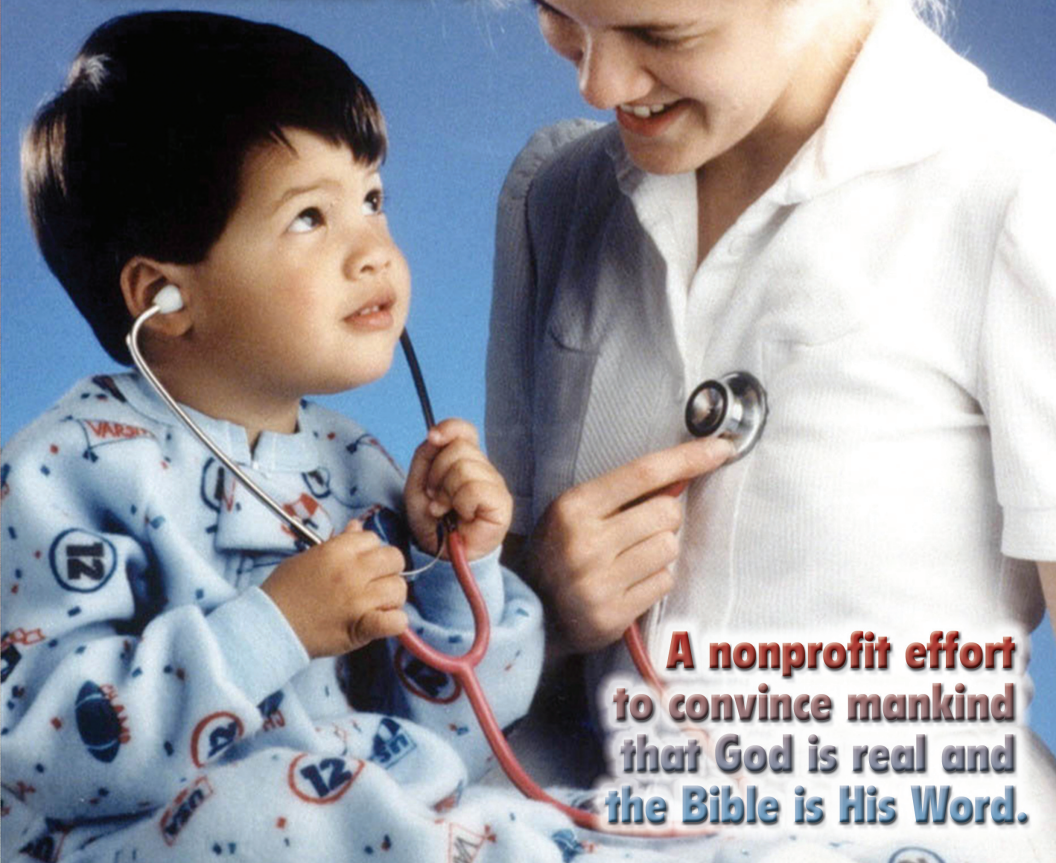


March/April 2009

Volume 36, Number 2

DOES GOD EXIST?

FINDING YOUR HEART!



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

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Articles in this Issue:

- Finding Your Heart 3
- The Fruit Test 6
- Watching the Trades and
Canes 14
- The Design of Liquids and Life 19

Special Features:

Nobel Scientists and God 18

Book Reviews:

- That You May Believe 21
- Reasonable Faith 22

Dandy Designs:

- Bacteria: Friend or Foe 23
- The Mysteries of the Loon 25

News and Notes 27

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FINDING YOUR HEART!

One of the difficult questions for me concerning God and the biblical account is the story of David, the great king of Israel. If I had been picking and choosing what to put in the Bible and what to leave out I would have left David out—or at least his days as a king. David is not only a lousy father with vagrant kids, but he is an immoral, abusive failure as a person. We have the horrible story of Amnon raping Tamar and the violence that followed because of David's inability to handle

the situation. We have the earlier story of his affair with Bathsheba and ultimate murder of her husband. Why does God put up with all of that, and why was it spelled out in graphic detail in the Bible (see 2 Samuel 11–13)?

The answer seems to be that with all of his weaknesses and failures David was, in Bible words, a man after God's own heart

(Acts 13:22). God seems to be very patient and tolerant if our heart is right. What does that mean and how do I get a heart like that?

Let me first of all emphasize that the picture on the cover is not portraying what we mean by heart. Our physical heart has nothing to do with being a person after God's own heart. Our language fails us in this regard. We talk about our broken heart or having heart, knowing it is not the heart beating in our chest that is involved.

Being a person after God's own heart can be defined as having a knee-jerk reaction to a situation that is identical to God's. When you look at David's moments of success, they are always rooted in conduct and attitudes that are the same as God's, or what God calls us to be. When David hears Goliath ridicule God and the army of God in 1 Samuel 17:23, David is appalled. When he faces a bear and when he faces Goliath his thought is that God will make this work (see 1 Samuel 17:37). When he returns from Philistine internment and finds the Amalekites have kidnapped his entire city, including his family and



burned the city, we see his army and friends turning against him. But David runs to God for answers (see 1 Samuel 30:1–6). David makes incredible mistakes, but his knee-jerk reaction to massive trouble and challenge is to do things God's way.

How do you get a heart like that? Is it genetic? Is it a gift from God? Is it something we earn? Can we develop it? Is it the same today as it was in David's time? It is interesting to see how David developed his heart. In 1 Samuel 17:34–37 David recounts his early life. As he took care of his family's sheep he had an incident with a lion and with a bear in which he rescued a lamb each of them had taken from the flock. His experience in these events was that he realized God had rescued him (verse 37). This was a learning experience. David could have attributed his success with the lion and bear to his own abilities or to luck. Instead he looks at the evidence and concludes that God was the cause of his success. When he is confronted with Goliath he refers to this experience and expresses confidence that God will continue to be the cause of his success.

What do we do when success comes our way? Does our success become interpreted as a testimony to our personal superiority? Do we stop and consider God's blessings and concentrate on the events that have taken place that blessed us which we had no control over? This is how we develop a heart like David—we make sure we have an attitude of gratitude for all we have. Be thankful for all you have rather than focusing on what you do not have.

Another product of growing and learning in life is to learn to make a Christlike response to life's situations. Look at the picture to the right. What is your knee-jerk reaction? What do you think would be the reaction of Christ to this guy? What do you feel when you see poverty, abuse, pain, and death? Jesus shows us the compassion and the caring God wants us to develop. This is another learning activity and shapes our heart and allows us to become more as God would have us be. This involves choices and is something for us to work at, grow in, make choices about, and mature into.



There is one more element in this process. In 1 Samuel 16:13 (KJV) we are told that “the Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward.” When we work at, pray for, and strive for our hearts to be molded into God’s pattern, God actively gets involved. God’s Spirit working with David did not make him a robot or a puppet. Man’s free moral choice is never taken away from him. In Saul’s case he got so far from living as God would have him live that God left him.

In the New Testament Peter promised the indwelling of the Spirit to all those who put on Christ in baptism. “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and to all who are far off ...” (Acts 2:38–39, NIV).

