

LSI Journal

The Lutheran Science Institute

January-February, 2010



The New Heavens And The New Earth

~ **A Review of Bill Maher's *Religulous*
- Part 2**

~ **The Death of Oral Roberts**

~ **Meditating on God's Word**

LUTHERAN SCIENCE INSTITUTE, INC.

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The mission of the Lutheran Science Institute is to learn, share, and promote the glory of God as revealed in His holy Word and demonstrated in His created world, beginning with the pastors, teachers, and laity of the WELS (Wis. Ev. Lutheran Synod) and the ELS (Ev. Lutheran Synod).

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The Annual Meeting of the Institute is held the Saturday after Thanksgiving. At least three other meetings are held during the year at locations selected by the president. Meetings are open to the public and announced in the LSI JOURNAL and/or on our web site.

MEETING SCHEDULE*

- ◆ 4th Saturday in January, 1:00 p.m.
- ◆ 2nd Saturday in June, 1:00 p.m.
- ◆ Last Saturday in October, 1:00 p.m.
- ◆ Saturday after Thanksgiving in November, 1:00 p.m.

*Dates, times, and locations subject to change. Additional meetings may be scheduled. Check with the president, secretary, or editor or see our Web site for verification.

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Can Evolutionists Be Neutral?

Everyone, including every creationist and evolutionist, interprets facts based upon their own prior beliefs (including their worldview). Everyone has a worldview, and the worldview of an evolutionist is very different from the worldview of a creationist.

Weaverbirds and Weaver ants

These animals had to have been designed by God and could not be the result of chance mutations.



The New Heavens And The New Earth

By Warren Krug

This writer over the past four decades has read quite a number of creationist books. Maybe it is just a coincidence or maybe there has been a subtle shift, but I seem to have noticed a definite change in how the writers, most of whom seem to come out of the Reformed tradition, refer to the last times. Years ago it was not uncommon to read direct references to millennialism, the belief that Jesus Christ will return to earth to set up an earthly kingdom that will last 1,000

years prior to the end of the world. Lately though, such direct references seem to have become much less common. Instead many writers in referring to the last times now seem to be using the phrase “the new heaven(s) and the new earth.” As Lutherans, we do not accept the notion of any earthly reign of Christ, but we can’t argue with the use of that phrase, for it comes directly from the Scriptures (Isaiah 65:17; Isaiah 66:22; 2 Peter 3:13; Reve-

The author is the editor of the LSI Journal.

lation 21:1). However, we may find we disagree with how “new heaven(s) and new earth” is being interpreted.

What About Millennialism?

Millennialism takes its name from the Latin word *millennium*, which means “thousand years.” The support for this doctrine lies mainly in Revelations 20 in which Jesus is described as coming to seize and imprison the dragon (Satan) for a thousand



years. There are postmillennialists who believe Jesus will come back to earth after a thousand years of peace during which the church will prosper, but also there are premillennialists who think the Lord will come back before the thousand years to set up an earthly kingdom that will last a millennium. Lutherans and some other Christians are called amillennialists because we believe this description of the thousand years in Revelations should not be interpreted literally and that we are already living in a figurative “thousand years”

which will end when Jesus comes back to judge the world and take all believers to heaven. Our Augsburg Confession states: “They condemn also others, who are now spreading certain Jewish opinions, that before the resurrection of the dead the godly shall take possession of the kingdom of the world, the ungodly being everywhere suppressed” (Art. XVII, 5) ¹

There are at least two reasons to support amillennialism. First, Revelations is clearly written in figurative language; John is having visions (Rev. 9:17). Note the figurative language in the first two verses of Revelations 20: Jesus is called an angel holding a key; hell is described as an Abyss with a lock; and Satan is called a dragon. Secondly, other clear passages in the Bible clearly contradict any idea of a thousand-year warning prior to the Last Day. Paul in 1 Thessalonians 5:1-3 says the Last Day will come suddenly, like “a thief in the night.” Matthew 24 also describes the sudden coming of the Lord to judge the world, to accept believers, and to reject the unbelievers. No mention of coming to set up an earthly kingdom. Moreover, we are told to focus our spiritual eyes on heaven

1. Koehler, Edward W. A., *A Summary of Christian Doctrine*, self-published, 1939.

(Philippians 3:4), not on some earthly kingdom.

