

DOES GOD EXIST?

July/August 2010
Volume 37 Number 4

A nonprofit effort
to convince mankind
that God is real and
the Bible is His Word.

Unanswered
Prayers

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Articles in this Issue:

- | | |
|--|----|
| Unanswered Prayers | 3 |
| Polarization of Creation/
Evolution Worsens | 7 |
| Blessed Are the
Peacemakers | 14 |

Guest Article:

- | | |
|--|----|
| Mathematics, Cosmic
Splendor, and the Bible | 17 |
|--|----|

Special Features:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|----|
| Nobel Scientists and God | 21 |
| Book Reviews: | |
| The Letter and the Scroll | 22 |
| The Blessings of an
Adopted Child | 23 |
| Dandy Designs: | |
| The Design of Hair | 24 |
| Survival by the Ear | 25 |
| News and Notes | 26 |

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Unanswered Prayers

I enjoy reading the mail that comes to us about articles in this journal. It is interesting to see how people react to what we write. In the November/December 2009 issue we had an article titled “God’s Role in Relationships” in which we talked about how God works in the lives of His children to bring people together. We have had more mail on that article than any article in recent history. What is interesting to me is how many people reacted to the discussion on page six about the history of my prayer life. I have always tried to be transparent in the articles I have written in this journal, and here is what I said:

The notion that praying for a new person to love would solve my problem rang pretty hollow with me. Call it lack of faith, call it lack of trust, call it hypocrisy — whatever accusation you might want to throw at me — I did not believe that God would bring me someone else or in any way impact my relationships. In the past when we had been faced with major problems in life praying never seemed to help. When our baby Tim was born with congenital problems we prayed and our friends prayed that he would not be blind, but he is blind. We accepted that and prayed that he would not be mentally challenged, but he is severely mentally challenged. We then prayed to help us accept the blindness and the retardation but that there be no other problems. We then found he had a form of muscular dystrophy, cerebral palsy, and schizophrenia. I battled my way through all of that, maintaining my faith in God, but becoming rather cynical about God answering specific prayers for specific needs. In my wife’s many struggles with the complications of juvenile diabetes we prayed fervently that the problems would go away, but they never did. In all of these cases what I prayed for never happened directly, but in all of these cases I found an answer that allowed me to cope with the problem and move on. The meaning of 1 Corinthians 10:13 became a part of my thinking — that God gives a way of escape that can prevent



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breaking if we choose to accept it, but that He does not always take away or provide direct solutions to the problem we are facing (2 Corinthians 12:8–9; 2 Corinthians 1:3–6, 9).

The mail that came in on that paragraph was massive. Many believers expressed their own experiences which were similar. A number of atheists and skeptics stated the view that this was a clear proof that there is no God and I was too biased to see it. The bottom line here is that there is a need to understand why God does not answer prayers. Why should there ever be a “no” from God on a sincere request? After all did not Jesus say, “And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father. You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it” (John 14:13–14, NIV). He also said, “Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks, the door will be opened” (Matthew 7:7–8, NIV). Why would God not say “yes” and allow me to have a child who was not blind, who was not mentally challenged, and who was not impaired by muscular dystrophy and cerebral palsy?

Before we try to answer this, let me say from experience that no matter how good an answer is given, if you are in the depths of pain and frustration, no answer is going to remove all that you are feeling. When I was in agony, people gave me logical and biblical answers, but those answers did not solve anything for me. Those answers, combined with study, prayer, and thought, have brought me to some understandings that have enabled me to survive as a Christian and a human being. Here are some of the conclusions I have reached.

GOD DOES NOT ANSWER SELFISH PRAYERS.

In James 4:3 we are told that sometimes when we pray we do not receive because we “ask amiss, that ye may spend it in your pleasures” (ASV). I do not think any of us struggle with this one. We know that praying for a solid gold BMW is not a prayer that is likely or logically to be answered in a positive way. Sometimes what we construe as an essential is a luxury, and that also falls into this category. Rational human beings can accept that God would not and should not pass out positive responses to every human whim.

GOD WILL NOT VOID PROMISES HE HAS MADE.

This is another obvious point. Galatians 6:7 makes a promise “Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows” (NIV). People cannot abuse their bodies with drugs and alcohol year after year and then expect to be able to pray to God and not suffer the long term consequences of that abuse. Hebrews 9:27 tells us that we are each promised that we will die. To expect God to void that promise is inconsistent, and yet death can be incredibly difficult for those left

behind. If we understand that death is a transition and not an end, the whole picture of death changes because God makes positive promises about death to those who serve Him. God is not voiding His promise to answer prayer when He denies a request that would void another promise He has made.

GOD USES "NO" TO MOLD AND SHAPE US. In 2 Corinthians 12:7 Paul talks about a "thorn in the flesh" which he had prayed three times that God would remove, but the answer was "No." Paul says that the reason was "lest I should be exalted above measure" (KJV). The TCNT translation says "to prevent me from thinking too highly of myself." The message is that sometimes we ask for things that are not good for us, or ask to be free of things that will help us be better and more useful to God.

I have to confess that I am a different person today than I would have been if my son Tim had not been born with multiple birth defects. The book I have written about Tim is titled *Timothy, my Son and Teacher*. Because of the long struggle to help Tim find happiness and stability in life, I have had to change. I have been molded by all the battles with doctors, state agencies, religious leaders, and even friends. I see nothing in logic or scripture that says that God caused Tim's problems. In fact, I know his difficulties came from the actions of irresponsible adults. (Tim is an adopted child whose biological mother had measles and did not seek medical care.) The fact is that I prayed fervently and with other Christians that Tim would not be victimized by all of this, but he was born blind, mentally challenged, with muscular dystrophy, cerebral palsy, and schizophrenia. I have been molded by all of this. I am a different person. I did not ask to be a different person, and I would rather not have been changed. However, the few strengths I have come mainly from the molding that Tim brought to me.

Like Paul we have to realize that God may see that there is a reason why He should not give us what we ask because He sees a higher purpose. If you see no purpose or value in your life, that may not seem to be a



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reasonable answer and one that is not easy to accept. However, to fair-minded people who believe that God has a purpose for their lives, this is an important understanding about prayers that are not answered.

GOD'S PURPOSES CANNOT BE VOIDED. In Matthew 26:39 we see an obvious case of God not answering prayer. Jesus Christ is facing crucifixion, and He knows what is about to happen. In anguish He cries out to God, “O my Father, . . . let this cup pass from me”(KJV). Jesus clearly states He wants to avoid dying on the cross, and the surrounding verses tell us He prayed this over and over (see verses 42 and 44). We are also told in each of these petitions Jesus adds “Yet I pray, not what I want but you want” (Williams). Jesus knew God had a higher purpose for what He was about to endure.

In Ephesians 3:11 we are told that everything that happened to Christ and that happens to us is “the eternal purpose which he realized in Christ Jesus our Lord” (RSV). In verse 10 further explanation tells us that “in order that the powers and authorities in heavenly realms should not see the complex wisdom of God’s plan being worked out through the Church” (Phillips). Ephesians 6:12 again states the ultimate purpose of God in creating man and the Church.

