

DOES GOD EXIST?

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

Jan./Feb. 2015

Volume 42 Number 1

What is the REAL
"Age of the Earth"
ISSUE?

Does God Exist? Lectureships

Lectures for 2015

Mar. 1-4	Mocksville, NC	336-357-3754
Mar. 26-29	Hamilton, OH	513-868-1032
Apr. 10-12	Muscataine, IA	563-263-4750
May 17-23	York College Round Up	402-363-5621
June 19-21	ARS International Christian Apolo- getics Conference at York College	402-363-5621
Aug. 23-28	Canyonlands Tour (see page 18)	

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Several years ago a spruce tree was discovered in Sweden that was determined by carbon dating to be 9,550 years old. The man who discovered the tree is a professor of physical geography at a Swedish university. He named the tree “Old Tjikko” in honor of his deceased dog. More accurately the root system of the tree is that old, although the stem or trunk is not more than a few hundred years old. News of this caused a flurry of discussions on the web about how Young Earth Creationists explain such an old tree. Although this tree is the oldest known Norway spruce, there are much older trees. An example is a clonal colony of quaking aspen trees called “Pando” or “The Trembling Giant” located in southern Utah, and pictured above. The individual tree stalks are genetically identical clones growing from the same root system. Although the individual stalks are much younger, the root system is estimated to be at least 80,000 years old, and perhaps much older than that. Those who insist on the earth (and the universe) being 6,000 years old say that all of the scientific dating methods are not accurate. However, are they creating an issue with science that is not justified?

I have been a member of the Lord’s church for over 45 years. One of the things that I have seen in all that time is that issues come and go in the church. Controversy is nothing new, and in fact most of the issues are not new. I was amazed to hear some youth ministers recently talking about the idea that premarital sex among teenagers is OK because it is a physical expression of release and not a spiritual matter. That reminded me of the situation in Corinth where some of the members of the church were believing that the use of a prostitute was acceptable for Christians for the same reason.

In 1 Corinthians 6:15–20 Paul gives a brilliant response to such an argument, reminding the Corinthians of what God intended in the oneness of a man and a woman.

Many issues seem to repeat themselves over the years as Satan uses denominational creeds and teachings to corrupt the pure teachings of Jesus Christ. The belief in special spiritual gifts and how God works through the Holy Spirit was a huge issue in the 1960s as tongue-speaking and miracles became a hot button topic. In the early twenty-first century, prophetic theories related to dispensationalism and premillennialism have become popular. In 2014 there was a major remake of the original *Left Behind* movie based on the book by the same name. Denominations that teach a premillennial belief system have come into considerable amounts of money promoting these teachings.

The church has always paid a high price for embracing denominational teachings. A current hot-button issue concerns the age of the earth and how long humans have been around.

HOW IMPORTANT IS THIS ISSUE?

There are those who consider this to be one of those most important issues of our day. However, they have different reasons for feeling that way.

There are very sincere Bible students who feel that anyone who believes the age of the earth could be in the millions or billions of years is not taking the Bible literally. We will address this point in just a moment.



Other believers feel that this is a critical issue because they subscribe to dispensational teachings and premillennialism. If your church teaches that biblical history is divided into dispensational periods and that our present period will end with the “rapture” and a great tribulation, then you are limited in the time-frame you can believe in. Recent religious surveys show that

over 50% of Protestant denominations teach some version of this belief system. Studies of the beliefs of the producers of home-school materials and creationist materials show that over 90% of them are dispensational-millennialists (see Ronald Number’s book *The Creationists*, Alfred Knopf, 1992). This includes popularizers such as Kent Hovind, Ken Ham, The Institute for Creation Research, etc. Even apologetic groups that may not subscribe to dispensational-mil-

lennialism theologially use the materials circulated by the popularizers, so the denominational message is spread and given emphasis.

The third group that feels this is an important issue are people like your author who work with young people who are trained in the sciences, and who believe the Bible is God's Word. We feel this is an important issue because we see the incredibly destructive effects all of this is having on the faith of young people. It is not really the issue of whether the earth is old or young that is involved here, but the bad science and distorted theologies that result from the discussion. We see some in the scientific community throwing ideas around that are not science. Theories like multiverses, superstrings, branes, parallel universes are displayed as new scientific discoveries in popular magazines, when in reality they cannot be tested or falsified in any way. These ideas may be interesting speculations, but they are not scientific fact and really are not science at all.

On the other side of the ledger, we see some popularizers of apologetics making fundamental scientific errors. Recently a popular apologetics spokesman blamed Darwinism for the Crusades, even though the Crusades took place long before Darwin's birth. Young people who know even a small amount of geology can see the enormous petrological errors involved in comparing the canyon on the side of Mount St. Helen's with the Grand Canyon. When a seventh-grader hears the preacher attribute the entire Canyonlands area to the flood of Noah, which he knows cannot be true, his trust in the preacher's message about the church is seriously wounded. A day rarely goes by when I do not deal with some young person who has left the church over issues of this kind. Leaders of churches with dwindling attendance continue to refuse to come to grips with this major cause of young people leaving.



WHAT THIS ISSUE IS NOT.

This is not a salvation issue. When the crowd asked Peter in Acts 2:37 "What must we do to be saved?" Peter did not give a set of beliefs about the age of the earth. The gospel of Christ is the good

news and has to do with redemption provided by God, not what a person might believe about the geologic history of the earth.

This is not a question of whether we take the Bible literally or not. People on all sides of this discussion seem to think that the 6,000 year age of the earth is arrived at by “taking the Bible literally.” That is absolutely not true! Nowhere does Scripture state any age to the earth— young or old. Those who believe that the Bible says the earth is of a young age have arrived at that belief by accepting a number of assumptions. An archbishop in the Anglican church named James Ussher stated these assumptions in a thesis he wrote on the subject in 1650. Ussher’s assumptions were:

1. There are no undated verses in the biblical account.
2. There were no missing people in the biblical genealogies.
3. The purpose of the genealogies was chronological, so they are all written in chronological order.
4. No historical period is missing from the Bible.

All of these assumptions are in error, but they all have to be accepted by anyone who attempts to give a biblical date to the age of the earth. Taking the Bible literally means looking at who wrote it,



when they wrote it, to whom they wrote it, and how the people of the time would have understood it. Taking a stated age from the margin of a King James translation of the Bible is not taking the Bible literally.

This is not a “false teacher” issue on either side. Attacks on those who do not agree with a practice or belief are made by attaching a biblical label to the person being attacked. “False Teacher” is a good example. If you do not agree with me on some minor point, you can accuse me of being a “false teacher.” The idea is not only that you are right and I am wrong, but also that I am a really bad person. Listen to a biblical description of a “false teacher:”

... there will be false teachers among you. They will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the sovereign Lord who bought them—bringing swift destruction on themselves. (2 Peter 2:1, NIV).