Do commentators who speak of “the new heaven(s) and the new earth” really mean the millennium?

It is, of course, not possible to read what is in the hearts and minds of these creationist authors if they don't further describe their interpretation of that phrase. Dr. Henry Morris, a Baptist who is often called the “father of the modern creationist movement” appears to view “new heaven(s) and a new earth” as a reference to eternity, and not to an earthly, 1,000-year kingdom ruled by Christ. In a short article about that phrase, he makes no reference to millennialism, and he says concerning the new age, “Then we shall have ‘a new name written’ by Christ Himself, sing ‘a new song’ with new voices, and live in that ‘holy city, New Jerusalem’ (Revelation 2:17; 5:9; 21:2). We shall have new bodies, new homes, new ministries, new lives, *forever*.”²

However, Matthew Henry, a Presbyterian minister and author of a popular commentary who lived from 1662 to 1714, wrote the following (according to Wikipedia): In the grace and comfort believers have in and from Christ, we are to look for

this new heaven and new earth. The former confusions, sins and miseries of the human race, shall be no more remembered or renewed. The approaching **happy state of the church** is described under a variety of images. He shall be thought to die in his youth, and for his sins, who only lives to the age of a hundred years. The event alone can determine what is meant; but it is plain that **Christianity, if universal, would so do away violence and evil, as greatly to lengthen life.** In those happy days, all God's people shall enjoy the fruit of their labours. Nor will children then be the trouble of their parents, or suffer trouble themselves. The evil dispositions of sinners shall be completely moritified; all shall live in harmony. Thus the **church on earth shall be full of happiness, like heaven.**³



2. Morris, Henry Ph.D., “A New World,” *Days of Praise*, 1997 <<http://www.icr.org/article/20837/>>

3. “Isaiah 65”, Bible Study Tools <<http://www.biblestudytools.com/commentaries/matthew-henry-concise/isaiah/65.html>>

How do confessional Lutheran commentators interpret “the new heaven(s) and the new earth”?

Here is a look at what several Lutheran commentators have to say about the four passages that mention the “new heaven(s) and new earth”. Paul E. Kretzmann uses the King James Version and the People’s Bible Series authors use the New International Version.

1. Isaiah 65:17. “Behold, I will create *new heavens and a new earth*. The former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind.”

John A. Braun, *Isaiah 40-66 (People’s Bible Series)*, Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 2001: We focus our attention first on the new heaven and new earth. The first three verses of this section of the prophecy anticipate the new heaven and earth, which the apostle John saw in Revelation, chapter 21. The faithful do not remember their former troubles and difficulties. They will “be glad and rejoice forever.” So God pictures eternal life and bliss with him in heaven.

Paul E. Kretzmann, *Popular Commentary of the Bible*, St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1924: **For behold, I cre-**

ate new heavens, the plural being applied to the abode of the blessed in many passages of the Bible, **and a new earth**, cp. Rev. 21; **and the former**, that which was infested with sin and its curse, **shall not be remembered or come into mind**, the very remembrance of the sorrows of this present world being erased by the overwhelming mercies of God.

2. Isaiah 66:22. “*As the new heavens and the new earth that I make will endure before me,*” declares the LORD, “so will your name and descendants endure.” “

Braun: The church on earth is the courtyard connected to the glorious eternal mansion of heaven. In that sense, the church on earth anticipates the new heavens and the new earth God will create. It will endure before God in time until the Lord calls an end to time and makes the church on earth the church triumphant and eternal.