Christians cannot accomplish God’s purpose by opting out of every difficult situation that comes along. Christianity is not an escape mechanism to avoid problems and sickness in life. When we ask God to back off from the reason He created us, we are making an unreasonable request and God will not answer such a request in a positive way. I am reminded of a line from *Fiddler on the Roof* in which the question is, “Would it void some vast eternal plan, if I were a wealthy man?” In reality the answer to that question is “yes”!

You go to the dentist and you get a novocaine shot. Why? Because thirty seconds of the needle is better than what seems like three hours of the drill. How much will anything that happens in this life mean in the context of eternity? You have a purpose for existing—a reason to



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be. God does not create junk, and He has a purpose for every life. God has also promised to take even the evil, bad things that come from Satan and make good things come from them (Romans 8:28). He has given us the option of rejecting that purpose and living selfishly, but He will not assist us in doing so. Life is not always easy, and prayers can be made for anything. When we become angry with God because He does not grant our requests, we are forgetting why we are here. When we accuse God of ignoring our prayers, we are turning to selfish desires that revolve around ourselves. We look instead at the eternal purpose we have in Christ Jesus as described in Ephesians 3:11.

—John N. Clayton

POLARIZATION OF CREATION/ EVOLUTION WORSENS

The most basic theme of the **Does God Exist?** ministry is that science and Christianity are friends—not enemies. For over forty years we have been trying to get people to understand that if God created and made the cosmos, and if that same God gave mankind a written set of instructions about how to live and told us something about our past, the two have to agree, because they have the same Author. If they do not agree, either we have misunderstood God’s written word or we have misunderstood the evidence recorded in the natural world we observe.

Our opponents in this endeavor have been both from the atheist community and from the religious community. These are people who

WANT a conflict between science and belief in God. The atheist group believes that their best bet in destroying faith in God is to promote the view that science is supported by evidence and intelligent thinking, and religion is supported by emotionalism and ignorance. The religious group considers all of science and those who are a part of it to be suspect at best. Their view is that science is a human endeavor, full of human error and selfish motives and



of minimal importance in the grand scheme of things.

These two groups are engaged in an escalating war of words with the gap between them growing daily. On the atheist side there has been a rapid growth of atheist activity on every front. Many cities are now seeing billboards and bus panels touting atheist themes. Atheists now have a variety of magazines and journals, some of them being expensive four-color journals printed on coated paper and with a wide range of talented writers. *Skeptic*, *Skeptical Inquirer*, *American Atheist*, *Skeptical Briefs*, and the *Humanist* are just a few of the more visible magazines/newsletters in general circulation. Organizations like The Committee for the Advancement of Science Education have morphed from pro-education organizations to out-and-out efforts to

slam religion and discredit belief in God. Atheists are involved in a wide range of books and materials aimed at the general public, and have been incredibly successful, with books by Richard Dawkins, Sam Harris, Christopher Hitchens, and others reaching the best seller lists. Anti-creation sections are now seen in scientific journals such as *Science* and *Scientific American*. There are so many lawsuits going on opposing religion and belief in God that those of us who are involved in apologetics rarely have a day when we are not informed of another one.

On the religious side we see similar growth and extension. The home-school market is dominated by religious fundamentalists who



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have extreme views about both science and the Bible. There are at least a dozen creation museums around the country. Some of these are very small, low budget operations, but others such as Ken Ham's museum in Kentucky and Kent Hovind's in Florida and are in the multimillion-dollar

category. A variety of new publishing houses have sprung up, printing and distributing materials opposing things from science which are seen as contradictory to a certain group's religious views. In Ronald Number's book *The Creationist*, there is a listing of those viewed as a part of the religious community opposing evolution. Over 90 percent of those in Number's study are dispensational-millennialists, meaning they have a particular religious doctrine they feel is threatened by some area of science. The number of creationist television channels that are now on cable, Direct TV, and Dish Network is very large—26 channels in the area where your author lives. The number of creationist journals continues to grow. Like the atheist materials some of them are expensive, high-quality printing with four-color pictures and flashy promotions.

Where will all of this end? It appears that the government is ultimately going to get involved, and one has to ask if a political solution is a possibility? What are the courts likely to do? With the advent of private schools, charter schools, the growth of homeschooling, and continued pushing to have government control of education what does the future hold? The problem in this situation is that the real victims of this whole polarization are the chil-



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dren. Young people have become pawns in the battles that take place between adults.

As someone who has been on both sides of this issue there are five observations I would like to make. I hope these will cause at least some people to think about their own role in this situation, and perhaps make a small step toward finding some resolution of the conflict and minimize the damage to young people.

1. REAL SCIENCE HAS NOTHING TO GAIN BY PRECIPITATING CONFLICT WITH PURE RELIGION.

This statement is true individually and on a general level. Science is defined in the dictionary as “systematic knowledge.” Someone may object to a theory or a belief, but real science uses theory as a tool, and systematic knowledge is neutral in its application. The more knowledge we have, the better our decisions will be and the less likely we are to make an error in what we do. Pure religion is defined in the Bible as “... to look after orphans and widows in their distress and keep oneself from being polluted by the world” (James 1:27, NIV). Knowledge can only assist us in our religion, and science cannot determine the uses to which its “systematic knowledge” will be put. In 1 Timothy 6:20 Paul tells Timothy to “Turn away from godless chatter and the opposing ideas of what is falsely called knowledge [science]” (NIV). Someone who has a degree in science may have all kinds of personal ideas that have nothing to do with the area of science in which he is trained. A large percentage of what causes conflict between faith and science is generated by people with science backgrounds making statements that have nothing to do with their field of expertise. Richard Dawkins is undoubtedly the most visible scientist who is doing this, but so are a number of other scientists who are atheists. As atheists accelerate the conflict between science and faith in God, they erode public confidence in science and impede children from entering science and reduce the funding of science by the general population.