Once again this does not make us robots or puppets. We can reject God and choose to live as the followers of Satan would have us live. In 2 Timothy 4:10 we see a follower who chose to do this. “For Demas, because he loved this world, has deserted me” What God’s Spirit does do is give us the capacity to be more than we could ever be on our own. Romans 8:16 says, “The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are children of God: ...”

Christians should continue to grow and learn. They should be the salt of the earth, the bastions of love, kindness, and caring in a cruel and heartless world. Where is your heart?

—John N. Clayton

DOES GOD EXIST? VIDEOCONFERENCE IN YOUR CLASSROOM

Recently Eric Nyrose invited John Clayton to speak to his Old Testament Pentateuch class at Alberta Bible College, in Calgary, Alberta, Canada, by a videoconference. The meeting with that class went so well that we decided to offer this opportunity to others. John Clayton can speak to your college class, high school class, mature youth group, or Bible study group to answer their questions about faith in God and the Bible and to answer the challenges of the atheists who say that science disproves God. We can set up a videoconference to allow your students to listen to John and ask him questions. There is no charge for this, and setting it up is very inexpensive. The technical requirements are: a fast computer, a high-speed internet connection, the free Skype software and account, and a web camera and microphone. For more information about videoconferencing with John Clayton, e-mail vidcon@doesgodexist.tv and we will send you details on how to obtain and set up the equipment and then schedule a time.

The Fruit Test

We live in an age when anyone who suggests that there are absolutes is viewed as some kind of dangerous fanatic. Relativism has become fashionable, and all religious and philosophical viewpoints are being touted as equally valid. The basis of this situation is easy to understand—the people of this planet have seen violence, hatred, pollution, waste, slavery, murder, and war generated by religious and ethnic beliefs. To produce tolerance, our world has suggested that we simply mandate that all systems are equally

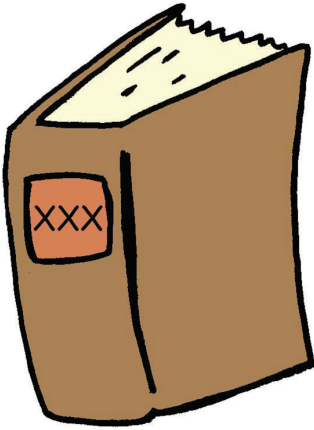


valid so no one has any reason to attack or denigrate anyone else. That objective is admirable and understandable, but it is an ignorant and unworkable proposal.

The obvious problem is that there are some religious and philosophical systems that mandate war and violence as a basic part of their heritage and beliefs. I remember a missionary telling the story one time of being in Africa and teaching a primitive tribe in the jungle somewhere about the betrayal and crucifixion of Jesus Christ. When the betrayal by Judas was told, the natives applauded. In that culture treachery and betrayal was considered to be a virtue, and one who succeeded in destroying someone else was held up as a person of great strength and wisdom. I cannot verify that there was or is such a culture, but it is certainly possible. The point is that such a system cannot be held up as equally valid with what most Americans would feel to be a value system by which people should live.

It is the position of the **Does God Exist?** work that the Christian system as taught in the Bible is the only way to live successfully. It is not our job to judge others or to decide how God will handle those who do not conform to the system of living and worship that He has given us. However, we do maintain that there is a right way to live and conduct one's self, and that the New Testament tells us how to do that. We believe the evidence supports Jesus' statement that He is "the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6). We want to

emphasize from the start that we are talking about what the system teaches, not what people do. There are atheists who live wonderful, self-sacrificing, constructive lives in spite of the fact that this might logically violate some of the principles that classical atheism teaches. There are some who claim to be Christians but who practice violence, immorality, and war to enhance their religious or political organization—in direct opposition to everything Jesus Christ taught. The question is not what people do because people of all persuasions do incredibly selfish destructive things. The question is, “What does the system actually teach, and does following that system bring positive or negative results?”



Sexual Conduct and Pornography.

One area of concern in our society is the question of sexual conduct and issues like pornography. What is the logical viewpoint of sex, marriage, and pornography from an atheistic standpoint? If this life is all we have and we answer to no one but ourselves, we decide for ourselves what is right or wrong. If our makeup is controlled by evolution and the principles of natural selection and survival of the fittest, then any sexual conduct a person wishes to engage in that promotes our well-being and pleasure is acceptable.

One of the things that attracts people to atheism is the freedom from moral restrictions, and the opportunity to engage in any sexual practice with any other consenting adult. In our day of contraception and the prevention of sexually transmitted diseases, the old negative consequences of illicit sexual activity have been minimized. While safe sex is never completely safe, the risk factor can be significantly reduced.

Logically, anything that can contribute in a positive way to sexual experience can be justified. Pornography that does not exploit another human and which enhances a person's sexual experience can be condoned. Even prostitution would be acceptable if it is conducted in such a way that sexually transmitted diseases are controlled, and which provides an income for sex workers who engage in their activities willingly. If our sexual drives are controlled by our biology and are rooted in survival of the fittest and natural selection then any sexual act that contributes positively to our survival and well being is acceptable. Few atheists would sanction the exploitation of another human, but most would argue that the violence and abuse associated with pornography and prostitution is due to financial issues and is not inherently a product of these enterprises. The famous atheist Aldous

Huxley said it well: “The person who sees no meaning in the world is concerned to prove that there is no valid reason why he should not do what he wants to. For myself, the philosophy of meaninglessness was essentially an instrument of liberation—sexual and political.”

The teachings of Jesus Christ are a radical departure from what we have just discussed. Jesus made it clear that sexual relationships and conduct are to be consummated only in marriage. Christ even told His followers to be careful about what they did in their thinking: Whosoever looks upon a woman to lust after her has committed adultery with her already in his heart (Matthew 5:28). The Christian system is one man and one woman in a committed relationship not allowing one to go for a period of time without sexual relationships. In 1 Corinthians 7:4–5 Christians are told not to separate from one another for a long period of time to avoid becoming vulnerable to sexual temptation from the outside. Sex is narrowly defined and singularly executed in a monogamous, committed, life-long relationship.



Atheists are prone to suggest that the Christian system is unrealistic. One partner for life is considered to be in violation of natural biological drives which encourage a male to impregnate as many females as possible to ensure that the strongest survive in numbers guaranteeing the continuance of the species. If man is viewed as solely a product of his evolutionary, biological past, then everything we see in the animal kingdom would apply to humans. Just as a bighorn ram butts heads with competing males and then accumulates a harem in which he fathers all of the babies, so too the alpha male human will enjoy mating with as many females as possible

The question is “what works?” What brings the greatest pleasure, the greatest fulfillment, the greatest stability, the greatest satisfaction, and the most healthy sexual experience? Humans are not sheep. Sex is not just a device to produce babies and bring a few moments of pleasure. The biblical perspective of sex which started in Genesis 2:24 is that sex brings a unique bond between a man and his wife. The Old Testament referred to “one flesh” and Jesus referred to it in Matthew 19:4–6 when He answered the Pharisees’ questions about marriage. In Ephesians 5:25 husbands are told to love their wives as Christ loved the church and to have such a deep love and commitment that they would be willing to die for their wives. In the same passage (verses 22–23) wives are told to honor and respect their hus-

bands. That kind of relationship is not available to the atheist who maintains women as a ram maintains a herd of ewes. In the Christian system sexual relationships are an expression of love, oneness, and commitment—not just physical release.