Kretzmann: For as the new heavens and the new earth which I will make, the new creation of which He spoke, chapt. 65,17, **shall remain before Me, saith the Lord, so shall your seed and your name remain**, namely, that of the believers, the spiritual children of Israel, gathered from Jews and Gentiles

alike.

3. 2 Peter 3:11-13. “Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat. But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to *a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness.*”



Mark A. Jeske, James, Peter, John, Jude, (People's Bible Series), 2002: God is coming not just to take things away from us. After the dismantling of the universe is complete, he will utter his creative word once again and a new heaven and earth will spring into being. This will not be an entirely other sort of existence, strange and alien, but our own universe, dismantled and rebuilt, transformed and renewed. The new world will have some great ad-

vantages over the old: heaven and earth will be together, not separate, as John saw and heard in Revelation 21:3.

Kretzmann: But new heavens and a new earth we expect according to His promises, in which righteousness will have its abode. After this old earth has passed away according to the apostle's description, there will be new heavens and a new earth. That is not a vain hope, a mere day-dream on the part of the Christians, but our faith is based upon God's promises. Is. 65:17; 66,22. Since our expectation is founded on the Word of God, therefore we shall not be ashamed. This old earth is filled with sin and unrighteousness, the very creatures, the dumb animals groaning with the pain of the curse of sin. Rom. 8,22. But after the last day there will be no more sin; in the new earth there will live only righteousness and joy and peace.”

4. Revelations 21:1. “Then I saw a *new heaven and a new earth*, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea.”

Kretzmann: The eyes of the believers are here turned to the coming, complete salvation, Here we may look and lift up our eyes,

for our salvation is near: And I saw the new heaven and the new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and the sea is no more. John sees the fulfillment of all the prophecies relating to the glory at the end, Is. 65, 17; 66, 22; 2 Pet. 3, 12, 13. The believers inherit the Kingdom which was prepared for them since the beginning of the world, Matt. 25, 34. The new heaven and the new earth they are called, because they are altogether different from this present world, steeped in sin as it is. Everything that has any connection with sin will be removed altogether. Therefore the sea also, from which the dragon came forth, will be no more.

Wayne Mueller, *Revelation (People's Bible Series)*, 1996: John saw "a new heaven and a new earth" (verse 1). Throughout this closing scene, literal and figurative descriptions of paradise stand side by side. It is not always easy to tell whether John is providing us a painting or a snapshot of heaven. This is also true of the opening statement about a new earth and sky. Will our earth and sky be destroyed and entirely new ones be created? Will our present world, as we know it, be destroyed and a renewed earth be our eternal home? It is also possible that John's

words are highly figurative. A new heaven and earth may be his picture for an entirely new place that we call heaven...The *new heaven and earth* are not meant to answer our curiosity about the afterlife. But they do make two important points. God will destroy the earth we know now, so we should not set our hope on it. Gone with the old world was the sea (verse 1). The sea was where the first beast came from (chapter 13). Along with the destruction of the old world came the end of antichristian threats. God will provide a new place that is safe and unshakable. Rather than demanding that our curiosity be satisfied, our response should be reverent worship (see 2 Peter 3:11,12,14).

Perhaps we should be cautious as was Wayne Mueller in trying to figure out exactly what is meant by "the new heaven and the new earth." It is safe to assume that when we get to heaven we will understand such things. We do know it can't refer to any temporary earthly kingdom of Christ. And we can gather enough information from the rest of God's Word to realize that heaven, despite not being sure of its exact nature, will be an eternal place of supreme peace and joy. That should be enough for us for now. ☪☪

A Review of Bill Maher's 'Religulous'

Part 2

By Jeff Stueber



Bill Maher

Later in the movie Maher suggests that Christianity is, in fact, a half-baked reproduction of numerous pre-Christian messianic movements from founders Mithra and Krishna, for instance. However, J.P. Holding has challenged both propositions.⁶ On the Mithra hypothesis, Holding summarizes by saying “In not one instance has a convincing case been made that Christianity borrowed anything from Mithraism. The evidence is either too late, not in line with the con-

clusions of modern Mithraic scholars, or just plain not there.”