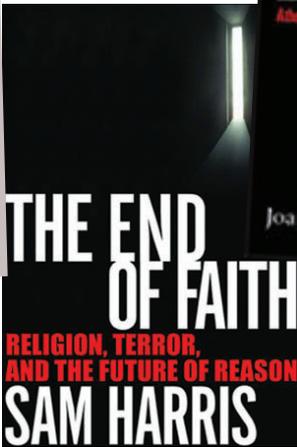
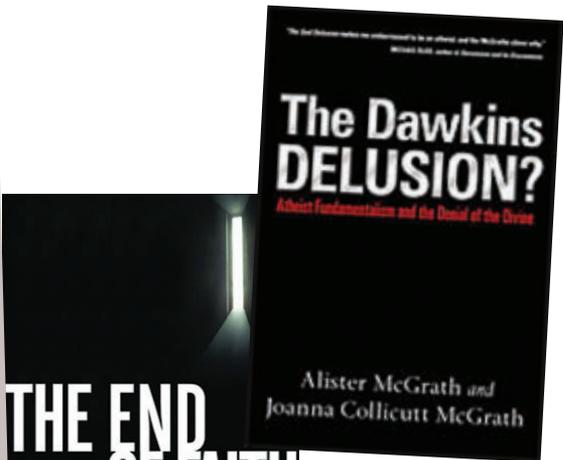
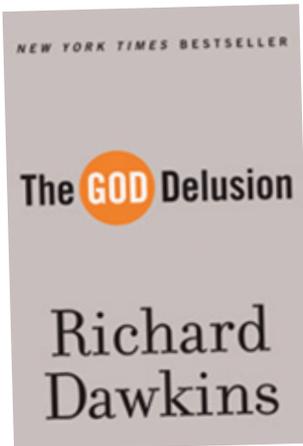
I have told the story many times of having a student in my AP Physics class who was one of the most capable and brightest students I have ever had in 41 years of teaching in the public schools. This young man taught himself calculus as we did the physics experiments, and was exceptional in his class work. At the end of the year he came in to see me and we talked about his ability. I encouraged him to become a scientist. He told me he really wanted to be a scientist and was unhappy that he could not go into science as a career. I asked him why he could not and his reply was, “My faith is important to me, and I can’t go into science and be a Christian.” This is not only tragic—it is wrong! Many capable young people are being propelled away from

science because of the misconceptions promoted by atheists and religious people about the relationship between these two areas of study.

It is important for science to have a good image in the general population. The distrust of the global warming message, and the resulting confusion created by politicians and opportunists is happening because of the general distrust people have of science. This damages science and brings harm to innocent people.

2. BOTH RELIGION AND SCIENCE ARE DAMAGED WHEN PEOPLE WHO ARE KNOWLEDGEABLE IN ONE FIELD TRY TO CRITICIZE THOSE IN THE OTHER FIELD.

One of the major objectives of this journal in the 42 years it has been in existence has been to correct mistaken teachings by people on both sides of the issues. In the last two years there have been some incredibly ignorant statements made by leading atheist scientists, especially Richard Dawkins (*The God Delusion*) and Sam Harris (*The End of Faith*). When Alister McGrath responded to Dawkins' errors in his book *The Dawkins Delusion*, Michael Ruse, a leading atheist, said that Dawkins' book had made him ashamed to be an atheist. Dawkins is a great biologist, but he is ignorant of the Bible, and of religion in general, because that is not his field. He has damaged his reputation as a biologist and as a scientist by his unfortunate comments on religion.



By the same token, we have had numerous articles in this journal on leading religious figures who make statements about science that the average seventh grader would know are not correct. When Arkansas adopted a book to be used in the public schools that opposed evolution, the use of the book was challenged in court. Very few religious people realized that the book claimed that UFOs were angels of Satan coming to earth to begin the battle of Armageddon right before the “rapture.” It was only when Judge Overton said the book was fundamentally flawed that religious people started looking at what the book actually contained.

We all make mistakes and have misunderstandings. No one is infallible, and those of us who speak publicly have a huge responsibility to do our best to make sure we accurately present whatever we say. It is important for adults to check out what they read and to whom they listen. A scientist who is commenting on religion needs to be treated very skeptically, and a religious figure who is explaining science needs to be treated in the same way. We have freedom of speech in America (so far) and people can say almost anything. We cannot minimize the conflict between science and faith as long as we listen to extremists on both sides who have an agenda and explain things which they know very little about.

3. NOT EVERYONE IS QUALIFIED TO HOME-SCHOOL OR OFFER INFORMATION ON SCIENCE.

Continuing the ideas in point two, we need to understand that teaching kids is incredibly hard. Our world is changing very quickly, and equipping kids so they can live without us in a rough and tumble world is a challenge. I have seen parents homeschooling children who were fundamentally ignorant about the things they were trying to teach the children. I also have seen parents using material that had major flaws in it, but the parent did not know enough about the subject to recognize those flaws.

If the purpose of homeschooling is to keep the child away from the “nasties” (whatever those nasties might be), it is misdirected. Sooner or later the child is going to have to function in the real world. Running into the nasties while they are still at home and you are able to help them, is far better than keeping them away from the nasties until they leave home, and then have them trying to handle the nasties without help. You cannot put kids in a bottle until age 25 and then dump them out and have them ready to function in the world. If kids learn how to handle conflict and misinformation while they are at home, then when their faith is challenged after they leave home they will not be damaged by it.

If the purpose of homeschooling is to give the child a better education, to protect them from a physically threatening environment, or



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do something the public schools cannot do, that is another matter. Homeschooling can be very successful, but it takes dedication and an informed parent to do it. It should not be done just to keep the child from a racial group, an economic group, or a teaching that might violate some of our beliefs.

4. RELIGIOUS AGENDAS AND PERSONAL AGENDAS SHOULD NOT BE INVOLVED IN SCIENCE.

I had reasons for not wanting the world to have meaning, and consequently assumed it had none. I am concerned to prove that there is no valid reason why I should not do what I want to. For myself, the philosophy of meaninglessness was essentially an instrument of liberation, morally and politically.

—A. Huxley

Any individual is free to believe what he wants and to express it as he wishes. Dawkins repeatedly denies that there is such a thing as good or evil (See Richard Dawkins, *River Out of Eden* [New York: BasicBooks, 1995], page 133), but to state this religious view in a science book is an error. Peter Albert David Singer, an Australian philosopher who is the Ira W. DeCamp Professor of Bioethics at Princeton University, repeatedly states his opinion that humans with significant disabilities should be euthanized. To state that unfortunate view as a personal opinion is one thing, but to present it as a scientific truth is most unfortunate. It has become fashionable to attack religion outright in the media. Anyone is free to say what he wishes and the media can print whatever they choose to print, but to insert personal attacks on religion in scientific papers and journals simply serves to further polarize the population and generate strife.

5. NOBODY WINS IN THIS CONFLICT.

What do the two sides in this situation hope to accomplish? A number of atheists have voiced the opinion that religion must be destroyed. The claim is that religion causes war and that only by militarily destroying religion can what is called “the cancer of religion” be eradicated. The lesson of history is that when atheists or political forces try to destroy faith they do not succeed. In the past, religion has



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been driven underground but it was not destroyed. Russia, China, and Albania are modern examples of how attempts to destroy religion have failed.

By the same token, the beneficial things that come to mankind from science cannot be debated. Medicine and electronic advances continue to bless all of us.

The notion that we can legislate atheism out of existence, along with science we disagree with, is not going to work.

The solution to this whole conflict is education. When fair-minded people sit down and look at the evidence, the issues, and the impact of the conflict, they can minimize the differences and find peace. No one has to compromise his fundamental beliefs, but we all need to learn and understand—and perhaps learn where we have to agree to disagree. Remember, “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God” (Matthew 5:9, NIV). (See page 14.)

We need to be known for attempts to bring peace and understanding, not conflict and dissension. We need to follow the Apostle Paul’s example and resolve to know nothing “except Christ Jesus and him crucified. I came to you in weakness and fear, and with much trembling. My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit’s power, so that your faith might not rest on men’s wisdom, but on God’s power. We do, however, speak a message of wisdom among the mature, but not the wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing” (1 Corinthians 2:2–6).