That means that if I disagree with you on any biblical point, and you label me as a “false teacher,” I am a really bad guy. Second Timothy 3:1–7 tells us what a “false teacher” is really about:

... lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God—having a form of godliness but denying its power. ... They are the kind who worm their way into homes and gain control over gullible women, who are loaded down with sins and are swayed by all kinds of evil desires, always learning but never able to come to a knowledge of the truth.

As individual Christians, we need to understand that disagreeing on some biblical point does not mean that one person is right and the other person is going to hell. Jesus challenged the Pharisees for claiming that everything they said and taught was right and should be followed, while their actions were not right. He even said to the Pharisees, “You give a tenth But you have neglected the more important matters of the law—justice, mercy and faithfulness” (Matthew 23:23).



WHAT IS THE FUNDAMENTAL PROBLEM?

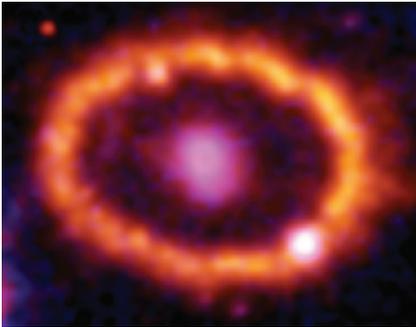


The real “age of the earth” issue is not about name-calling or false teachers, or church politics. The real issue is our view of God and how God operates—both now and in the past. There are two extreme views involved here. One is the “magician” view of God. Those who hold this view see God as a miracle worker who functions as a magician, doing magic and miraculous things that man cannot and should not try to understand. Many preacher-training schools promote this view in which every statement in Genesis

is a miracle done by a method only God can do and understand. When God says, “Let there be light,” in Genesis 1:3, light appears by itself with no cause. We know today that light is produced by the acceleration of electric charge, but the magician approach would say that light came by an act of God that was totally miraculous. The extremists of this view would suggest that at the end of verse 1, God had an earth with fossils in the ground, rock layers with coal seams hundreds of feet underground, all from animals and plants that never existed.

The alternative extremist view is to maintain that God is an engineer and that everything was done by natural processes with God offering some kind of guidance, but no more. This view would accept any concept of the evolution of humans saying that God simply used evolution to form humans, and that whatever spiritual qualities we might have were physically produced in our brains. The creation of the physical universe would, in a similar way, be viewed as a natural process guided by God, but nothing more.

Both of these extremist views are seriously flawed. Suggesting that God created the cosmos and everything in it by a miraculous process beyond the understanding of humans denies the evidence and puts God in the role of a deceiver, faking history to mislead us. In 1987 astronomers saw a star explode. Supernova 1987A was the first such explosion viewed by humans since 1054 when the Chinese recorded a similar event. We have seen new elements formed in this process that were not there before. We have seen processes that fit our understanding of how heavy elements have been produced in the cosmos.



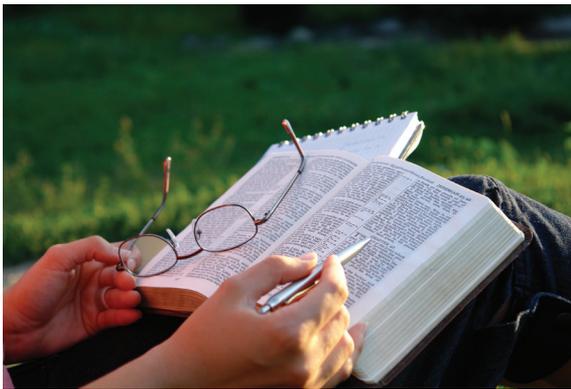
Supernova 1987A
Did it really happen or
was God faking it?

When we measure how far away the star is, we find that supernova 1987A is 160,000 light years away from us. That leaves us with two possibilities. One explanation is that the event did happen 160,000 years ago, and is a method God uses to create. The other possibility is that God made a video of something that never happened. He then sent it toward earth from a point 6,000 light years out in space knowing we would watch it and misunderstand it. James 1:13 tells us, “When tempted, no one should say, ‘God is tempting me.’ For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone” God does not try to deceive us. Claiming that dinosaurs never existed but were placed in the ground miraculously will not make sense to a junior high student who has cut open a petrified dinosaur egg and found a baby inside.

A person who is a physical extremist (naturalist) cannot seriously believe that everything we see and experience is naturally caused. The creation of time and space is not a natural process. Man's spiritual makeup is not explainable in terms of evolution or psychology.

In the original language of Genesis chapter one, there is strong indication that both miraculous creation and natural processes took place. The language indicates this with the Hebrew *bara* being used only in reference to what God can do—never to what humans or natural forces can do. The Hebrew *asah* is used in reference to what both man and God can do. When the creation of time, space, and matter/energy are described in Genesis 1:1 the word used is *bara*. When change is made in the waters in verse 7 the word used is *asah*, indicating a natural process. When the spiritual makeup of man and woman is described in verse 27 the word used is *bara*. When man's physical body is made up of the elements of the earth in Genesis 2:7 *bara* is not used. Instead, the Hebrew word *yatshir* is used, indicating the kind of process a sculptor or artist might do. The Genesis account ends in Genesis 2:3 (KJV) by stating “God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he rested from all his work which God created [*bara*] and made [*asah*].” A clear statement of the fact that both processes were used.

This article is a call to Christians to take the Bible literally, factually, and in a way that recognizes all of God's methods and abilities. We will never be able to explain all of the methods God has used to create us and the world in which we exist as physical beings, much less the eternal world that Jesus has promised us. We deny what the Bible says when we restrict God's methods and the time-frame in which God acts—be it young or old. Let us continue to study and learn all that



God shows us in his Word and in the natural world in which we exist. We cannot reach out effectively to the twenty-first century world by making God a mystic and denying the obvious methods he has built into the world. Passages like Romans 1:18–20 and Psalm 19:1 all speak

to us of God's intent for us to do this. Failing to do so is refusing to accept the whole counsel of God.

—John N. Clayton



Something's Missing

by Dick DiTullio

The sequence of “just right” events and circumstances that had to be in place in order for you and me to even exist is nothing if not amazing. There first had to be a beginning to our remarkable universe, conceived in detail and intricately designed prior to its arrival.

The one-time creation of “something” from “nothing” was more than a neat trick. It was and is the ultimate reality. From that incomprehensible “big bang” explosion (really more of a highly fine-tuned, rapid expansion) the initial elements were formed. You needed precise laws of physics in place to control the expansion rate and the force of gravity (which must be one part in ten thousand billion, billion, billion, billion weaker than the strong nuclear force). Equally precise are the strength of the weak nuclear force and electromagnetism. You needed a process in place to create heavier elements in the furnaces of stars. The stars need to assemble into galaxies to provide homes for planets.