Maher cannot be blamed for his lack of a grasp on the issues. Often throughout the movie the people he interviews come up far short of giving an adequate response. Maher speaks to Steve Burg, a former Jew now a Christian, who relates the evidence he has for his faith. According to Burg, he has in the past asked God for things in the name of Jesus and God proved his existence at those times. In one example, he was at a party for Jews for Jesus and he asked a person at that party for a drink of water and was given a cup and told to stick his hand out a window. Mysteriously it rained and Burg takes this to be an example of a mira-

The author is an LSI Board of Directors member and a free-lance writer living in Watertown, Wisconsin.

cle. Maher, quick to the punch, said he doesn't pray for rain but if he did and it rained, he wouldn't think it did so because he prayed for it but because it sometimes rains. If this is the best evidence a Christian can muster, it is no surprise Maher has difficulty accepting any Christian beliefs.

Mark Pryor, senator from Arkansas and Evangelical Christian, is asked why being a man of faith is a good thing. He states that faith has a way of softening people and, if you look at the teachings of Jesus, you'll see that He is a very forgiving individual. This nonsensical answer doesn't faze Maher who retorts that Jesus also said if anyone does not abide in him he is like a branch that withers and is cast into the fire and burned. Pryor continues on his bungling ways misusing the world "literacy" in a sentence and doesn't finish up the interview strongly by jokingly suggesting senators don't have to pass an IQ test to be a senator (which paints him badly as he obviously realizes when changing his facial expression after saying this). I would have challenged Maher by noting that faith is not good or bad; what is important is the object of the faith. We have to live with some kind of faith, but we must seek good reasons for the faith we have – whether in God, our spouse, or

**At the end of the
movie Maher leaves
no question where he
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to live."**

even our leaders.

Even the person playing Jesus [I'll call him "Jesus" in this paragraph for brevity] at the Holy Land Experience in Orlando, Florida, gets into the act. Maher asks him why God doesn't just obliterate the Devil and Jesus correctly says God is waiting for the end times, but then stumbles when Maher presses him on this. God's ways are so above ours, Jesus tells us, an explanation he offers when Maher brings up the Holocaust. "God has a plan for that," Jesus tell us, an explanation that doesn't satisfy Maher or me for that matter. What Jesus should have said is that it is important for mankind to have free choice to choose good or evil and one cannot have a choice unless there are at least two things to choose from – in this case good or evil. The destruction of evil will come at a time when there are no more souls to save and there is no reason to continue allowing the existence of evil and the Devil.

At the end of the movie

Maher leaves no question where he stands: “Religion must die for mankind to live. The hour is getting very late to be able to indulge in having key decisions made by religious people, by irrationalists. . . . Faith means making a virtue out of not thinking. It’s nothing to brag about, and those who preach faith and enable and elevate it are intellectual slaveholders.” That’s a powerful assessment of the situation and in this video Maher gives no reason to assume he has grasped the more intellectual side of religion to be worthy of making such a judgment. Earlier he criticizes John Westcott for claiming that the millions of people who are gay are not complete people as men or women – a “pretty big judgment for a Christian” in Maher’s words. However, Maher is guilty of making a big judgment of religion despite his lack of research which makes him either deliberately or unconsciously inconsistent.

Yet, returning to the beginning of the movie, Maher may have admitted his real motivation for not believing. His family quit his church when Maher was thirteen (because the couple practiced birth control which the church frowned upon) and he was relieved, not for any ideological reasons, but because he

was bored and he would have worshipped anything that would have allowed him to sexually sin more. When Maher asked his mother what “we” (he and her) believe, it is instructive that she could not give him an answer. So Maher apparently has found religion unsatisfactory because of personal sexual reasons and because of his family’s inability to instruct him or even defend their incoherent beliefs.

