 70 x 180); this backs up Carol Hill's point that the symbolism of the figures reflects both the sexagesimal (base 60) system of Mesopotamia and the Hebrew sacred number 7 (or 70). (Incidentally, for the mathematicians, 12,600 is the lowest number with precisely 70 factors; or 72 if 1 and itself are included).

However, the really interesting pattern emerges if one concentrates on the first and third columns, which each begin and end with a character with whom God made a significant covenant (Adam/Noah/Abraham/Moses). Here are the key features of the pattern:

1. The ages in Gen. 5 add up to 8575 (= 25 x 7 x 7 x 7)

2. The 7 ages in the third column add up to 1029 (= 3 x 7 x 7 x 7)

If we combine these two columns together, thus making a "list" of 17 ages:

3. These 17 ages add up to 9604 (= 4 x 7 x 7 x 7 x 7);

4. The middle age is that of Lamech (777);

5. Remarkably, the 7 ages on either side of Lamech add up to a total of 7777. The fact that this is intentional can be seen in the way this figure of 7777 is itself divided up:

6. The ages either side of Lamech (i.e. Methuselah and Noah) add up to 1919 (19 x 101);

7. The 6 ages preceding Methuselah (i.e. Seth to Enoch) add up to 4949 (7 x 7 x 101), of which the first three (Seth/Enosh/Kenan) add up to 2727 (3 x 3 x 3 x 101);

8. The 6 ages after Noah (Abraham to Amran) add up to 909 (3 x 3 x 101)

There are clearly other patterns which have also been incorporated into the system; for example, one which has been long recognized is the following, for the major patriarchs:

Abraham	175 (= 7 x 5 x 5)
Isaac	180 (= 5 x 6 x 6)
Jacob	147 (= 3 x 7 x 7)

James Williams (in his article "Number Symbolism and Joseph as Symbol of Completion," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 98 [1979]: 86–7) suggests that Joseph (whose age of 110 is [5 x 5] + [6 x 6] + [7 x 7]) completes this sequence: "Joseph is the *successor* in the pattern (7 → 5 → 3 → 1) and the *sum* of his predecessors ($5^2 + 6^2 + 7^2$)."

It would not be possible to demonstrate other patterns in this letter, but if I may conclude with several brief observations:

1. Given the knowledge of mathematics in the ancient Mesopotamian world it would not be difficult for a mathematician to have devised this pattern; in my dissertation I reconstruct a possible path that might have been followed;

2. If only one age was different by even 1 year, the entire system would collapse. This gives good grounds for assuming the reliability of the MT figures. The LXX and the SP have both "adjusted" the MT figures, but in doing so have created chaos; in the LXX Methuselah actually dies 14 years *after* the flood!

3. The key theological points that the system demonstrates are:

   (a) The period from Adam to Moses was regarded as in some ways a "complete" period of time, characterized by the number seven;

   (b) *None* of the ages reach 1000, which, in the ancient world, would have symbolized some degree of divinity;

   (c) *None* of the characters achieved immortality on earth (as again occurs in the legends of the cultures surrounding Israel). As Paul says: "Death reigned from the time of Adam to the time of Moses" (Rom. 5:14).

I trust that these observations will further reinforce Carol Hill's conclusion that "the symbolic … view is sacred because that is how the original biblical author(s) intended for it to be" (p. 250).

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Interpreting Numbers in Genesis

Thank you for publishing Carol A. Hill's article, "Making Sense of the Numbers of Genesis" (*PSCF* 55, no. 4 [December 2003]: 239–51). Carol has done a magnificent job in showing us how the early scribes of Israel were beholden to the Mesopotamian culture in their different use of "numbers." This is just another example of how much of the early biblical books of Genesis and Exodus are a product of a "post-exilic period" in which Israeli scribes, being newly released from captivity in Babylon, set about putting a jumbled collection of local ancient legends and myths into some sort of coherent order. Carol's conclusion is right on: "Ironically, by interpreting the numbers of Genesis "literally" Christians have created a mythological world that does not fit with the historical or scientific record."

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"Genesis Age Gaps?"

Carol Hill's articles on Genesis topics make interesting reading, but her most recent one contains arguments that I challenge. In "Making Sense of the Numbers in Genesis" (*PSCF* 55, no. 4 [Dec. 2003]: 239–51), she tries to show (p. 248) that certain biblical genealogies are condensed by omitting names and thus creating gaps of time in the lineage. She then asks: "How far back in time can biblical genealogies be stretched, assuming that legitimate gaps exist" (p. 249). The gaps she mentions amount to 370 years, but she stretches that by saying: "The known gaps can push biblical chronology back at least several hundred years and up to one thousand years or so at most" (p. 249).

Hill's "most notable example" of a gap is in Matt. 1:8, where Uzziah is listed as the son of Joram (Jehoram), omitting the names of three kings of Judah in between them, for a possible gap of 70 years. However, Matthew was simply repeating the condensation of Joram to Uzziah found in 2 Kings 15:32. This has no effect on biblical chronology because scholars like Bishop Ussher (1650) or Reece (1977) have recourse to detailed information about the omitted kings earlier in 2 Kings (8:25; 12:1; and 14:1).

Hill's other example involves Exod. 6:16–20, which indicates that Moses was a grandson of Kohath, who was "born before the descent into Egypt" (p. 248). Hill believes there must be names omitted from that line because the