—JNC



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BLESSED ARE THE PEACEMAKERS

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God (Matthew 5:9).

You would never know it by what you see in the lives of some people who call themselves “Christians,” but Christianity is a religion of peace. The history of the denominational Christian church has not been a history of peace. We not only have had the Crusades, but we have had wars between different Christian denominations. All of this is in diametric opposition to what Jesus taught and what the New Testament tells us Christianity is about. Aggression and war are a function of selfishness, a basic philosophy of “survival of the fittest,” and the antitheses of what Christianity stands for. A careful study of the New Testament not only teaches that we should be at peace with one another, but it tells us how to go about doing that. These principles apply whether we are talking about getting along with the world at large, our mate, or people we work with. Let us look at some of these principles which allow us to “be called the children of God.”

LET PEACE RULE YOUR HEART

“Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace” (Colossians 3:15, NIV). Are you a lover or a fighter? How do you drive your car — peacefully sharing the road, or on the borderline of road rage? When people hear your voice on the phone, what happens to their blood pressure? Do you strive to bring a solution to every problem, or do you enjoy being an agitator? In my school teaching days a group of us teachers used to eat lunch together. I always enjoyed throwing out a controversial statement, and then watch as the group would polarize and argue about the subject I brought up. It finally got to the point where one teacher stopped eating with us because, in her words, it was giving her an ulcer. This was certainly not “letting peace rule within my heart.”

Christians are to be people who treasure and value peace. We are not to be people who treasure and value divisive issues and controversy. We are told to “contend for the faith”(Jude 3), but it was Jesus, our example, who brought compassion, service, and understanding to the table — not open warfare. The great preacher and author Ira North used to say, “No one wants to hear the gospel from an angry, crabby old man or woman.” We are to bring joy and love and understanding to those around us. We have good news and peace to bring to a world full of bad news and strife.

UNDERSTAND THAT WE ALL ARE OF EQUAL VALUE

“For indeed we were brought into one body by baptism, in the one Spirit whether we are Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free men, and that one Holy Spirit was poured out for all of us to drink.” (1 Corinthians 12:13, NEB). “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus” (Galatians 3:28). One of the major causes of war and strife in the world has always been the attempts of one group of people to claim superiority over another group. At any given moment there is violence somewhere on the planet because one racial or ethnic group feels the need to assert itself over another group.



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Christianity is a unity faith. Many people who claim to be Christians have had a hard time comprehending this, but one cannot read the New Testament and not see that God has broken down all racial and ethnic barriers and made everyone equal. This is closely related to our previous point, because it is very difficult to have peace when one person claims to be superior to another or to have special favor with God. Paul battled this problem in his day with the controversy over Jewish traditions versus Gentile traditions. We are even more fragmented today because people have not accepted what God says about the fact that we are all equal in His sight. There will never be peace until everyone accepts that principle.

ACCEPT DIFFERENCES OF OPINION

“Then pay to the Emperor what belongs to the Emperor and to God what belongs to God” (Matthew 22:21, TCNT). Give diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Ephesians 4:3). “If you can, so far as it depends upon you, live at peace with all the world.” (Romans 12:18, Weymouth). Let us follow after the things which make for peace and the things which belong to the upbuilding of each other (Romans 14:19). The whole 14th chapter of the book of Romans deals with how to handle differences of opinion. Paul talks about people who have beliefs about food and what should and should not be eaten. He then talks about special days and the observance of one day as more holy than another. In verse 21 he says that it is better not to eat or drink or do anything that causes someone else stumble.

I have heard it said that Christians are divided over everything people can be divided over and a few things they cannot be divided

over. I believe that the statement has some merit. The most fundamental things which the Bible teaches are difficult to miss. We tend to have problems concerning things that really do not matter all that much. False teachers, as described in the New Testament, were not people who misunderstood a passage of Scripture, or who had a belief that was not carefully thought out. False teachers were people who were evil and deceptive and totally denied Jesus as the Son of God. (See 2 John 7; 1 John 2:18–19; 2 Peter 2:1.) One of the characteristics of such people is that they agitate and cause discord and division (Romans 16:17; 1 Corinthians 3:3).

We may disagree about many things, but if we are people who value what God has taught us, we will work for peace, learn to tolerate differing opinions, and place a very high premium on not allowing division to occur.

BE MINISTERS OF RECONCILIATION

“Euodius and Syntache I beg you by name to make up your differences as Christians should” (Philippians 4:2, Phillips). The word which God has sent to the sons of Israel by telling them the good news of peace through Jesus Christ (Acts 10:36). Since we stand justified as a result of faith let us enjoy the peace we have through Jesus Christ, our Lord (Romans 5:1). The followers of Jesus Christ will learn how to bring peace to those around them. Christians have been reconciled to God, and because of that reconciliation should recognize how important the process is. Have you ever had a break-up with a boyfriend or girlfriend and then made up with them? Was that not a joyful thing? If someone helped that happen, did you not feel a special thankfulness to that person?

As Christians, our primary job is to help people reconcile with God. That is what the message of the gospel of Jesus Christ is all about. It is done by helping people see what God has done to allow reconciliation to happen, and what they need to do to make it happen. God does not force himself on anyone, and Christians as ministers of reconciliation cannot force people to reconcile with God. Our secondary goal is to bring people into reconciliation with one another. Paul emphasized this in his message to Euodias and Syntyche, and there are many biblical examples of Christians who were brought together by other Christians or by the Church as a whole.

One of the greatest tragedies of the Church in the past 100 years has been that it has been typified by conflict, division, and abuse, rather than peace, reconciliation, and love. Satan will do everything possible to keep the attitudes and conflict of the past 100 years going. With God’s help we can change that and we will do that one step at a time, in our families, or congregations, our towns, our nation, and our world. The ultimate reconciliation is sure, and peace will happen.

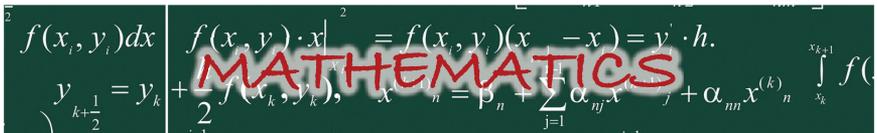
—JNC

MATHEMATICS, COSMIC SPLENDOR, AND THE BIBLE (Three External Witnesses)

by Al Cornell

As with dimensions, the number three does not exhaust the supply of external witnesses. However, allow me to grapple with words to try to scratch the surface of why these three contain apologetic potency.

They differ in the vastness of their audiences. Mathematics appeals to a rather select audience, yet the logic of numbers undergirds the concept of a rational universe for many. The vibe of cosmic splendor is universal, reaching mankind everywhere. The Bible's impact depends on translation and distribution. At best, it works only nominally in the lives of those who lack direct access to either reading or hearing it.



There is something about mathematics that goes beyond burning the midnight oil in an attempt to wrap brain cells around multiplication, trigonometry, or differential equations. Why are great physicists all excellent mathematicians? Why could they not be linguists or humanists or politicians? Of course, it is because there is something mathematical about the universe.