But galaxies and stars are not all the same. We have a very unique star and a very unique galaxy. And we are “fortunate” to be in just the right place in our just right galaxy. We have already pushed chance beyond its limit.

But we have not even looked at our planet yet. It is common to think that all one needs for life is a rocky planet and water in a liquid state. A short list of required features would fill the rest of this page. You also need the right size planet made out of the right materials. Without heavy metals in earth’s core, there would be no life. You need just the right thickness of crust with silicate minerals in the surface material to allow plate tectonics (providing nutrients and land mass) to work. You need just the right amount of surface water with just the right land-mass-to-water-ratio. You need the right axis tilt, the right spin rate. We are not close to being done.

You need a moon of just the right size (larger than most) to stir the oceans, to maintain earth's axis tilt and help maintain our rotation rate. You need the right number and



positioning of other planets (celestial harmonics), which affects the long-term stability of our orbit. The atmospheric composition must be just right including a thin ozone layer to block much of the ultraviolet light from the sun. You need a molten core to produce a magnetic field to block the solar wind from destroying the ozone layer. The list goes on, seemingly forever.

Once everything is in place, you can then look at introducing life. But life is not a natural consequence of these things. Life requires an injection of information. Living things are amazingly complex. DNA is information-rich and includes building instructions for all living things. Each cell in your body is a literal factory that includes a receiving department, a staging area, a maintenance department, scheduling, transportation devices, waste control, a rework area, specifications that are translated, reproduced and forwarded to manufacturing.

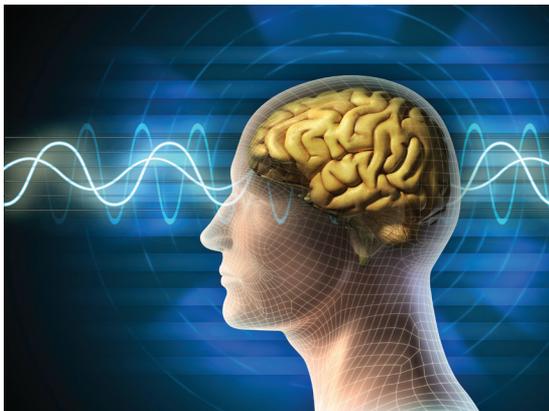
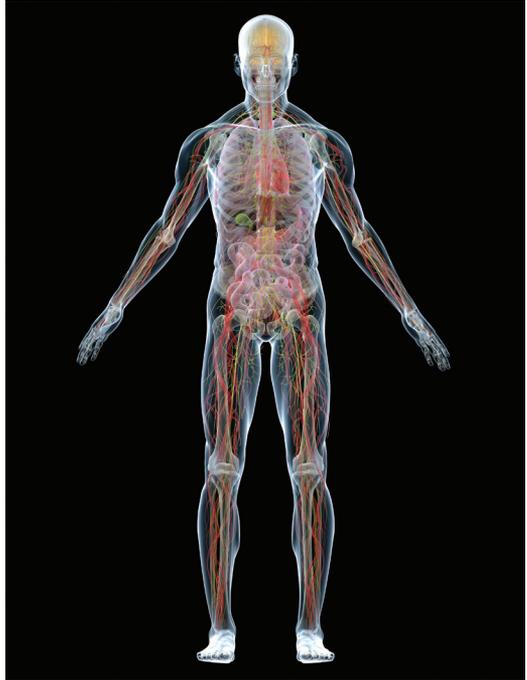
The cell has assembly lines where proteins are produced. There are no less than 24 quality-control checkpoints in place. If a protein is damaged during production, it gets a chemical tag. If enough tags are attached, the protein is removed from production and sent to a receptacle where it is disassembled. The good parts are returned to staging, and the defective parts are carried by one machine to another machine which paddles it outside the cell. There are hundreds of literal machines in each of the trillions of cells in your body. (One person, reflecting on this, observed, "... You'd think it would tickle.")



Each cell includes a power plant, a cafe, and everything you see in a factory built by humans. And the factory in the cell can completely reproduce itself in one day.

So all of this and hundreds of other examples of complexity in living things are there for us to observe. The flagellar motor moves bacteria through liquid cellular environments. These motors mimic exactly the outboard motor on a boat. The flagellar motor includes a propeller, a drive shaft, a clutch, a stator, bushings, a rotation-switch regulator, sensors, etc., etc., etc. It can rotate at up to 100,000 rpm, stop on a quarter turn, and reverse direction without blowing itself to smithereens.

The human body itself is a miracle of design. Read what it takes for blood-clotting to occur. Look at the ingenious use of bacteria to assist with food digestion and many other functions. Look at the eye, more advanced than any camera, and the ear, which uses three bones to reproduce the sound of the most expensive sound systems. Look at how oxygen is transferred from the lungs to the blood, and how the blood travels throughout the venous system to oxygenate and feed the cells, and pick up and filter-out



waste. And we have not scratched the surface in any of this.

Consciousness is taken completely for granted. Why do we ponder? Why do we contemplate? Why do we consider past, present, and future events? Why do we wonder?

When people achieve their personal goals,

winning an Olympic gold medal, having an album go platinum, making it to the top of the corporate ladder, whatever it might be, they often come to the same conclusion in reflective moments — “Something’s missing.”

The Olympics are fine. Selling albums is fine. Having a successful business career is fine, but only in the proper perspective. Matthew put it succinctly, “What does it profit a man to gain the whole world and lose his soul?”

For most people something’s missing.

Life does not make sense. Considering all that had to be put in place



for us to exist at all begs the question, “To what end?” The big three questions have plagued mankind from centuries past: Why are we here? What are we to be doing? What comes next?

So we fill our time with sports, with recreation, with partying, with our jobs, with

drinking, with games, with “sex, drugs, and rock & roll,” with politics, with hobbies, with endless, mindless pursuits. What is the

point? Does not all the design in place infer a Designer, a Designer with a plan for us? Should we not spend at least a little time trying to get to know the Designer and find out if there might be a bigger purpose to our lives?





If the Bible originated entirely by ancient human endeavor, its content would conflict sharply with modern science. Unfortunately, biblical interpretations have caused some distinct conflicts. For example, many religious people have been taught to scoff at Big Bang and Inflation theory. They discard modern cosmological concepts without even a perusal of biblical content.

Without doubt, the Bible conveys a simple message to people of cultures that lack understanding of modern science. Consequently, it contains figurative expressions that convey the intended message without the encumbrance of unnecessary detail. People intent on proving the Bible wrong and people bent on defending anti-science doctrines seek out those figurative passages as proof-texts and perpetuate conflict.