Not only is the purpose and promise of sex an issue, but the way of having the greatest pleasure in sex is an issue. It is interesting that our magazines these days are full of advertisements for devices, drugs, and chemicals that will enhance sexual experience. The problem is that promiscuity has robbed people of the best of what sex has to offer. Meaningful sex happens when you know what your partner likes and what he or she does not like—what turns them on and turns them off. It happens a number of years into a marriage and is enriched by the unity that a man and a woman have. The mechanical efforts of our society to make sex better is a reflection of the consequences of not conducting sex in the kind of relationship God calls us to. In the Christian system there is no comparison of one partner's sexual performance, because there is no one to compare it to. There is no need for pornography to arouse someone, because the relationship with one's partner provides a beautiful arousal of love and commitment.

The prevailing unhappiness with sex, and the desperate attempts of people to find a way to get better sexual experiences is a demonstration of the fact that only the Christian system provides what we all want in sexual experiences. Other religious systems that teach polygamy or polyandry also fail for the very same reason that atheism fails. It is sad that so many people on this planet have bought into alternatives to God's plan for man and woman. They have lost the most beautiful sexual experiences that they could ever have had. Complete sex is not functional in a relativistic belief system. God's way as revealed in the New Testament works.

Benevolence and Charity. All philosophies and religions do charity work, including many atheists. There is a need that everyone has to help others through such things as homeless shelters, care facilities, and a variety of relief organizations. However, the numbers are very clear that in every study that has been done the bulk of benevolence and charity work is done as a unique characteristic of Christianity. In John 13:3–17 Jesus washed the feet of His disciples and told them that they were to do the same. Over and over Christ emphasized giving and caring for others. In judgment scenes Jesus showed people who visited the sick, cared for the homeless, fed the hungry, gave drink to the thirsty, and visited prisons as those who were in favor with God





while those who did not were denied by God (see Matthew 25:31–46).

Many atheists do some giving, but the question that has to be raised is why? If survival of the fittest is the mantra by which we live, then why would we do anything that would negatively contribute to our existence. If you are less fit you do not

survive, and why should an atheist do anything that would jeopardize his own well being by helping others who are less fit? I remember one time asking my father, who was an atheist, why he gave money to the United Way. He thought about it for a while and finally said, "I guess it was the way I was raised." My father was raised in a religious home in which giving was practiced as a Christian virtue. United Way caused friction between my mother and father. In my mother's mind the only reason to give to United Way was to have your name on the list of givers published and distributed among her associates and friends. My father went beyond that in his thinking, but it was based on his religious indoctrination as a child. Our culture has had the Christian concept of giving imbedded in it, and many of us have functioned in it without necessarily believing in the Christian concept. The fact is that a purely atheistic approach would deny benevolence and charity, and the numbers support that. We made the point several issues back in this journal that atheist giving was very marginal (see March/April 2008, page 29).

To be able to find joy in giving, and to be able to develop a life style that is built around giving and sharing, there must be a belief system that denies that we ourselves are the most important thing in the creation. Religious systems that espouse building magnificent edifices and structures for their own religious pleasure and use, similarly violate the teachings of Jesus. Jesus said (James 1:27) "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction . . ." This is where the joy of giving is found, and only the teachings of Jesus Christ bring us to that blessing.

Animal and Human Rights. If we buy 100 percent into the concept of evolution and naturalism, then man is just an animal with no special makeup and nothing unique, except perhaps his brain. Such a belief system would maintain that all animal life is equally valid (relativism again) and that the life of a pig is just as valuable as the life of a human. We do in fact have extremists in the animal rights groups

today that maintain exactly that—man is nothing special and all animal life is equally precious and has equal rights. We now have people protesting the use of animals for food. There are even laws being proposed in many countries which would make killing an animal an act equal to killing a human (see January/February 2006, page 15).



From Genesis 1 on, the Bible has maintained that man is unique. Man is presented as the only form of life on Earth which is created in the image of God. God’s original command to man was to subdue the earth, have dominion of the fish, the fowl and the beasts of the earth.” Man was also told to take care of the Garden, dress it and keep it (Genesis 2:15), and we certainly need to do a better job of that. Cruelty to animals is inexcusable and not our point here.

Death and Quality of Life. I am personally at a time in my life when I have experienced the death of many people who are close to me—my wife, my parents, and a number of friends. One of the major issues that I have observed as I have watched these people die is how they approached death. My wife spent her last weeks of life laughing, smiling, and telling doctors not to use extreme measures to extend her life. Seeing her grandchildren and her brother one last time was a high priority for her, and we traveled to do that. Her last words to me, her husband of 49 years were words of comfort and encouragement. My wife milked every drop of goodness and happiness available in a life that was full of chronic sickness from 60 years of insulin-dependent diabetes. I have seen similar responses in close Christian friends. My last day with Tom Love, a dear friend who had worked with me in a variety of Christian projects was a time of laughter and good memories. In all of these cases the view of the future was positive. These people knew that all of the things that were afflicting them and bringing their lives to an end would soon be gone, and the future was brighter than the past had ever been. One of my favorite stories of the death of my wife was when I told our mentally-retarded foster son Tim that his mother was dead. He sat there for a moment and then he said “I guess God will have to give her the insulin shots from now on . . . oh no, (smiling) she won’t have to take those shots any more, will she?” In Tim’s case there were no tears or pain, because death to him as a Christian was a positive natural thing and his mom was free of what hurt her in the past. All of this boosted his and my quality of life. We did not have a funeral for my

wife. We had a memorial service in which we celebrated her life. We shared funny and positive stories about what she accomplished, happy memories of how she blessed her children, her husband, her friends, and this ministry. (By the way, written copies of the service are available upon request.)

Coming from an atheist family, and having many atheist friends and associates, I have seen some bizarre and unfortunate reactions to death. If this life is all there is, and after this life there is nothing at all then hanging on to this life at all costs is a very high priority. Death is the ultimate tragedy and all resources and energy must be devoted to avoiding it. There is nothing to look forward to because in the atheist belief system there is no future once death occurs. My parents tried to shield me from the subject of death. I never went to a funeral as a child and never had the subject of death discussed. When I was taken to a visitation of the father of one of my high school classmates at the age of 17, my mother was incensed and reacted angrily to the lady who took me. When my father's mother was near death's door from cancer, extreme measures were taken to prolong her life using up all of her financial resources. This was in spite of the fact that she begged not to have anything more done. The best atheists can do is to portray death as a natural product of life, something that must be tolerated because it is unavoidable. They can never portray it as something to look forward to.