Nearly 2,400 years ago, Plato said, “God ever geometrizes.” And in 1960, Noble Laureate Eugene Wigner wrote of the “unreasonable effectiveness of mathematics.” In his article, Wigner explained, “The miracle of appropriateness of the language of mathematics for the formulation of the laws of physics is a wonderful gift for which we neither understand nor deserve.”

Here is an example of that effectiveness from *Is God a Mathematician?* by Mario Livio: “Newton observed a falling apple, the Moon, and tides on the beaches (I’m not even sure he ever saw those!), not mathematical equations. Yet he was somehow able to extract from all of these natural phenomena, clear, concise, and unbelievably accurate mathematical laws of nature.” Later Livio wrote, “Concepts and relations explored by mathematicians only for pure reasons—with absolutely no application in mind—turn out decades (or sometimes

centuries) later to be unexpected solutions to problems grounded in physical reality.”

The point of the unexpected usefulness of mathematics in the physical universe is echoed by Ian Stewart in *Why Beauty is Truth: A History of Symmetry*, “The astonishing thing is that the best mathematics usually leads somewhere unexpected, and a lot of it turns out to be vital for science and technology, even though it was originally invented for some different purpose.”

Stewart also quotes from a letter by Werner Heisenberg to Einstein, “... I frankly admit that I am strongly attracted by the simplicity and beauty of the mathematical schemes which nature presents us.”

While some mathematicians and philosophers try to explain away this amazing relationship between physical reality and mathematics by claiming that mathematics is a human invention, seven pebbles in a crater on the moon possess that mathematical reality whether anyone has ever seen them or not. A pure materialist can never admit that mathematics exists and is discovered because it, like information, has a non-material existence.

Near the end of his book, Livio wrote, “What is it that guarantees a mathematical theory should exist at all? ... There are no guarantees!”

Seldom do we think about whether there could be an alternative to the rational world in which we live. But the order, the symmetry, and the beauty all demand an adequate explanation. Take another look at that math book and think about the Author beyond the author.



From my narrow valley, I only view the sunset when warm colors blush across a major portion of the sky. Paul’s list of “whatever things” that are worth pondering, if they contain virtue and praiseworthiness, includes those that are lovely (Philippians 4:8). That must cover aurora borealis, rainbows, and sunrises. It also reaches to snowflakes and cardinals, violets and gentle rains, columbine and hummingbirds, asters and maple leaves. Might it also include a child’s hug, a mother’s touch and a grandpa’s time? I suppose those things are part of an internal witness.

When the iron curtain divided Eurasia, I remember the glowing report from a missionary who had traveled behind it. His story was of grainfields and cattle, of trees and brooks, of sunsets and green valleys. Even when a government tried to coerce citizens with the athe-

istic concept, God did not leave Himself without witness. A Psalmist captured the universal nature of this witness with these words: “The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they display knowledge. There is no speech or language where their voice is not heard. Their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world” (Psalm 19:1–4). From the Congo to the Arctic, from ocean islands to mountain ranges, from thatched huts to marble walkways, this witness is pervasive and imposing.

Ironically, our best grasp of cosmic splendor comes from light striking receptor cells that transmit a message to the brain that, in turn, sees an image. But light is unfathomable. In his book that I previously quoted, Stewart says, “... we seldom think about how weird it is What is light? Electromagnetic waves. Waves in what? The space-time continuum, which is a fancy way of saying, ‘we don’t know.’” Modern physics has divulged to us an unimaginable universe in which we still grapple in the dark to understand what it really is. The enigma of light adds to the darkness. Yet, out of that darkness we perceive a Creator uninhibited by our limited ability to comprehend. And so it is, from the primitive tribesman to the Cambridge scholar, cosmic splendor can be an awesome witness.



Non-biblical perceptions of salvation always portray man as reaching up to fix the problem that exists between himself and deity. The Bible portrays God as reaching down to overcome the problem. Did man simply get tired of reaching up and invent a new theology or did God reveal it? Along with the rest of the Bible, this resonates.

It takes a determinate simplicity to read Genesis 3:15 in its context and not perceive something bigger than snake heads and human heels in a turf war. Here we encounter a serpent being rebuked for having deceived, and we are told that it will harbor enmity. This serpent is clearly identified near the end of the other bookend of the Bible. The ancient serpent is Satan (Revelation 20:2). The four parties involved in the verse are the woman, the serpent, seed of woman and seed of the serpent. But the battle described is neither between the woman and the serpent nor the seed of both, but between the seed of woman and the serpent. This unfolds in a prophetic manner tied to the purpose of the incarnation, and this marks the inception of the consistent Messianic expectation of the Old Testament.

The time-tested book of human values and conduct guidance has withstood a plethora of skeptical nit-picking. Yet, to this day, it inspires and motivates the greatest activities of compassion and benevolence found on earth.

The Gospels reach even beyond believers with the unique character of Jesus Christ. The agnostic, Loren Eiseley, in *The Star Thrower* wrote: "... —love, compassion, call it what one will — which however discounted in our time, moved the dying Christ on Golgotha with a power that has reached across two thousand weary years."

Notice also that those who gave the original testimony to the character of Jesus proclaimed His resurrection from the grave. Can anyone take that claim seriously? When former atheist Anthony Flew wrote *There is a God: How the World's Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind*, some critics from among believers responded with, "He's just a Deist, and does not believe in a personal and active God." Yet if they would have read his book, they would have found that he had N. T. Wright use the last 17 pages to present a case for the resurrection of Christ, and that Flew himself said, "I would say the claim concerning the resurrection is more impressive than any by the religious competition."

A UNIFIED MESSAGE

These three witnesses bring evidence to bear on the same point. Their individual influences mesh, casting a formidable matrix for faith in the existence of God. There is a reason mathematics is an integral part of the physical universe. At this moment, I see an amazing beauty of nature as I look out my window into the dim morning light and observe the hoar frost on the trees. For the one who has arrived at an early stage of faith, there can be a lifetime of returning to the pages of the Bible and finding renewed solace and comfort.

All three witnesses leave us with some incomplete answers. Why are there mathematical equations that can never be solved? Why can π be determined to a billion decimal places without ever reaching an exact number? Why is there ugliness in the natural world? Why are there calamities? Why does evil exist? Why does the book of Job just give clues to Job's problem and never yields the all inclusive answer?

Perhaps the inconclusiveness all relates to one important aspect of our relationship to the Creator. Is it that we must remain free moral agents and respond in faith to a benevolent God who in love provided these clues and many more? I believe there exists a harmonious reality that leads to a better and more fulfilled life and I believe that life embodies our ultimate hope.

Photos in subheadings for this article:

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The Bible: © iStockPhoto.com/cstar55 and © iStockPhoto.com/lauchenauer

Nobel Scientists and God

Editor's Note: One of the things that has come out of the battle between extremists in the evolution/creation controversy has been a flow of literature from atheists claiming that good scientists and intelligent, educated people do not believe in God. This simply is not true. Tihomir Dimitrov has compiled an e-book on <http://nobelists.net> of quotations of Nobel Prize winning scientists. In each issue of this journal we hope to quote statements from some of these.