When we take a look at the bigger picture of what the Bible teaches, some interesting details tend to supply a picture of harmony between science and the Bible.

At least 15 times, the Old Testament states that God stretches out or spreads out the heavens. In Isaiah 45:12 (NIV, 1984), the Lord says, "It is I who made the earth / and created mankind upon it. / My own hands stretched out the heavens; / I marshaled their starry hosts." Most of those passages use the present tense as in Isaiah 40:22, "He stretches out the heavens." Might that be an interesting detail in this expanding universe?

The word stretches implies process. If these passages all described God's action as putting or placing the stars and the heavens, we would tend to draw a different conclusion about the event. However, many religious people still reach that different conclusion and scoff at Inflation and Big Bang. They see the result but deny the process.

The term "Big Bang" was first used in derision by Sir Fred Hoyle to ridicule that new cosmological theory. Later, Hoyle endorsed Big

Bang, but his nomenclature stuck. Before that time, most cosmologists believed in Steady State. That theory endorsed the idea that the cosmos was eternal. Big Bang required a beginning and was repulsive to atheists. While Christians could have viewed this change of theory as a positive step toward harmony between the Bible and science, many chose to make fun of it and intensify the conflict.

I find it intriguing that Old Testament writers use an expression that is congruent with modern science. If their writings did not come under the influence of the Holy Spirit, it is unlikely that they would have included the stretching out process in their explanation of creation. Many modern interpreters ignore that phrase and exclude that process from their understanding of creation.

Another expression that gives subtle insight into the creation process occurs in the New Testament. This expression occurs ten times. In the 44 translations on the Bible Gateway network site, 26 translate it, “the foundation of the world,” five, “the creation of the world,” and others present various similar translations.

The Greek phrase is *katabole kosmon*. The common prefix *kata* means down. The word *bole* means to cast or throw and is found only in Luke 22:41 in the Greek New Testament. In that verse, Jesus withdrew a stone’s throw from the apostles. The Greek *kosmon* is, of course, the word from which *cosmos* is derived. In Acts 17:24, it is most frequently translated “world” but sometimes “universe.” Though it can have other meanings, a common definition of it as found in *Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon* is “the world, i.e., the universe.”

So, while our English translations fail to present this idea from the Greek text, “the casting down of the universe” is the most literal translation of that text. Other than the ten verses that use the phrase *katabole kosmon* the English word “foundation” is always a translation of a different Greek word, *themelios*. I’m not sure why no current translation uses “casting down,” but translating it as “the foundation of the world” could have started from a bias of a creation firmly set in place by God. Discussion about the meaning of this phrase can be traced back to early church writers. Translating *katabole* as “foundation” has not always been popular, though it may be plausible. Translating it as “creation,” as in the NIV, is mere interpretation.

So biblical expressions indicating a process by which God stretched out or cast down the universe are intriguing. They stand apart from creation explanations in other ancient literature. We can rightfully be excited about the way biblical and modern cosmology mesh.

Though it is true that many concepts are imagined or read into the Bible, I am convinced that many things contained in it cannot be disproven by resorting to the claim of coincidence. Faith can be underpinned by rich bits and pieces of Scripture.



God's Word: The Only Vaccine Against Immorality

by Paul Smith

For the commandment is a lamp: and the law is light: and reproofs of instruction are the way of life: To keep thee from the evil woman, from the flattery of the tongue of the strange woman. Lust not after her beauty in thine heart; neither let her take thee with her eyelids (Proverbs 6:23–25, KJV).

My son, attend unto my wisdom, and bow thine ear to my understanding: That thou mayest regard discretion, and that thy lips may keep knowledge. For the lips of a strange [immoral] woman drop as an honeycomb, and her mouth is smoother than oil (Proverbs 5:1–3, KJV).

Men are sexual beings with a very potent sex drive that is easily aroused and hard to keep in check. That is why a man must avoid anything that stimulates him sexually outside the bond of matrimony. Solomon intimately understood how powerful sexual temptation can be—especially for a young man. It is with this in mind that he wrote the fifth chapter of Proverbs. Verses 1–3 perfectly describe the power of sexual temptation. Notice how Solomon personifies it as a seductress whose lips of honey offer the prospect of the ultimate pleasure and gratification of a forbidden treat. The pursuit of the ultimate sexual experience makes it all the harder to resist. The voice of conscience is ignored and forgotten as you become entrapped in the snare of the enemy, whose deviousness is represented by the smooth oil of the

seductress' mouth. Fully camouflaged and extremely calculating the enemy presents the perfect illusion — timing each consecutive attack to destroy us spiritually.

The wise King Solomon understood that if a young man is to withstand the charms of the temptress successfully, he must be prepared ahead of time. How is that possible?

Proverbs 5:1 contains the antidote to the poison of sexual temptation. Solomon writes, “My son, attend to my wisdom, and bow thy ear to my understanding.” In other words, one must study God’s Word and apply it to one’s life. Time spent in God’s Word every day builds up a man’s immune system against the poison of pornography and all other sexual immorality. The Scriptures are the thinking and perspectives of the Lord. As a man continually immerses himself in the Bible he will gradually take on God’s mind-set toward the sin of sexual immorality. A man who devotes daily time to God’s Word is given spiritual insight into the power of temptation, how it works, and where to find strength to resist it. James 4:7 tells us, “Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.” The power and strength to do this comes from the Holy Spirit. Amen!



Charles Anderson of the Laurel Avenue Church of Christ in Hamilton, Ohio, published the following:

Shortly after the dissolution of the USSR, Nadia Hundert of Kiev, Russia, wrote this:

“Today, as a consequence of an atheistic upbringing, we are knee deep in alcoholics, drug addicts, other chemically dependent individuals, loafers, bums, criminals, savages, uncouths, dullards, cruel and frightful juveniles who commit crimes for the fun of it. These are people who were brought up by non-believer parents and an atheistic society. Christians lived with religion for 1000 years and provided us with a rich heritage, which we have succeeded in destroying without fire or flood . . . It would be a very good thing if, in restructuring the school curriculum, the education specialists included teaching of religion in our schools.”

DOES GOD EXIST? 2015 Canyonlands Tour

WHEN: August 23-28, 2015

WHERE: Leaving from and returning to Flagstaff, Arizona

WE WILL BE VISITING: Sunset Crater, the Grand Canyon, Bryce Canyon, Zion Canyon, Lake Powell, Meteor Crater, The Painted Desert, and the Petrified Forest. Lectures by John Clayton and Alan Doty will be conducted onboard the coach as we travel from one site to the next. Then in-the-field visits will be made to the places discussed. This is a trip for Christians that will feature devotional messages, singing/worship, and Bible study, as well as lessons in science. We will enjoy the beauty of God's creation and learn about God's methods and how the evidence supports the integrity of God's Word.