I recently had an atheist take me to task for my portrayal of the Christian view of death as a positive thing. His statement was “If I believed what you believe I would commit suicide on the spot—then I could have this wonderful death experience you talk about.” My response was that if he in fact took his own life and had his mental faculties working when he did so (which I seriously doubt is possible) then he would not have the blessings God promises after our lives are over. The reason is that our lives according to God are designed with a purpose. Atheists view life as an accident, but Christians view life as a conscious creation with a deep and intense purpose. Ephesians 6:12; 3:9–10; and Job 1 and 2 all clearly show that we are created to do something, and that the struggle between good and evil involves us in a very personal way. We have life to accomplish what God has given us to do. Each of us has a talent given to us which is oriented toward that purpose. We want to live life to the fullest. My wife’s

last day on this earth was spent talking with people about life, and sharing with people how she had found joy and happiness in life. I had taken her some small New Testaments with a programmed learning guide to scriptures leading the reader to an obedience in God. When I picked up her things after she died, there was not one left, and several of the nurses and one doctor told me she had given them one of those testaments.

This is the Christian approach to life and death. Right up to our last breath we have purpose, love, direction, and hope. My wife is no longer walking by faith. She is walking by sight with her God and with Jesus. She had that hope and walked by faith while she was alive. Now in death she walks by sight. The atheist tries to walk by sight in life. The only hope he has is that when he dies he never resumes consciousness, because if he does it will be in condemnation by God because he was wrong. The atheist will say “but what if you are wrong?” My response is “We will never know we were wrong. If the atheist is right, we will never awaken and thus never know we were mistaken, but we will still have experienced great hope and joy and purpose in life.” But we are not wrong, and the evidence grows daily of the great hope we have. That great hope fills life with meaning, direction, joy, and purpose.

—JNC

DOES GOD EXIST? VIDEOS

We would like to remind you that our videos are available on DVD. Currently there are 24 programs on six DVDs. These, as well as our other materials, can be viewed in our catalog available online at www.doesgodexist.org or by writing to the address on the back cover of this bulletin. In addition, the videos can be viewed at our sister Web site: www.doesgodexist.tv. On this Web site they can be viewed, purchased using a credit/debit card, or downloaded (free of charge). Once downloaded they can be saved on your computer or can be put on your own DVDs. We have had requests for these downloads from around the world.

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!*



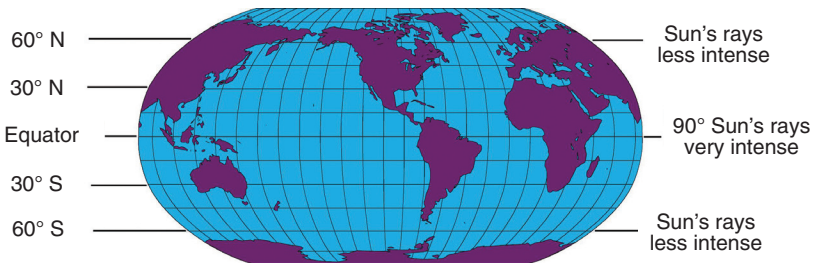
WATCHING THE TRADES AND CANES



I am writing this article on an island in the Bahamas where I have been on a small vacation with my oldest daughter and her family. As I look toward the ocean I am watching the culmination of a long period of movement in the earth's atmosphere—a tropical depression named Faye

that is likely to turn into a hurricane. This island has been in desert conditions for some time. The rocky nature has made it very difficult for even the most hearty plants to survive. I have seen desert plants that have literally been scorched by the hot sun at this tropical latitude in August. Now there are sheets of welcomed rain coming down—with a prediction of perhaps as much as ten inches of rain in the next few hours. To a northern boy raised in Michigan, Indiana, and Ontario this is a strange sight and a real learning situation. What many people do not seem to understand is that this weather system is an incredibly well-designed machine. Living things that depend on water are the prime beneficiaries of this design.

At the equator the sun's rays strike the earth's surface at essentially a 90 degree angle. That means energy is absorbed at the equator more



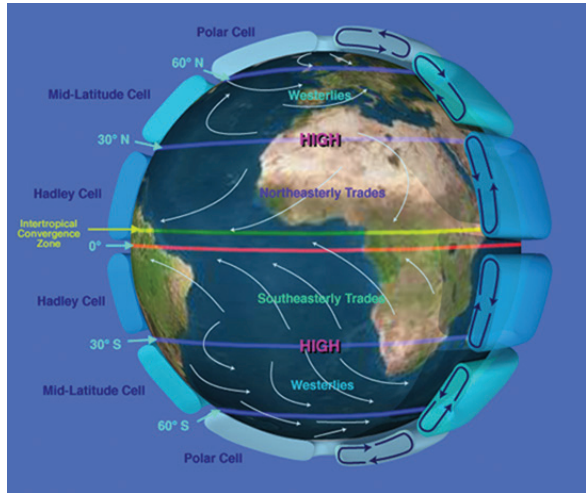
dramatically than at any other latitude, so it gets very hot. Contrary to what many believe, the fundamental cause of warm and cold areas on the earth is not our distance from the sun, the makeup of the

atmosphere, clouds, or a canopy. It is the way the sun's rays strike the earth. Hitting a baseball perpendicularly to the bat will cause a home run, but hitting the ball at an angle on the top of the bat will produce a foul ball. It is very much the same situation.

The increased energy and heat at the equator causes the air to rise. As it rises clouds form and rain falls to the surface of the earth and at the equatorial latitudes causes what is called a tropical rain forest. Once the rain has fallen the hot air is very dry and will move away from the equator. In the earth's design, by the time it gets to 30 degrees latitude the air cools and begins to sink to the surface of the earth. This air is very dry and the result is that a massive percentage of the world's deserts are located at 30 degrees north or south latitude.

As the air rises at the equator, it must be replaced, and air moving towards the equator to replace it creates what we call the trade winds. The air coming down at 30 degrees latitude flows both to the equator and the opposite direction producing in the United States a prevailing wind direction and storm direction from the southwest.

This explanation is greatly oversimplified. The earth's rotation exerts a force called the Coriolis force which causes the wind to turn as it flows (see the drawing to the right). The tilt of the earth causes the sun to be directly overhead right at the equator only twice a year—moving as far north and south as 23½ degrees. Oceans, continents, mountains, and even pollution can modify this basic system but in simplified terms, this is how it is designed.



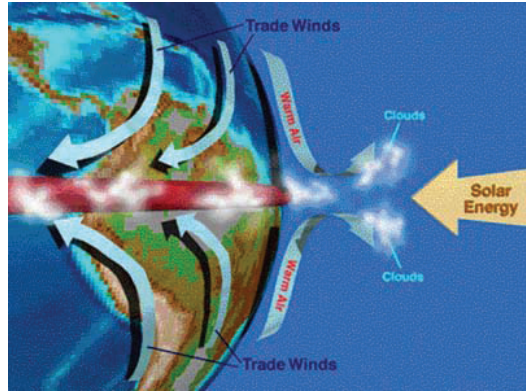
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The problem then for living things which are found at 30 degrees latitude is how to get enough water to survive. In this journal we have written from time to time about the individual design features of living things that allow them to conserve or find water in arid and inhospitable climates. The other part of the story however, is how water balance occurs in these areas that are naturally a desert climate. When certain areas of the oceans of the world have the sun directly overhead, they heat up. This causes massive amounts of water to evaporate and produces a low pressure system. We call

these low-pressure systems tropical depressions. The Coriolis force of the earth's rotation spins these systems and consolidates them so that a massive water machine develops over the ocean. These storms drift across the Atlantic evaporating more water and gaining strength, and the Coriolis force moves them up to the 30 degree north latitude. A similar process happens in the southern hemisphere. This huge bubble of water comes ashore as a tropical depression or hurricane. This water is vital to the natural ecology of plants and animals native to 30 degrees latitude.