Erwin Schrodinger Nobel Laureate in Physics

Note: Other quotes from Schrodinger were given in the November/December 2007 issue of this journal.

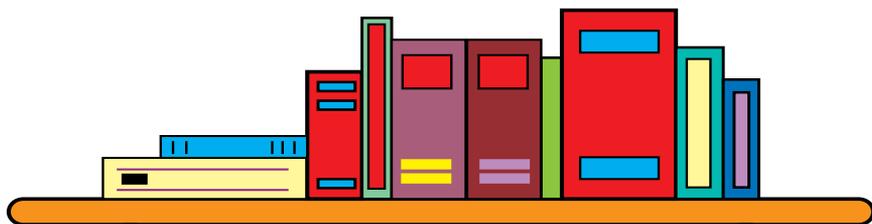
“The grave error in a technically directed cultural drive is that it sees its highest goal in the possibility of achieving an alteration of nature. It hopes to set itself in the place of God, so that it may force upon the divine will some petty conventions of its dust-born mind.”

“Consciousness cannot be accounted for in physical terms. For consciousness is absolutely fundamental. It cannot be accounted for in terms of anything else.”

“We living beings all belong to one another, we are all actually members or aspects of a single Being, which we may in western terminology call God ... ”

“Science is reticent too when it is a question of the great Unity ... of which we all somehow form part, to which we belong. The most popular name for it in our time is God—with a capital ‘G’.”

“Science is a creative game with rules, which are designed by God himself: ... but a game with reality, a game with sharpened knives. If a man cuts a picture into 1000 pieces, you solve the puzzle when you reassemble the pieces into a picture; in the success or failure, both your intelligence and your creativity compete. ... The uncertainty is how many of the rules God himself has permanently ordained, and how many apparently are caused by your own mental inertia, while the solution generally becomes possible only through freedom from its limitations. This is perhaps the most exciting thing in the game.”

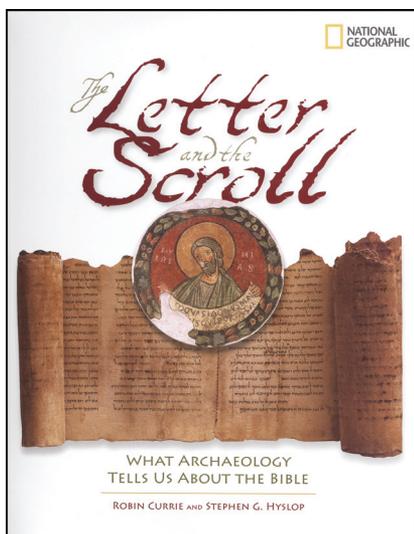


BOOK REVIEWS

The books that are reviewed in the Book Review section are not available through us, but can be obtained from a local bookstore or through many online bookstores.

The Letter and the Scroll

by Robin Currie & Stephen G. Hyslop, National Geographic, 2009,
335 pages, \$40.00 (hardcover), ISBN-13: 978-1-4262-0514-9



One of the most prolific publishers in the United States is National Geographic. Their books are expensive (this one costs \$40.00), full of beautiful pictures, and well organized. Unfortunately, their approach in the past has been highly critical of Christianity. They have approached the Bible from a minimalist point of view, with a generally negative air and an emphasis on problems more than solutions. This book is a welcomed exception. The authors state “The purpose of this book is not to prove or disprove the Bible but to explore the world that gave rise to its Scriptures and

consider them in their historical context—an approach that can enhance one’s appreciation for the Bible both as a work of history and as a statement of faith” (page 19).

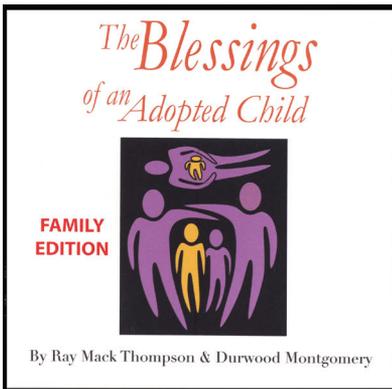
The book is divided into eight chapters covering major eras in biblical history. The chapters are titled (1) “Sumer and Akkad: Land of Abraham”; (2) “Egypt: Pharaoh’s Land”; (3) “Canaan: The Promised Land”; (4) “The United Monarchy: Kingdom of David and Solomon”; (5) “Israel and Judah: The Divided Kingdom”; (6) “Persia, Greece and Rome: Imperial Overlords”; (7) “Galilee and Judea: Where Jesus Walked”; and (8) “Jerusalem: A Land Besieged.” Each of these subjects is discussed by referencing or quoting Scripture and then

showing what artifacts and historical records there are for what is stated. There is very little editorializing and a minimum of judging of the credibility of the account given in the Bible.

This is a useful book. The pictures and art work are typical National Geographic quality and the book could be used as a reference and picture source for class teaching very effectively. It would be very useful in a church library, but its price may make it of limited use for individuals.

The Blessings of an Adopted Child

by Ray Mack Thompson & Durwood Montgomery, www.raymack.com,
2009, 50 minutes, \$10.00 (DVD), email: raymack@mac.com



We have mentioned a number of times in this journal that adoption is a special act of love that flies in the face of mindless evolution and natural selection. If the sociobiological explanation of life is accepted — that all we are here to do is to promote our genes by whatever method is available — then adoption does not make sense. In the animal world, such a statement does not always work, but in humans it does not work at all.

Your writer has been blessed to have three adopted children, and the joy and love that has come through that experience has been one of the biggest blessings in my life.

Ray Thompson has articulated this concept in a number of materials that show it well and share his personal experience. His materials will be especially helpful to adoptees and adoptive parents. You can see his material on <http://vimeo.com/7989085> (several women in the group were adopted and several gave up their children for adoption) or see his Web site at www.raymack.com.



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DANDY DESIGNS

THE DESIGN OF HAIR



John Clayton

It may be incongruous for a bald man to be discussing the design and wisdom of hair, but hair serves a much more complex function than we humans attach to it. Hair goes far beyond making us ugly or beautiful or even keeping us warm. In the animal world and even in plants there are many uses for hair that might surprise you.

Most of us are aware that some hair can have a waterproofing chemical added to it to keep an animal dry and to facilitate swimming. Beavers, otters, and seals use hair to survive in their water world.

Recent studies of spiders have shown us that hair has a variety of other uses. Contrary to popular opinion, tarantulas do not use a bite as their main mode of defense. Tarantulas have hairs that they shoot at an enemy. When a spider is attacked it will brush a rear leg rapidly against its abdomen and release a cloud of hairs. These hairs have barbs on them which work their way into the skin of an attacker and produce burning and itching. The tarantulas will “hiss” before releasing the hairs, and in the wild most animals that would eat the spiders have learned to stay away when there is a hiss. The hiss is actually the hairs on the pedipalps (appendages next to the mouthparts) being rubbed together. Many animals and insects make sounds using hairs.