PROVIDED & INCLUDED: All transportation Monday through Friday from Flagstaff and return via air-conditioned motor coach. All lodging at the motels including breakfast beginning Monday at 6:00 a.m. through Friday at 6:00 p.m. All park entry fees and all educational materials. Tour Captain, from our travel partner QueensLander Worldwide Tours, who will provide logistics and on-site support.

NOT PROVIDED: Lunches and dinners, Gratuities for Driver and Tour Captain, souvenirs and items of a personal nature.

COST: \$879.00 per person based on double occupancy.

DEADLINE FOR REGISTRATION with QueensLander Tours is May 1, 2015.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Visit our website:

www.CanyonLands2015.com

Or contact QueensLander Tours

Toll-free: 1-877-865-6711

or by e-mail at Go@QLTours.com

Or contact John Clayton

1-269-687-9426

or by e-mail at jncdge@aol.com

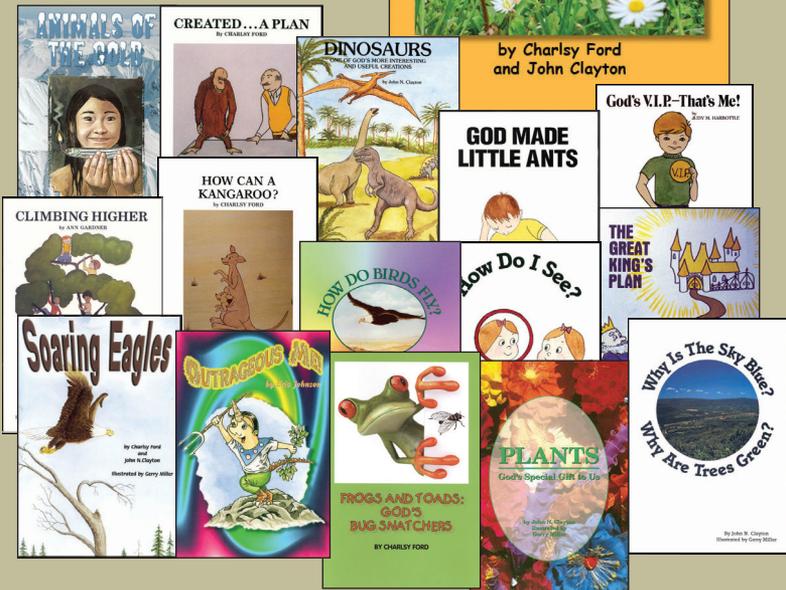
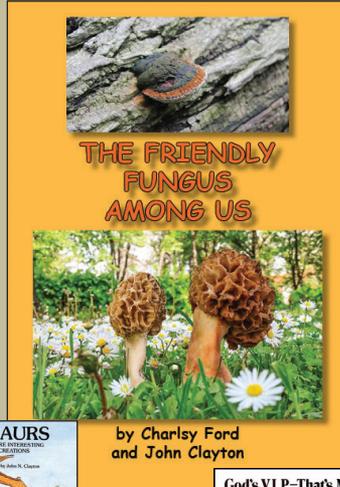


College credit will be available on an arranged basis with this year's trip. This will be handled by York College in York, Nebraska. For information on credits, grading, and tuition please contact York College at 402-363-5621.

Announcing a new book in the DOES GOD EXIST? Children's Series...

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GREAT SCIENTISTS AND GOD

Editor's Note: There are many writers who claimed that good scientists and intelligent, well-educated people do not believe in God. This simply is not true. Tihomir Dimitrov (<http://nobelists.net>) has been researching the statements of the greatest scientists of all time, and we are reproducing some of their statements in this column.

SIR JOSEPH J. THOMSON

1856-1940

Discoverer of the Electron

Winner of the 1906 Nobel Prize in Physics



“As we conquer peak after peak we see in front of us regions full of interest and beauty, but we do not see our goal, we do not see the horizon; in the distance tower still higher peaks, which will yield to those who ascend them still wider prospects, and deepen the feeling, the truth of which is emphasized by every advance in science, that ‘Great are the Works of the Lord’.”

ADDRESS CHANGE? To remain on our mailing list, please give us both your old and new addresses with both zip codes at least six to eight weeks before the move, if at all possible. Thanks!



Cynthia's Corner

GOD'S UNCHANGING NATURE



With all of the changes in nature that this issue of the bimonthly discusses, I am thankful for the fact that “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever” (Hebrews 13:8, NIV 1984). This is very comforting to me when we live in a world that is constantly changing. Thanks to advanced technology we can instantly see and react to what is happening all over the world.

We have all been affected by social media. I am a baby boomer. I have seen massive changes in technology, communication, and social norms. What once would have been appalling and shocking has become commonplace. Living together, and even having children outside of marriage is not shocking anymore. Gay lifestyles are accepted and protected by law. Immorality and sexuality are flaunted. Religious values are deemed outdated and old fashioned. In fact, the idea of absolute truth is mocked, and we are told that everything is relative—including morals and ethics.

I am thankful we have a Creator who does not change with the times. God’s values and truths have not and will not change. We can depend on what he says and build our lives around it. Jesus, God in the flesh, said, “I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life” (John 14:6). God’s Word is Truth and is complete and perfect (John 17:17 and Revelation 22:18–19). It does not change.

God has given us in the past in the Ten Commandments a moral code to live by (Exodus 20:1–17). Jesus calls us to an even higher standard in the New Testament. The truth is that none of us can live up to those standards. “All have sinned and fall short” (Romans 3:23). God’s values and truths do not change from age to age or culture to culture. He holds us accountable to his standards and his Truths as revealed in his Word. We are told to “keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience” (1 Timothy 3:9).

We do not need to be tossed about and blown here and there by every wind of teaching (Ephesians 4:14), being confused and corrupted by the world’s changing standards, values, and opinions. We have a loving heavenly Father who clearly gives us rules to live by and then helps us to do it. I am thankful for God’s unchanging nature.