It is interesting that when there are no hurricanes or tropical depressions in the 30 degree latitude areas, the result is a problem for all living things. Drought, dropping water tables, surface collapses, saline invasion of fresh water areas, and a plethora of other problems cause suffering for man as well as all other living things.

I am sure that there are readers of this column living in New Orleans, Homestead, Florida, or some other place that have suffered terrible destruction and pain from a hurricane who will object to the portrayal of a hurricane as a design feature of the earth. We certainly empathize with those who have suffered because of these storms, but most of the



Source: <http://sealevel.jpl.nasa.gov/overview/climate-climatic.html>

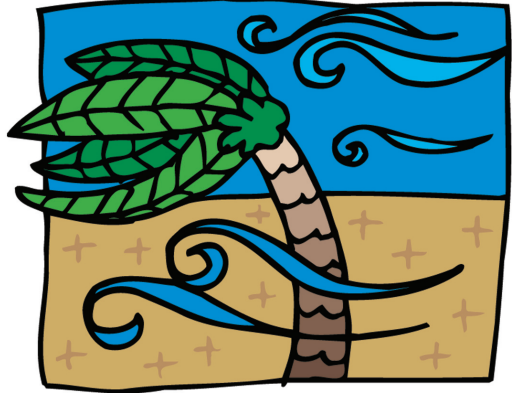
horrific damage from these storms happens because of human error. In the original coastal areas of North America for example, there were massive mangrove swamps which eliminated storm surge and blunted the effect of wind and rain. Swamps and marshes had their own set of physical properties that minimized the damage from hurricanes. Mankind has destroyed the mangroves, drained the swamps, and built cities below sea level surrounded by levies. Human structures made of light-weight materials are not going to withstand heavy wind. It is interesting that in the Bahamas most of the buildings are made of cement, and hurricanes are accepted as a normal event in the lives of those who live in these islands. Hurricanes are storms that arrive slowly with adequate warning, and need not cause the loss of human life or significant losses of property. We have seen tragedy because of human greed and carelessness that need not have happened.

How difficult would it be to design this weather machine? How many variables are there in this system? The first item that has to be designed is the miracle of water itself. Its molecular weight (18) is

less than the molecular weight of air (30) making the density change possible to produce weather systems, evaporation, and the Hadley Cells shown in the drawing (on page 15). The cohesive and adhesive properties of water which are dependent on the chemical properties of oxygen and hydrogen are essential for the processes we have been describing. Water's high specific heat, its very high heat of vaporization, and the most unusual closeness of its freezing and boiling points are also critical.

From an astronomical standpoint there is a huge number of variables that have to be carefully chosen for the system to work. The mass of the earth controls the thickness of the earth's atmosphere. The rotation rate of the earth allows the air masses to move properly, and avoids the possibility that the wind velocities will go to catastrophic levels. The gases that make up our atmosphere (primarily nitrogen and oxygen) provide a density and set of physical and chemical factors essential for life and for the weather systems to function. The size of our sun, its temperature, the type of star it is, the kinds of radiations it emits, its stability, and its distance from the earth are all critical factors.

The point of this brief and simplified description of how our weather systems work has been to suggest that those who argue that a hurricane is a destructive, chance event incompatible with the concept of a loving God is a position rooted in ignorance. The fact is that hurricanes and the weather systems of the earth in general are a great apologetic for the wisdom and design of God. Human error, greed, and ignorance cause bad decisions to be made about where and how humans build shelter from the elements. Such tragic situations cannot be laid at the feet of God. We have an earth that is designed so that life can live at all latitudes and in all kinds of situations. We have been told to take care of the garden, dress it, and keep it (Genesis 2:15). It would seem that understanding how it works and intelligently adapting to how it works with care and thanksgiving is what man's lot should be—not bemoaning the consequences of bad choices and selfish attempts to prosper from those who do not understand the design of the system.



—JNC

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 is simply 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.

Sir William Bragg Nobel Laureate in Physics

“Christ’s rule and example showed God as our Father and us as His children, a society in which love governs all.”

“From religion comes man’s purpose; from science, his power to achieve it. Sometimes people ask if religion and science are opposed to one another. They are: in the sense that the thumb and fingers of my hand are opposed to one another. It is an opposition by means of which anything can be grasped.”

“Science is experimental, moving forward step-by-step, making trial and learning through success and failure. Is not this also the way of religion, and especially the Christian religion? The writings of those who preach the religion have from the very beginning insisted that it is to be proved by experience. If a man is drawn towards honor and courage and endurance, justice, mercy, and charity, let him follow the way of Christ and find out for himself. No findings of science hinder him in that way.”

“As to the actual mode of the experiment, I will say nothing. We all know it well already: it has been enshrined in a thousand testimonies; it has been displayed in countless lives; it is all included in the lovely words of St. Paul, simple though they are: ‘And the greatest of these is [love].’”

Bragg identified “two sad mistakes” in the current science-religion debates: The one is to suppose that science, that is to say, the study of Nature, leads to materialism. The other that the worship of God can be carried on without the equipment which science provides.”

THE DESIGN OF LIQUIDS AND LIFE

The remarkable picture below was taken aboard the Space Shuttle. The three enthralled astronauts are looking at a glass of water—but without the glass. Water has a number of forces that operate between its molecules. One of those is adhesion. Water will have an attraction to a material that is of a different molecular makeup than it is. If you look carefully at a glass of water, you will see that the water clings to the side of the glass and is raised slightly. It is this characteristic that allows water to climb up through the small capillaries in plants so the water can reach the top of the plant.



Source: NASA/STS-35 photos: Astronauts Hoffman, Lounge, and Durrance

Another force that molecules of water can exert is cohesion. Molecules of water will cling to each other, and that is why a razor blade can be floated on top of a glass of water if it is done carefully. In the weightlessness of outer space, water can be set free in the space capsule and the cohesive forces will work, but there is nothing to adhere to, so the water becomes a sphere hanging in the weightlessness of space.

It is interesting that matter in the creation exists in four states, and that the liquid state is the least common of those four states. We rarely find liquids in space. The interiors of planets may be in the liquid state, but they are not common. Having a liquid on the surface of an astronomical body is exceedingly rare. A moon of Saturn has a liquid surface of methane; and, of course, the earth has a liquid

surface of water, but those are rare situations. Solids are the next most common form of matter in the cosmos, but even solids are rare and exist in very few places. We have a few rocky planets like Earth, Mars, Venus, and Mercury. We also have some moons of our planets that are solid. There are clouds of solid matter in our galaxy, and the asteroid belt between Mars and Jupiter has a great deal of solid material. However, this form of matter is rare compared to the last two forms of matter.

Gases are the next most abundant form of matter in the cosmos, and there is a lot of gas. We not only have atmospheres of planets that are very large, but stars like our sun have a corona which is a gaseous area above the photosphere, the luminous surface. Clouds of gases are also seen in free space. Many of them are massive clouds of hydrogen gas.