Hairs do not just serve as weapons and sound makers, they also serve as shields. The tarantula spider *Theraphosa* has an enemy called the gray fly which has larvae that will feed on the spider’s blood. The spider lays down a silk mat made of web material and covers it with hair. The hair has barbs on it which stop the fly larvae from being able to move and the larvae cannot feed.

The more we study the design of hair in the natural world, the more uses we see for it. On humans, hair is pretty much decoration, but those of us who have lost our decoration have other survival skills that allow us to go on. Seeing God’s design of hair in spiders, beavers, and other animals helps us know that there is a purpose behind all God does, and one of the joys of science is to learn more about that use and the design behind it.

Source: *Natural History*, September 9, 1992, page 41.

SURVIVAL BY THE EAR

One of the most difficult things to do in nature is to maintain a balance between food supplies and survival of a species. We have learned in recent years that when man makes a change in one part of the ecosystem there are many ramifications for everything in the system. Insects are an especially sensitive part of the environment. Too many insects can wipe out a plant population and cause problems for all living things in the ecosystem. However, the insects themselves are important to keep plant growth under control and to do things like pollinating and decomposing waste materials.

“Praying mantis” is the colloquial name for an insect of the mantid family. The “praying” comes from the fact that it stands in a position that resembles praying. However, it is sometimes called “preying mantis” because it is a predator of other insects. Along with bats, it helps to keep other insect populations under control. The problem for mantids is since they are insects too, bats will eat them. Since mantids do not fly very well they could be easy prey for the bats and get wiped out very quickly. The reason that this does not happen is that mantids have what is called a Cyclopean ear located deep in the center of its thorax. This ear, which is not seen in any other form of life, is sensitive to the frequencies that bats use when hunting prey. The mantids have a survival technique that is very successful. When the mantid receives the ultrasonic signal from a nearby bat it dives straight down in a tight spiral which the bat cannot follow. Hearing the bat before it gets too close, enables this escape system to work.

Evolutionary theory would suggest that the mantids evolved the technique over a period of many years, but fossil evidence shows that the mantids were in existence for a long time before bats appeared on earth. That means the escape device was designed and operational before the predator came on the scene.

Survival systems demand incredibly sophisticated design and the natural world is full of examples of unique organs and systems that allow life to be abundant and varied on our planet. Everywhere we look we can see God’s wisdom through the things He has made (Romans 1:19–22).

Source: *National Wildlife*, April 2010, page 24, and *Wikipedia*.



News and Notes

DOES GOD EXIST? 2010 SEMINAR IN THE CANYONLANDS, SEPTEMBER 19-24



A Grand Canyon view

Both photos: Cynthia Clayton

PURPOSE: To help Christians understand the Canyonlands area, the history of the earth as seen in the rock record, and how that history correlates with a literal understanding of the Bible.

WHERE: Leave from Flagstaff, AZ and visit Grand Canyon, Bryce Canyon, Sunset Crater,

Zion National Park, Meteor Crater, Painted Desert, Petrified Forest, and points in between.

CONDUCT: Air-conditioned motor coach with lectures presented by John Clayton and Alan Doty en route. At each point participants will have the option of hiking or staying in one place and enjoying the view. Hiking is not required.

PARTICIPANTS: Anyone age eight or older who is willing to participate in lectures, devotionals, studies, and wholesome activity.



Alan Doty, our guide through Bryce Canyon

INCLUDED: Bus transportation, motels, field guides, entry fees, breakfasts Monday through Friday. Not included: Other meals, gratuities, souvenirs, transportation to and from Flagstaff.

COSTS: No money is paid to **Does God Exist?**, to your guides, or to John Clayton. The only cost is for the items described above. Cost is: singles: \$898; doubles: \$797; three or four in a room: \$549. Trip insurance is available. To reserve space or for more information contact: Mark Story at Queenslander Tours, Mark@QLTours.com, phone (toll free) 877-865-6711; or John Clayton, jncdge@aol.com, phone 269-687-9426.

MISREPRESENTING GALILEO. Atheists and the media in general have used Galileo Galilei as a poster boy for what religion does to science. The claim is that when Galileo observed that earth was not the center of the cosmos with everything going around it that he was excommunicated by the Catholic Church and condemned as an admitted atheist. Galileo was a believer and was never excommunicated by the Catholic Church. He was censored for some moral problems, and his observations did conflict with some church theology of the day, but he was not an atheist and his problems stemmed from his moral choices, not his scientific views. Source: *Astronomy*, May 2010, page 14.

MORE ON POLLUTION AND SEXUAL PREFERENCES. Data continues to accumulate showing that materials mankind dumps into the environment can have a dramatic affect on sexual preferences in living things. We reported a number of studies on bass and humans in our March/April 2010 issue, and now there are new studies showing atrazine (a herbicide) can change a male frog into a functional female. The amount of atrazine needed to do this is 2.5 parts per billion, and atrazine concentrations in human drinking water is allowed to be as high as 3 parts per billion. The atrazine apparently has profound affects on estrogen, testosterone, and thyroid hormones. What effect this has on humans has not been studied, but there is growing evidence that man's foolish disposal of waste products is having profound effects on all living things on the planet, and hormonal influences may be among the greatest in severity. Source: *Science News*, March 27, 2010, page 9.

ATHEIST KEEPS PREACHING JOB. Klaas Hendrikse is an atheist, but he is also a minister of the Protestant Church of the Netherlands. He is known for his book *Believing in a God that Does Not Exist*, which basically says that the idea of God is a good idea, but there is no such thing as an actual God. A special assembly of this church was convened to decide whether Hendrikse should be retained as the pastor of the Church,

and the assembly decided that he should be retained. They will have a meeting later this year to decide how to talk about God. When modern denominationalism is followed to its logical end, this is the result. Is it any wonder that atheism is growing at such an astounding rate in the Netherlands? Source: *Christianity Today*, April 2010, page 13.

PLEDGE SUIT FAILS AGAIN. A group of atheists including Michael Newdow has been trying for years to get “Under God” taken out of the Pledge of Allegiance and “In God We Trust” removed from our currency. On March 17, 2010, the 9th Circuit Court in San Francisco ruled that “under God” is constitutional and that “In God We Trust” is not an endorsement of religion and thus can remain on currency. However, this is probably not the end of the story.

ARCTIC TERN STILL WINS. Among the great evidences for design in the natural world are the journeys made by a variety of forms of life as they migrate from one area to another. We have discussed the migration of the arctic tern in some of our materials. In the *Smithsonian* magazine (March 2010, page 6), there is a note that recent studies show the arctic tern does in fact have the longest migration. Terns averaged 44,000 miles in ten months in a lifetime that would translate into 1.5 million miles for a bird that weighs about four ounces. Migrations benefit living things in widely separated areas of the world, and sometimes not the animal that is migrating. Chance explanations are strained at best for such long migration journeys.