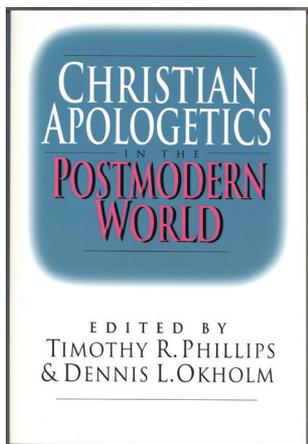
—Cynthia Clayton



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

Christian Apologetics in the Postmodern World

edited by Timothy R. Phillips & Dennis L. Okholm, InterVarsity Press,
©1995, 238 pages, \$22.00 (paperback), ISBN: 0-8308-1860-X



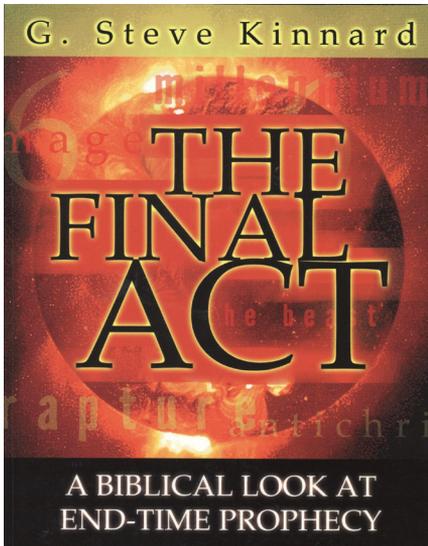
The title of this book seems to this reviewer to be a little misleading. This book is not an effort to answer the Modernism and Postmodern arguments, but rather it is a discussion of what theological position should the church take to answer Modernism and Postmodern challenges. Phillips and Okholm teach theology at Wheaton College, and what they have done in this book is to bring together essays that discuss modern theology on a philosophical and theological level.

The book begins with definitions of apologetics and postmodernity. Roger Lundin and John Stackhouse discuss the arguments and resources related to postmodernity. William Lane Craig maintains that the approach of evidence works. Six different authors discuss the theological challenges that churches face. The last part of the book covers postmodern arguments and various methods of answering those challenges.

This is not a book that the average Christian will find useful. It is aimed at theologians and ministers, and will have most of its use in seminaries and religious academic institutions. Those who have an interest in philosophy and theology will enjoy reading the opinions and ideas of the authors. However, if you are looking for answers to give to people who doubt the existence of God you will not find many that will be useful in this book. We recommend it to ministers of college congregations and to teachers and students in university theology courses.

The Final Act

by G. Steve Kinnard, www.ipibooks.org, ©2000,
154 pages, \$10.99 (paperback), ISBN 1-57782-140-8



Dispensationalism and millennial theories are a destructive agent in apologetics today (see “What Is the Real ‘Age of the Earth’ Issue?” on page 3). They are destructive because they dominate protestant churches and force political beliefs on Christians that lead people away from the spiritual. The notion that Jesus is returning to establish a political kingdom that restores Judaism and establishes David’s throne in this world violates the whole spirit of Christ’s teachings. This concept has spun off denominational Young Earth Creationism with its bad science and destruc-

tive emphasis on the rapture, tribulation, and political issues.

Steve Kinnard has put together a small book which explains this whole belief system and shows its biblical errors. The book is divided into four chapters, starting with the history of “end time prophecy” in church history. Kinnard explains three millennial theories— amillennialism, postmillennialism, and premillennialism. Then he explains in detail the concept of premillennialism as the dominant denominational end times teaching today. His explanations are brief, accurate, and easy to understand.

The remainder of the book is a biblical study of the Old Testament, the New Testament, and the Book of Revelation showing that the Bible clearly does not teach what dispensational-millennial preachers claim. There is an appendix which has a useful outline of the book of Revelation. There are a number of useful charts in the book and some clear exposés of people like Tim LaHaye, John Hagee, Hal Lindsey, and Jerry Jenkins. This is an area of erroneous teaching that the church has contended with for over 100 years, and this book is a useful tool in combating what is still happening today.

DANDY DESIGNS

GRASPING THE SIZE OF GOD

God is not a physical being, but his power and the magnitude of all he does can be seen in the creation around us. When we wonder how God can do all he tells us he can and will do, we need to remember some things about the size of the creation around us. Here are some facts to help stretch your mind a little:

◆ Each time you take a breath you take in a million, billion, billion atoms of oxygen.

◆ The period at the end of a sentence contains 100,000,000,000 (one hundred billion) atoms of carbon. To see one carbon atom you would have to enlarge the dot to the size of a football field.

◆ If you enlarged the dot to the diameter of the earth (7,900 miles) you could see protons and neutrons.

◆ To see a quark you would need to stretch the dot to 20 times further than the distance to the moon or 4,780,000 miles.

◆ Each human cell contains 100 times as many atoms as there are stars in the Milky Way, or 200,000,000,000,000 atoms in a cell.

◆ The human body has 100 trillion cells and so each human is made up of 200,000,000,000,000,000,000,000 atoms. That means each human has more atoms in his body than there are stars in the Milky Way.

◆ There are 7 billion people on earth so there are 1,400,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000 atoms on earth just in people.

David wrote: “When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; What is man, that thou art mindful of him?” (Psalm 8:3–4, KJV). In Psalm 139 David continues to praise God for the way God has created us, and Proverbs 8 tells us that Wisdom was involved in the entire creation process. You are special, and God has created you in an incredible way. He has a work for you to do. Our purpose in being here is to encourage and motivate one another to use the talents and abilities that God has given us to reach a lost and a dying world.



ANIMAL SENSES

The Bible says in Romans 1:18–20 that “we can know there is a God through the things he has made.” The Bible also says that this is true in space and on earth (see Psalms 19:1 and 139). There is



no shortage of design features in the world around us. This “Dandy Designs” column has been run for all of the 42 years this journal has been in production. We have five volumes of these examples available in book form. We also have a website called “dandydesigns.org.” In *Discover* magazine (May 2014, page 74) writer Molly Loomis has an interesting list that shows how animals are designed to sense the world around them. Here are some examples:

- ◆ Redwood ants sense imminent earthquakes through electromagnetism in time to evacuate their mounds.

- ◆ Star-nosed moles have 22 trunks with 100,000 nerve fibers (six times as many as those in a human hand) that act as tentacles sweeping ahead like a high-speed broom.

- ◆ Wolves have a sense of pitch each picking a unique frequency.

- ◆ Seals have whiskers that can detect a hydrodynamic trail of fish swimming up to 600 feet away.

- ◆ Most animals have a dietary sense of lacking nutrients their bodies are not able to store. They crave foods having amino acids found in those foods.

- ◆ The skin of a catfish is like a tongue, detecting the flavor of potential prey from all directions. Earthworms can detect chemical changes, in the same way, using their whole body.

- ◆ Snake tongues not only detect prey or enemies, but tell the snake where it is located through an organ known as Jacobson’s Organ.

- ◆ Rats and moles have independent nostrils that work in stereo.

- ◆ 40% of a shark’s brain is dedicated to smell allowing them to locate prey in the open ocean.

- ◆ Worker bees have paramagnetic iron oxide in their abdomens causing them to shrink or swell depending on outside magnetic changes. This is used in navigation.

- ◆ Jewel beetles have sensors that detect infrared radiation from forest fires up to 50 miles away.