The people Maher engages certainly aren’t capable of defending their beliefs. In fact, one reviewer at *rottentomatoes.com* said “Maher’s theories will get up the nose of believers of almost every creed, but his strategy of mocking easy targets will shake few temples worldwide.” That’s precisely it. Neither is Maher capable of engaging more serious and scholarly material about his subject of study. Maher is a comedian by nature and his film has humorous possibilities, but he approaches his subject like researching alcohol consumption habits of adults by interviewing the town drunk or studying theology by reading Richard Dawkins. LSI

End note

6. <http://www.tektonics.org/copycat/mithra.html>; <http://www.tektonics.org/copycat/krishna02.html>

► LSI News

Next Meeting

God willing, the next meeting of the Board of Directors will take place on Saturday, January 23, at Trinity Ev. Lutheran Church, Union Grove, Wisconsin. The time is 1 p.m. Trinity is located 1/2 mile north of Union Grove on Highway 45.

Editorial Committee Appointed

An editorial committee has been appointed with the intent of improving the quality of the articles printed in the *LSI Journal*. The members of this committee are Pastor David Peters, chairman, Jeff Stueber, and Patrick Winkler. Their first meeting is scheduled for noon on Saturday, January 23, an hour before the next scheduled meeting of the Board of Directors.

Free and Reduced Memberships Announced

The Board of Directors has announced the following new memberships to begin immediately: **1. Electronic membership.** Individuals who are willing to receive their *Journals* and *Bulletins* via e-mail in .pdf format can save 50% on new memberships and renewals. For instance, one-year rates would be \$9 for voting members and \$12.50 for

associate members, foreign memberships, and groups. Electronic memberships mean you would not receive printed copies. **2. Free Church Membership.** Any church conducting a door offering for LSI may have a one-year free membership. This would include printed copies. **3. Free Electronic Memberships for Groups.** Any church or other organization which posts a prominently displayed link to the LSI Web site on its Web site may receive a free electronic membership if requested.

► E-Mail

Wrestling With a Question

Dear Editor,

I have been wrestling with this question for many years, so let me run it by you also. I have been blessed with a farm and wish to use it to glorify God's creation. I do have some ideas but have not moved on any of them other than with my grandchildren. I would like to know what comes to your mind with that question? If you have others that may have ideas on this question, you may share it with them.

Marlin

Ed. Please write or e-mail if you have any ideas to suggest to Marlin.



NUGGETS

What's the difference between monounsaturated fats, polyunsaturated fats, saturated fats, and trans fats?

Monounsaturated fats help lower the “bad” LDL cholesterol and resist oxidation (which promotes absorption of fats and cholesterol into artery walls). They are found mainly in olive oil, canola oil, peanut oils, most nuts, and avocados.



Polyunsaturated fats also lower LDL cholesterol.

They are found mainly in vegetable oils such as corn, sunflower, soy and cottonseed.

Saturated fats raise the amount of “bad” LDL cholesterol, increasing your risk of heart disease. They are found mainly in red meat, most whole-fat dairy products, egg yolks and in tropical oils.

Trans fats raise LDL cholesterol and lower the “good” HDL cholesterol, increasing the risk of heart disease. They are found mainly in stick margarine and shortening and products made from them such as cookies, pastry and other baked goods, candies, french fries, etc.

—*Mayo Clinic: Your Independence*

IN WHICH STATES ARE YOU MOST LIKELY TO HIT A DEER?