DARWIN MISQUOTES. Atheists attempt to claim Darwinism and the work of Charles Darwin as a strong proof that God does not exist. We have pointed out in this journal many times that what Darwin contradicted was the denominational creeds of his day, not the Bible. A recent flap has developed when *Science Illustrated* magazine (March/April 2010, page 4) quoted Darwin in *Origin of the Species* as concluding his work with an atheist statement. The final statement actually reads, “There is grandeur in this view of life, with its several powers, having been originally breathed by the Creator into a few forms or into one; and that, whilst this planet has gone cycling on according to fixed laws of gravity, from so simple a beginning endless forms most beautiful and most wonderful have been, and are being evolved.” When *Science Illustrated* printed it they left out the phrase “by the Creator” which Darwin had actually added to the second edition of the book.

TEMPLETON FOUNDATION MORAL DEBATE. The John Templeton Foundation awards prizes to people who contribute to the Science and Faith controversy and has been publishing a series of “Conversations” among scholars about the “big questions.” The current

question is “Does moral action depend on reasoning?” You can read selected essays on this subject by top scholars on www.templeton.org/reason. There are some good comments and some foolish ones in these essays. Our comment is that when God is eliminated from the equation, the reality of whether any moral code is workable on a practical level is not debatable. There is no functional morality when everything is viewed as relative.

AUSTRALOPITHECUS SEDIBA. Once again the media has grabbed on to a new fossil find and this time is publicizing it as “a window into human evolution.” What have been found are two skeletons that have both “human and ape features.” The ape features include a small brain, small skull, long forearms, and flat face. The human features are the hips which seem to allow long strides assuming the specimen had a vertical posture. There also have been reports of DNA studies in Siberia which show patterns in specimens found in Denisova Cave which do not match either Neanderthals or modern man. The point the media continues to miss is that the variations in human racial features show that specimens can look very different and still be one species. The name *Australopithecus sediba* literally means southern ape well-spring, and the fossil is a variation of the ape family. The bottom line was stated by Dr. Richard Potts of the Smithsonian, “The history of man is a fascinating mosaic of features.” Source: *USA Today*, April 9, 2010, page 2A; AP Release in the Fort Worth *Star Telegram*, 3/25/2010, page 8A; *Science News*, 4/24/2010, page 5.

GLOBAL WARMING—SENSE AND NONSENSE. Thanks to politicians and extremists on all sides, the global warming issue continues to confuse the general public. A more than 3000-page report from the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change contained several errors as to what the future holds for planet earth. The claims that African crops will wither, the Amazon rain forest disappear, and the Himalayan glaciers will cease to exist by the year 2035 are simply not true and are not supported by data. The fact that the planet is warming as a whole, and that mankind will have to adjust to this process and needs to be careful not to catalyze it, is strongly supported by the data. Global warming has happened in the past, and it will happen again. God’s design of the earth is so incredible that the planet has survived previous changes in world-wide temperature, but we have so many more people on the planet now, that the impact may be much greater. We need to be good citizens on this planet, and do what we can to provide for the well-being of all of mankind, but alarmist claims of catastrophe, and fanatical religious opposition to the need to take care of the planet God has placed us on should be ignored. God put man in the garden to dress it and keep it (Genesis 2:15). Using the

earth wisely is part of caring for it. Source: *Scientific American*, May 2010, page 16.

KOMODO DRAGONS ARE VENOMOUS. Science teachers have used the Komodo dragon of Indonesia as an example of how animals can use infections to bring down prey. The idea was that the saliva contains bacteria that infect animals the dragon bites, eventually causing them to die. A recent study now shows that the dragons have six venom glands which hold neurotoxins similar to snake venom which cause cramping and contain blood thinners. Sometimes explanations accepted for many years turn out to be assumptions, and as more information becomes available adjustments have to be made. Science does this rather well in most cases, but sometimes religious people are locked into a tradition which has no biblical basis and have a hard time changing it. We all need to be open to the fact we have room to grow, and education both biblically and scientifically is essential to doing that. Source: *Science Illustrated*, May/June 2010, page 28.

SECULAR HUMANISTS START NAME CALLING. The most recent ad from The Council for Secular Humanism states, “For many centuries the world’s most opinionated fuddy-duddies have known exactly where independent thinkers who write, edit, publish, read or discuss magazines like *Free Inquiry* will end up. And that was even before we decided to tempt you with one hell of an offer.” Apparently the atheist movement is desperate enough to start formal name calling, referring to everyone who believes in the fact of hell’s existence as “opinionated fuddy-duddies.” It is an interesting statement for a group that goes ballistic when someone suggests that there is a correlation between morality and belief in God. Being an independent thinker means to rationally consider all possibilities, including the existence of God and the validity of the Bible. Atheist Web sites continue to show an appalling ignorance of both the evidence and the Bible. You are not independent when you rely upon someone else for your information about the Bible, and you are not thinking when you refuse to consider facts, or the positive implications of belief in God and the Bible as a guide for life.

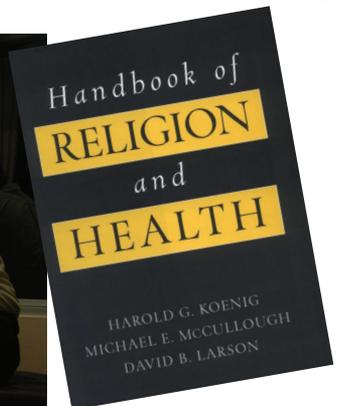
SURVEYS SHOW YOUNG ADULTS DRIFTING. *USA Today* (April 27, 2010, Page 2A) has printed a survey by LifeWay Christian Resources of 1200 people in the 18- to 29-year age bracket concerning their faith. Of those surveyed 72% said they were not religious, but they also said they were spiritual. Those who called themselves Christians amounted to 65%, but 65% of those never pray with others and 38% do not pray at all. Furthermore 65% do not ever attend any

kind of worship service and 67% never read the Bible or any “sacred texts.” Those who said they believe they will go to heaven and have accepted Jesus Christ as Savior, also showed little interest in Church with 50% of them not attending Church weekly and 36% never or rarely reading the Bible. In this group only 17% read the Bible daily. The author of the study predicts that we “will see churches closing as quickly as GM dealerships.” That may be extreme, but the study should certainly speak to the importance of the Church doing a better job of teaching young people what faith is about and meeting the needs of young adults.

HEALTH BENEFITS OF FAITH. There have been a lot of bogus studies trying to link prayer to healing and church attendance to freedom from disease. New data from Duke University and Texas Tech does provide some startling numbers about faith and health. The *Lubbock Avalanche Journal* (April 27, 2010, page A1) gave four of them.

1. Hospitalized people who never attended church have an average stay three times longer than people who attended regularly.
2. Heart patients were 14 times more likely to die following surgery if they did not practice a religion.
3. Elderly people who never or rarely attended church had a stroke rate double that of people who attended regularly.
4. People who are more religious tend to become depressed less often.

If these studies came from a fundamentalist source, they would be quickly dismissed. Hearing them come from major medical universities does suggest the data needs to be looked at carefully and not just dismissed as religious propaganda. A book containing this information is *Handbook of Religion and Health* by Harold Koenig of Duke University.



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