These are only a few examples of the amazing design in animal senses. It is difficult for us to believe this apparent design could be the product of blind, chance processes.

News and Notes

DIE AT 75 OR ELSE!? Dr. Ezekiel Emanuel is the chief medical advisor to the Obama administration and was one of the main architects of Obamacare. He is another proponent of using the death of human beings to promote financial security on a national level. He joins Peter Singer, whom we have discussed before in this column (see the November/December 2010 issue). Singer is the Ira W. DeCamp Professor of Bioethics at Princeton University who maintains that physically and mentally handicapped humans should be euthanized to stop the drain on resources that they demand. Recently an expectant mother asked atheist Richard Dawkins what she should do if her fetus has Down syndrome. Dawkins answered, “Abort it and try again. It would be immoral to bring it into the world if you have the choice” (*The Week*, September 12, 2014, page 16). In an article in *Atlantic* (October 2014) Emanuel wrote that we would all be better off if we died at 75. Emanuel believes that those who live beyond 75 no longer are productive members of society and are a burden because “they gobble up collective health resources.” The future for our children and grandchildren has to be alarming as we rush toward “survival of the fittest” thinking at the national level. It is ironic that in the same magazine in which Emanuel’s article is reviewed (*The Week*, October 10, 2014, page 19) there is a glowing, positive review of Tony Bennett’s new album with Lady Gaga. Bennett is 88.

DRUG UTILIZATION. Since marijuana was legalized in Colorado, 87% of all sales have gone to heavy users of this recreational drug (people getting high 21 to 31 days a month). In a related issue, more than half of all alcohol sales in the United States are made to “problem drinkers” (people drinking ten drinks a day). The legalization of recreational drugs may bring tax dollars to the government, but it is not helping the abuse problems that bring such havoc into people’s lives. (Source: *The Week*, October 10, 2014, page 18.) Another study reported in *The Week* (September 26, 2014, page 19) showed marijuana’s impact on teens in Australia and New Zealand. The study of 3,725 students found “clear and consistent associations” between regular use of marijuana and high-school and college graduation

rates and suicide attempts. The report said that “the risks of negative outcomes increased with the frequency of cannabis use.” The study goes on to say “Because our study has shown the potential harms of adolescent use ... policy makers must be aware of this, and reform efforts should be carefully considered to protect against this.”

MENTAL ILLNESS AND PRISONS. Data is now being revealed that backs up what those of us who work with prisons have known for a long time—that a large percentage of people who are incarcerated are mentally ill. Recent studies show that percentage has now grown to 35% up from 20% in 2008. Not only are many people in jail because of mental illness, but being in prison can cause mental illness. In our correspondence course work we see a lot of paranoia, depression, disordered thinking, and suicidal thinking. This is a huge mission field that very few churches are recognizing. Source: the Corpus Christi *Caller-Times*, September 21, 2014.

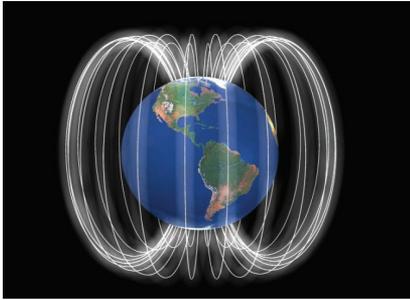
TESTOSTERONE AND HUMAN HISTORY. One of the areas of study we have dealt with in this journal is the different needs that humans had in Old Testament times compared to modern times. The primitive nature of man and his lack of structure in society has a lot to do with the giving of commandments from God from the time of Adam to the time of Christ. A new study of testosterone levels in ancient people show that ancient people had vastly higher levels. Higher levels of testosterone mean more aggressive approaches to problems in life—a help in primitive times, but not so today. The timing of the Christian system being given to man matches up well with this information. Christ gave us the capacity to live peacefully and positively with our neighbors, and this seems to have a biochemical support system involved as well. Source: *Archeology*, November/December 2014.

PYRAMID CLAIMS CONTINUE. Four-thousand years ago ancient Egyptians moved more than 2 million limestone blocks roughly a mile from quarries. Then they used them to build the Great Pyramid of Giza. The limestone blocks were over 3 x 3 x 2.5 feet and weighed 2.5 tons. The tabloids claim that this could not be done with the primitive machines available 4,000 years



ago. Their conclusion is that aliens with antigravity devices were involved. Over the years scientists have proposed a variety of simple solutions, from hydraulic lift systems to slickened ramps. The most recent proposal which has been shown to work is to attach round wooden dowels to the blocks. This acts like the treads on a tank or bulldozer and can go over any terrain with a small amount of energy expended. The point is that ancient people had a variety of methods available to build structures, and there is no need to suggest that aliens were involved. The Tower of Babel shows us that people working together can accomplish amazing things. Source: *Science News*, October 4, 2014, page 14.

MAGNETIC REVERSAL IN OPERATION? Many natural processes are cyclic. That means that they go one way and then another in a repetitive, cyclic motion — like a pendulum. We have seen creationists use the fact that the earth's magnetic field is weakening



as an evidence that the earth is very young. They ignore the massive evidence that the earth's magnetic field flips back and forth. What is now the north pole has in the past been the south pole of this planet. We have also seen evolutionists ignoring the fact that a complete reversal would have a radical influence on biological systems. The

shielding we enjoy from the radiation coming to us from the sun would do significant things to the stability of biological systems. The European Space Agency has announced that their satellite data shows that the earth's magnetic field is dropping at an accelerating pace ten times faster than previously thought. A complete reversal is not expected to happen anytime soon, but it is a reminder that the design of our planet is delicate, and we are fragile. Source: *Scientific American*, October 2014, page 29.

SPEAKING OF OSCILLATIONS. In addition to magnetic reversals, the news is full of reports of discoveries of oscillations being a part of the functioning of the human body. In the 1970s, a Japanese scientist named Yoshiki Kuramoto showed that synchronized oscillations called resonance has a lot to do with how our bodies function. The heart, for example, contracts when all of the cardiac muscles are in rhythm causing the whole heart to pump blood through the body. Studies of neurons in the human brain are suggesting a similar function which allows cognition, thoughts, and dreams. Interruption of the oscillation might even cause epilepsy. God's wisdom

and the tools he has used to create us and our world continue to be evident as we make more and more discoveries. Source: www.scientificcomputing.com/news/2014/06/equations-reveal-natures-rebellious-rhythms?type=cta.