However, the most common form of matter in the cosmos is plasma. A plasma is made up of atoms that have had their electrons stripped away from them. We see plasma in florescent lights, where high voltages have removed the electrons. The sun is a huge plasma as are all stars, and massive plasmas exist in various nebulae in space.

It is interesting that the most common form of matter on earth (liquid) is the least common form of matter in the cosmos as a whole. Conversely the most common form of matter in the cosmos (plasma) is the least common form of matter on the earth—with plasmas being seen only in lightning and in the auroras. Man also makes a few in his lights and electronic devices.

There are many lessons available to us as we study liquids and work to understand the forces that control them. Some of them are practical lessons, that may enable us to find ways to use plasma to solve energy problems and study the composition of the cosmos. Some of them have to do with appreciating the wisdom and design that is built into the creation in which we live. When we understand the cause and nature of plasmas, we realize that life could not exist without them. Liquids, on the other hand, offer an enormous potential in not only allowing life to survive, but allowing it to propagate and be stable in the creation. We live on an incredibly unique planet, with conditions that are remarkably suited for life. The more we learn about matter, the states of matter, and the composition of the cosmos as a whole, the more we can appreciate what God has done, and see that a wonder-working hand has gone before.

—JNC

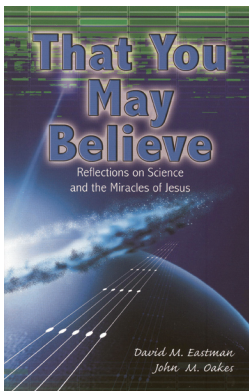




That You May Believe

by David Eastman and John Oakes,

Illumination Publishers International (www.ipibooks.com),
2008, 184 pages (paperback), ISBN-13: 978-0-9797886-6-6



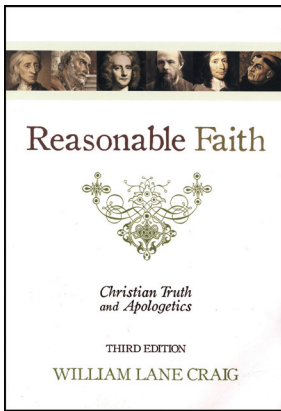
This book is subtitled “Reflections on Science and the Miracles of Jesus.” It addresses a problem atheists are raising today and which needs to be addressed by Christians. That is whether the miracles in the Bible are really miracles, or if there are natural and cultural explanations for all the claims of miracles that the Bible presents. I have known John Oakes for a very long time. In fact John has a dedication to me in the front of the book which is humbling but which reflects our relationship. John is a professor of chemistry, and I met him at the University of Colorado where he was getting

his PhD. He is president of the Apologetics Research Society and has written a large number of books. I am not familiar with David Eastman, but I know he is a leader in the Church in Chicago.

The strength of this book, in my opinion, is that it takes the miracles of the Bible and shows from science that they did in fact have to be miracles, and it offers available evidence that they did actually happen. After brief chapters on the nature of science and faith, the book discusses the creation of the universe and gives current scientific information that it was a miraculous event. The authors then turn to Old Testament miracles and show that they had to be miracles and do not have natural explanations—ending with their connection to the miracles of Jesus. The miracle of changing water to wine and the multiplying of the loaves is discussed from a chemical standpoint in chapter five, along with the significance of Jesus being the “bread of life.” The healings of the human body are discussed in chapter six. Chapter seven deals with spiritual forces and chapter eight discusses

natural changes such as weather and fig tree changes. The next several chapters deal with the raising of the dead followed by a wonderful section on miracles Jesus did NOT do. Jesus did not perform miracles to meet His own needs, remove man's freedom of choice, or stop the crucifixion.

This is a good book. It will be especially useful to believers in building faith, but it also gives solid evidence that the miracles of the Bible are indeed miracles. You cannot write them off as products of the ignorance of the people of the day. We recommend this book highly.



REASONABLE FAITH

by William Lane Craig,

Crossway Books, 2008, 415 pages, \$26.00
(paperback), ISBN-13: 978-1-4335-0115-9.

One of the brightest lights in apologetics in today's world is Dr. William Lane Craig. Dr. Craig has a PhD in philosophy and has been involved in a large number of debates on university campuses and on television. He is very capable both in his presentations and his knowledge. This book is a summary of much of Dr. Craig's teachings.

This book is divided into five large units with a total of eight chapters. The first unit is a discussion of how to know Christianity is true. The second unit is the absurdity of trying to build a life that has meaning without God. The third unit is a large section of the major scientific evidence for the existence of God which deals with some of the major arguments in cosmology, a discussion of ontological approaches, and teleology. This is a very strong section with various scientific problems with the proposals about the nature of our particular system being discussed. The fourth unit involves problems of historical knowledge and miracles. The fifth unit is a deep discussion of how we know Jesus was God and an understanding of the resurrection.

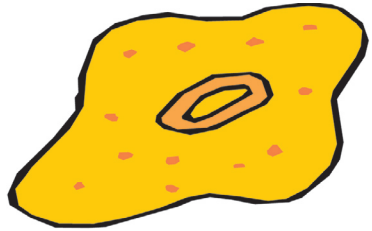
Craig does a wonderful job of handling this material. This book is well-researched, up-to-date, heavily documented, and accurate. It is written with great clarity, and leans hard on philosophy, using a wide range of philosophers and scholars to support his points.

For those with an interest in apologetics, this is a book that should be in your library and should be read frequently. It has a very complete index which can be used to look up questions and issues that occur in daily work with people who have faith problems. There are

a number of supplements and guides that can be purchased to use with the book in various teaching situations. The Web site is www.reasonablefaithtools.com. We recommend this material highly as a useful tool in the hands of those who are battling naturalism and scientism in the minds of their young.

DANDY DESIGNS

BACTERIA: FRIEND OR FOE



Most of us probably have negative thoughts when we think about bacteria.

We know that diseases are caused by bacteria, and we have been told since childhood that we need to wash our hands to avoid illness. Most of us know that from the seventeenth through the nineteenth centuries a fourth of all women giving birth in hospitals died of puerperal fever which was an infection spread by unhygienic nurses and doctors. What we may not know is that there was strong social opposition to hand washing during that time. In 1843 Oliver Wendell Holmes Sr. campaigned for basic sanitation in hospitals, but was opposed by most of the medical establishment. Dr. Charles Meigs who was a famous American obstetrician responded that “Doctors are gentlemen, and gentlemen’s hands are clean.”

Bacteria are a vital part of the design of the human body. There are around 1,000 species of bacteria in the human body. There are more individual bacteria in one person’s body than there are people in the United States. These bacteria do a bewildering number of things for us. They clean our skin, decompose our waste, help digest our food, and repel fungus, pollen, and insects. In addition they provide stimulus to our immune system to resist a variety of diseases. A recent study of 11,000 children showed that an overly-hygienic environment increases the risk of eczema and asthma.