THEY KEEP GETTING BIGGER. It seems that magazines keep reporting on bigger and bigger ancient animals. In the last few months we have seen a bunch of the “biggies.” *Science News* in their August 9, 2014, issue had an article about a bird with a wingspan of 21 feet. *Popular Science* in their September 2014 issue showed a dinosaur which was 35 feet long and weighed 5 tons. *USA Today* in their June 16, 2014, issue promoted a four winged jumbo dinosaur with foot long feathers. In the September 12, 2014, issue of *Science* there was a great picture of Spinosaurus, which they call “a terror of the Cretaceous waterways.” The same issue also reported on a titanosaur that was 85 feet long and weighed as much as a herd of elephants. *National Geographic* is the master of the “biggies” with every issue having a bigger and better dinosaur. What is interesting about all of this is how many unanswered questions are raised every time the bigger animal is proposed. How do you supply oxygen to all parts of the animal when it is that big? How do you handle blood pressure in an animal as tall as these animals are? What kind of heart is needed and how does it control body temperature? How do birds with such huge sizes fly? There is no Hebrew word that would include an animal like these, and the reason is that they are not a part of the “Creation Week.” The week deals with man and his domesticated animals, and not with the millions of species which were not a part of Moses and his world. Any reference to prehistory or to animals like a duck-billed platypus would be beyond the understanding of the people of Moses’ day. What we are seeing in these huge, prehistoric creatures is the incredible work God did in preparing the earth for humans by providing the resources God knew we would need.

MUSLIM SCHOOLS GROW. In the *Houston Chronicle* (September 14, 2014, page B1) there is a story about the Houston Quran Academy in Katy, Texas. The school has excellent academic standing and makes a point of saying it is opposed to extremism. However, the Koran is the focal point of the curriculum, and Islamic traditions are honored and taught. This school is connected with the Islamic Schools League of America, which has 275 full time schools in the USA. In America people of all faiths have equal freedom, and there are large numbers of religious schools all over the United States. The future will tell whether Muslim schools become a beachhead for jihad in America, or whether they fit in like any Catholic or Jew-

ish school system—working peacefully to educate children in all academic areas, and in what it means to be an American.

BELGIUM MURDERER WINS RIGHT TO SUICIDE. A prisoner who has a life sentence has been given permission by a Belgian court to kill himself. In Belgium last year 1,807 people were euthanized, and 15 other inmates have followed Frank Den Bleeken's lead in requesting assisted suicide. Source: *The Week*, September 26, 2014, page 6.

PORNOGRAPHY A MAJOR ISSUE FOR US ALL. A national survey by Pure Desire Ministries and reported by ConquerSeries.com indicates that 68% of men in Christian denominations and 50% of pastors from all denominations watch pornography regularly. *The Dallas Morning News* (April 6, 2014, page 6P) in an article by David Segal described the damage that porn does to kids. This is an issue for all of us, because every congregation faces challenges brought about by pornography at all levels of the membership. Every congregation needs to have a class taught by an experienced Christian that is open, current, and accurate in the effects of porn and how to avoid pornography when it is so abundant all around us.

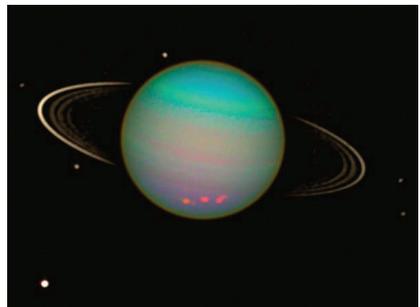
ARK PARK TRIGGERS TAX BREAK DEBATE. Ken Ham with his theme parks based on dispensational theology, has triggered a debate about taxes and churches that may have far reaching consequences for all churches. Ham's group has a creationist museum in Kentucky and is in the process of trying to build an "Ark Park" with a replica of Noah's ark. The problem is that there has been an effort to get tax breaks and grants from the state government for the building of the park. The basis of asking for tax breaks and tax money is that the theme parks will bring tourists into the state. The problem with the parks is that they promote a sectarian message. Paul Simmons, president of Americans United for the Separation of Church and State, wrote in the Louisville *Courier-Journal*, "The state would be using public funds to enable a group to foist an incredible anti-science, anti-common sense, highly sectarian message on the public under the guise of religious liberty." Simmons is atheistic in his approach, but many of his allegations are true. Much of the message of these parks are denominational tradition and not educational or scriptural in their teachings. We need to render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's (Matthew 22:21). Mixing church and state is never a good idea, especially when the church is promoting its own denominational view.

THE SCIENCE OF MORALITY. Scientists now classify studies of morality as a discipline of science. In the September 12, 2014, issue of *Science* (page 1340) there is a report titled “Morality in Everyday Life.” It looks at various human categories, such as liberal and conservative or religious and non-religious, and how they respond to moral and immoral situations. What is interesting about the report is the assumption of the authors about what is moral and what is not. The choices are care vs. harm, fairness vs. unfairness, loyalty vs. disloyalty, authority vs. subversion, sanctity vs. degradation, liberty vs. oppression, honesty vs. dishonesty, and self-discipline vs. lack of self-discipline. Not every culture has the same definitions of these qualities nor puts the same premium on them. Our point would be that without a fixed standard of what is right and what is wrong such a study has a huge bias imposed upon it by the belief system of the authors. God has given us an objective standard by which morality can be defined. Without that standard, the subjective nature of morality makes scientific evaluation suspect at best.

LEGISLATIVE REPORT. *Citizen* magazine continues to report on legal issues involving social choices in the United States. In their August 2014, issue the following cases are reported:

- ◆ Massachusetts Supreme Court rejected an atheist lawsuit seeking to remove “under God” from the Pledge of Allegiance.
- ◆ South Dakota passed a law banning sex-selective abortion.
- ◆ Oklahoma repealed the Common Core education standards.
- ◆ Arizona passed a law allowing health department officials to make unannounced inspections of abortion facilities.
- ◆ Planned Parenthood of Kansas and Mid-Missouri dropped a lawsuit which sought to force taxpayers to fund their organization.

WEIRD MOONS OF THE SOLAR SYSTEM. That is actually the title of a wonderful pictorial article in *Astronomy* magazine (June 2014, page 22). The complexity and design of our solar system and its history is well shown when we examine these strange moons. Our moon plays a vital part in making earth habitable.



Uranus with its rings and moons

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This journal is a part of a program of service titled **Does God Exist?** The purpose of the program is to provide thinking, seeking people with scientific evidence that God does exist and that the Bible is His Word. It is our conviction that all men can logically and rationally believe in God. In addition to this bimonthly journal, the **Does God Exist?** program offers DVDs, CDs, courses, books, and other materials. These materials are offered on a loan basis or at our cost. We also are more than willing to correspond with you and answer any specific question(s) you might have. If you would like further information on borrowing or purchasing these materials, we would be glad to send it to you. Check the boxes below to describe what you would like and mail it to us. We will get it right out to you.

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*It's scientists vs. preachers,
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