The misconceptions about bacteria are numerous. Not only do most bacteria help us, but good and bad bacteria are amazingly resilient and efficient in all they do. There is no “five second rule” when it comes to dropping food on the ground, for example. Bacteria can be on the food the instant it touches the ground. A recent study

at the University of Arizona showed that TV remotes are one of the most destructive carriers of disease in hospital rooms—worse than toilet handles. These remotes spread *Staphylococcus* which resists antibiotics and causes 90,000 deaths per year in hospitals.

There is still considerable debate about the origins of bad bacteria. Many bacteria that are destructive to humans have come to us from animals. It is appalling to see how many pets are allowed to have intimate contact with their owners transferring bacteria which may be helpful in a dog or cat, but can cause problems in a human. Some bacteria get altered (mutated) by chemicals and radiation in the environment. Much is still being learned about how bacteria become detrimental to our health.

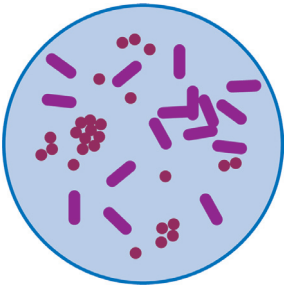
Bacteria are an important tool of God. We could not live without them, and they have been well controlled in the past by the hygienic rules that God has given. The ancient Israelites had washings and practiced quarantine that reduced the problems of spreading

diseases and infections. By contrast, King Henry IV of England caused controversy by requiring his knights to bathe at least once in their lifetime. The lifestyle of the Israelites involved living in the open in isolated open air conditions. We have built huge cities and placed ourselves in very dense populations so that the problems of infection and the spreading of disease have become more critical. A seventh grader in Florida recently

made the news by proving that there were more bacteria in the ice machines in fast food restaurants than in toilet bowl water. We have also complicated our situation by misinformation and the injudicious use of chemicals and radiation. A simple example is that antibacterial soap is no more effective at preventing infection than regular soap, and the active ingredient (triclosan) has a negative effect on hormones.

When we are sick we tend to allow ourselves to question the wisdom of bacteria and agents that can make us ill, but we underestimate the purpose and value of bacteria in our lives, and need to appreciate them as a part of the intelligence that permeates every aspect of the world in which we live.

Source: *Discover* magazine, September 2007, page 80.



THE MYSTERIES OF THE LOON



©iStockphoto.com/Paul Tessier

All of my life I have had the joy of being in the north woods in the summer. One of the great contributors to the wonders of the north is the loon. There are four species of loons (divers in the UK/Ireland)—the arctic, red-throated, yellow-billed, and the common loon (pictured) which is the species with which I am familiar. Their haunting cries are almost impossible to describe. Some call it a wail, some a howl, but in reality the loons have several calls and no human words can describe the calls adequately. The cry of the loon and the howl of the wolf are the two sounds most associated with the north.

The first mystery of the loon is the fact that it is a sea bird. In January, you will find loons in a pack or flock at night in oceans on both coasts of North America and the Gulf Coast. They are also found across the Atlantic from Norway to Algeria. Instead of having hollow bones as most birds do, loons have solid bones, making flight difficult but ideally suited for swimming. Loons can dive to 200 feet and stay submerged for several minutes, but they can also stick their bills out of the water and stay submerged if they sense danger. Their diet is fish, and in the ocean they have a virtually infinite food supply.

Loons are covered with down to keep them warm but the down is covered with contour feathers which have a central shaft with barbed filaments that zip together. Once oiled, the zipped feathers form a watertight cover which sheds water and keeps the down dry. The blood vessels in the upper legs avoid heat loss. The legs and body are covered with a layer of subcutaneous fat insulating the bird against the coldest ocean water. This is a bird ideally suited to live in the ocean.

When spring comes, a strange change takes place in loons. The loons molt, shedding their gray feathers and growing black ones. The loons have been flightless throughout the winter, but now stiff wing feathers come through as the molt occurs and the birds begin to exercise, building muscle and feather strength that will allow flight. After two months of this process, the birds suddenly in March through June, travel north many hundreds of miles to a fresh water lake in the far north of the United States and Canada. Sometimes in spring you will hear loons calling to each other as they fly at times 1,500 feet in the air.

Why should the loons leave the ocean? There is an abundant food supply, and there are many suitable places to lay eggs and raise young. No massive change to allow flight would be necessary if the loons stayed in their marine environment. There are many dangers and risks involved in making such a long journey, and the reproductive risks are huge. If the eggs are not laid quickly, hatched quickly, and the babies brought to maturity quickly, the winter freeze may come before the babies can fly. Those of us who have lived in the far north have seen baby loons frozen into the ice or snow because they did not meet these time demands. Even the methods of navigation which bring loons back to the same lake year after year involve considerable complexity.

Scientists are only beginning to understand why the loons migrate. One obvious reason is nesting sites. The loon is incredibly awkward on land, and in the north they can nest a few inches above quiet water with no tides to interfere. Their exodus from the ocean relieves pressure on fish populations in marine coastal areas, and controls fish populations in fresh water lakes. The loon is incredibly well-designed to fill a niche in the ecosystem that no other life form fills. The complexity of this design is so high that it stretches credibility to attribute it to chance and survival of the fittest. The mystery of the loon is one more testimony to the intelligence built into all we see in the world around us.

Source: *The Loon: Voice of the Wilderness*, by Joan Dunning, Yankee Books, 1985, ISBN: 0-89909-080-X



News and Notes

Magic and God. If you are like me, you are constantly amazed at what magicians can do. In *Scientific American* (December 2008, page 72) is a discussion of how the design of the human brain allows magic to take place. It is a pretty technical discussion, but the basic methods are explained well and most of our readers would find the article worth reading.

Salmon Navigation. In the same issue on page 122 is a discussion of how salmon are able to locate their birth stream. There is a great deal of interesting new information, but the author points out that science is struggling with the ability salmon have to return to the shoreline near their birth stream. It is difficult to read the incredible complexity of this system and believe that chance is the vehicle that designed and implemented it.

Teen Pregnancies in Great Britain. Those in the United States who oppose abstinence programs in combating teenage pregnancy will frequently point to European countries that have extensive birth control education programs in the public schools as models that the U.S. should follow. The newest data in Great Britain however shows that pregnancies are rising and sexually transmitted diseases are also climbing rapidly. Over 1,000 girls younger than 14 had abortions in Great Britain last year and the government plans to vaccinate over 300,000 girls between 17 and 18 against the human papilloma virus. Just providing information about birth control is not proving to be a valid method for reducing the consequences of promiscuity. Along the same line United Nations data from Zimbabwe shows that abstinence education is working with the HIV infection rate dropping from 26 percent in 2002 to 18 percent in 2006. Deaths there have declined by 200,000 and new infections in 2007 dropped by 300,000. The media would have us believe that abstinence education does not work, but the numbers contradict that belief. Sources: *The Daily Telegraph*, June 2008; www.everychildmatters.gov.uk; and LifeNews.com.

Amish Population Doubles in 16 Years. In spite of the fact that they are not evangelistic, the Amish population in the United States grew from 123,000 in 1992 to 227,000 in October, 2008 according to the Associated Press. Four out of five children stay within the church and with high birth rates the Amish population is growing. The idea that modern luxury will eventually eliminate religions that emphasize hard work and moral values is not borne out by the evidence.

Atheists Run Ads on Buses. We have commented in previous issues of this journal that atheist advertising and promotion of their views had increased dramatically. In December bus ads began to appear in London and in Washington, DC. One of them says “There’s probably no God. Now stop worrying and enjoy your life.” In Washington one ad says “Why believe in a God? Just be good for goodness sake.” Richard Dawkins donated \$9,000 to get the program started in London, but \$113,000 in donations have come in to extend the ad campaign. The American Humanist Association has spent \$40,000 in the Washington ads. Some believers in God in London have donated to the ads saying that they are so bad that “they will probably attract people to religion.” Our concern is that increasingly atheism is favored by governments and opposing views are suppressed. Trying to get a Christian ad on a London bus several years ago when we were working in London was impossible. Source: Associated Press release—October 23, 2008 and November 11, 2008.

Dating Problems. The age of the earth is not a biblical issue, but many times dating methods are inadequately presented with their assumptions buried and not made clear to the average reader. For many years we have pointed out that some experiments show half-lives to change with high electrical voltages being applied to the sample. Now evidence is becoming available (*Science News*, November 22, 2008, page 21) which shows that neutrino bombardment from solar flares can also alter half-lives. Dating methods of all kinds make assumptions, and nothing is gained by failing to show what those assumptions are. In the same issue (page 5) is an article about doubts concerning the dates of the oldest forms of life seen in the fossil record.

Sufi Muslims. We have made reference to the Sufi branch of the Islamic faith in our materials from time to time. The Sufis are a branch of Islam that interprets war statements by Mohammed as spiritual statements. They are peaceful and emphasize poetry and cooperation and many Muslims in the United States belong to this branch of Islam. In the *Smithsonian* magazine (December 2008) is a detailed article on the Sufi beliefs, and it is important reading for all Americans.

Oregon Will Pay for Suicide, But Not Chemotherapy. A man who has prostate cancer and does not have insurance applied to the state of Oregon Health Plan, to get financial help with the procedure. He received a letter saying the state would not help him with medication that would extend his life, but that the state would cover the cost of assisted suicide. The euthanasia issue is rapidly becoming a forced option by the state, and with a low premium on human life we can expect more emphasis on doctors ending lives than extending them. Source: LifeNews.com/bio2528.html.

King Solomon's Mines. Atheists continue to attempt to convince the media that the Bible has no factual or historical validity. New archeological discoveries make that position hard to maintain. One of the most significant recent finds is a settlement in southern Jordan that shows clearly a copper producing society existed there 3,000 years ago. The site is called Khirbat en-Nahas which means "ruins of copper" in Arabic. This is an area the Bible refers to as Edom, whose people opposed Moses during the Exodus. There will be debate about the site, but it certainly has re-opened the question of how accurate the Bible's history is. Source: *Science News*. November 22, 3008, page 10.

Ocean Monster—Again. Over the years there have been repeated reports about monsters being seen by fishing ships or sailors on remote beaches. These sightings are used to promote the idea that dinosaurs are still alive on the earth today or to support a variety of dragon stories or to support the local story of a beast that is claimed to live in the area called Quqrat. We now have a picture that was taken in July of a huge pink carcass that is about six feet long, has hair on its under side, has a three-foot tail ending in a diamond shape. Unfortunately no one got flesh samples, but oceanographers suggest it is a mangled carcass of a beluga whale. Source: *Alaska Magazine*, December/January 2008–9, page 11.

Dinosaur Soft Tissue Question. Three years ago there was a lot of hype about a *T. rex* sample that contained collagen. Studies now suggest that what scientists are seeing is not dinosaur material but a modern day film of bacterial slime. There have been a lot of articles in all kinds of journals about the collagen claims, and until the question of contamination is resolved debate will continue. Be careful about claims made about this find. Source: *Science News*, August 30, 2008, page 12.

Research On Animals Debate Grows. If you do not view man as a special creation of God, created in the image of God, then a hu-

man is no more valuable than any other animal. Many animal rights groups base their belief that animals should not be used in any way by man on the assumption that a human is just an animal like every other animal and nothing more. Switzerland's highest court has been asked to decide whether research on monkeys can be carried out. Researchers at the Swiss Institute of Neuroinformatics in Zurich wish to insert electrodes to research strokes, Parkinson's, and other human diseases. They have been denied permission at the moment to do this research on the basis that the monkey's rights will be violated if they do. We will keep you posted on this one. Source: *Scientific American*, September 2008, page 20.

Book of the Month—News & Notes. We will not review this book because it is not primarily an apologetic work, but we do wish to mention it to readers who have an interest in the article we ran in the November/December 2008 issue titled “Destructive Dispensationalism.” We have come across a book by Steve Wohlberg titled *End Time Delusions* which goes into the subject matter of that article in greater detail and does a good job with it. For those interested, it is published by Destiny Image Publishers, Inc., PO Box 310, Shippensburg, PA 17257-0310. The ISBN number is 0-7684-2960-9.

Announcing: *Does God Exist? 2009* Summer Seminar & Field Programs

WEEK-LONG RETREAT

August 10–14, 2009 at Michiana Christian Service Camp, Niles, Michigan. All day sessions on faith and science with John Clayton. Lessons, classes, lab exercises, devotionals. Designed for non-science people and anyone who wants to learn about science and faith. Open to all ages and there will be recreational facilities for all ages. For more information e-mail at jncdge@aol.com, call 269-687-9426, or write John Clayton, 1555 Echo Valley Dr., Niles, MI 49120.



FIELD TRIPS

For many years **Does God Exist?** has offered summer programs in the field designed to help Christians train to be more effective in using apologetics to build faith and answer questions. This year we are offering three exciting trips:



Zion Canyon View



Beautiful Bryce Canyon



Grand Canyon Hiking

There is no charge for the programs, only the cost charged by the companies that manage the boats and buses involved. John Clayton is your host and teacher for these trips, assisted by Nathan and Erin Collins, and Alan Doty. Mark Story and QueensLander Tours (www.QLTours.com) is the agency with whom we have a relationship. Prices include transportation from departure point and back, motels, park fees, and some meals.

CANYONLANDS

is an all-ages trip to Grand Canyon, Bryce, Zion, Painted Desert, and Petrified Forest national parks, Meteor Crater, Lowell Observatory and more on September 13–18. Cost will be \$779 for double occupancy from Flagstaff. Reservations need to be made A.S.A.P. For more information contact us or Mark Story, Mark@QLTours.com or phone 1-877-865-6711.

YOUTH TREK

is a college-preparation in-field trip to Colorado and Canyonlands region with Grand Canyon hiking on July 13–18. The cost will be \$759 for double occupancy from Denver.

GALAPAGOS ISLANDS

are a group of islands off the coast of Ecuador with interesting geological features and plant and animal life. Our trip will be on June 8–19. The cost will be \$3,879 from Quito, Ecuador. This does not include airfare to Quito. QueensLander Tours will arrange this—call 1-877-865-6711 or go to www.QLTours.com



Sunken Volcanic Crater, Galapagos Islands

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 and video tapes, CDs and audio tapes, 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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