The ten states where the odds are greatest a driver will hit a deer (and the odds) are:

1. West Virginia (1 in 39)
2. Michigan (1 in 78)
3. Pennsylvania (1 in 94)
4. Iowa (1 in 104)
5. Montana (1 in 104)
6. Arkansas (1 in 106)
7. South Dakota (1 in 107)
8. Wisconsin (1 in 116)
9. North Dakota (1 in 136)
10. Virginia (1 in 137)

Source: *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* (9/29/09)

Rethinking the Aging Brain

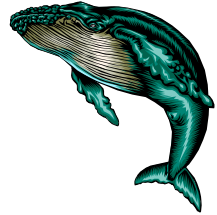
“It used to be thought that the aging brain was far less able to form new connections, and many people still believe that musical abilities can only be developed in early life. But the human brain is capable of learning very complex and creative new tasks, even later in life.”

—Author Olive Sacks, quoted in *Discover* (December, 2009)

A CASE OF MISTAKEN IDENTITY

From the “Letters to the Editor” page in the November, 2009 *Acts & Facts* published by the Institute for Creation Research:

“I saw your web address on the whaling boat featured in ‘the whale wars’ program on Animal Planet channel. Is this what your company is a part of, the slaughter of so many whales in the name of research? If so, Please Stop!” --L.R.



Editor’s Note: The Institute for Creation Research gets criticized for many things, but this is the first time we’ve been accused of slaughtering whales. If you visit our website at www.icr.org, you’ll see that our focus is on scientific research that supports the accuracy and authority of the Bible. You should direct your concerns to the Institute of *Cetacean* Research.

Time flies like an arrow.
Fruit flies like a banana
...attributed to Groucho Marx



⇒ “As a senior in high school, we were taught that the earth was 3 billion years old, yet there I was 50 years later and the earth had aged by 1.56 billion years! It would seem that geologic clocks and human clocks run at different speeds.”

Dr. John Doughty, *Persuaded by the Evidence*, page 173.



Wednesday, December 16, 2009

Oral Roberts Dead at 91

His life was one of great successes but also much controversy.



Photobucket.com

SUMMARY: Oral Roberts, a pioneer in televangelism who founded a multimillion-dollar ministry as well as Oral Roberts University, died on Tuesday at the age of 91. Hospitalized after a fall on Saturday, Roberts died in Newport Beach, California of complications from pneumonia. He had survived two heart attacks in the 1990s and a broken hip in 2006.

He broadcast his revivals on television, a new frontier for religion when he started in the 1950s. He was a forerunner of the “prosperity gospel” which has come to dominate television. According to this theology, those who give to God get things in return. Jack Hayford of the International Church of the Foursquare Gospel said, “If God had not, in His sovereign will, raised up the ministry of Oral Roberts, the entire charismatic movement might not have occurred.”

Roberts overcame tuberculosis at age 17 at a revival meeting where a healing evangelist was praying for the sick. He said he not only overcame that illness, but he was healed of his youthful stuttering. He also said he then heard God tell him to build a university. In 1947 he began an evangelistic ministry in Tulsa in which he prayed for the whole person -- the body, mind and spirit. That philosophy earned him the “faith healer” label, though he protested, “God heals — I don’t.”

Rocky times hit his ministry in the 1980s with controversy over his City of Faith medical center, a \$250 million investment that folded, and a widely ridiculed proclamation that God would “call me home” if he failed to meet a fundraising goal of \$8 million. A law school he founded also was closed. In 2007 his son, Richard Roberts, who succeeded him as ORU president faced allegations of spending university money on luxuries at a time the university was \$50 million in debt.

Richard Roberts then resigned, and a billionaire businessmen helped keep the school afloat.

The Rev. Billy Graham said he recently spoke to Oral Roberts by phone and that Roberts told him his “life’s journey” was ending. “Oral Roberts was a man of God, and a great friend in ministry. I loved him as a brother,” Graham said.

COMMENT: There are those people who say that one should never speak ill of the dead, but in the interest of Christian truth, it is important to mention some shortcomings in the ministry of Oral Roberts. He certainly can be credited with accomplishments such as being a pioneer in televangelism and the founding of a university. However...

The so-called “prosperity gospel” the way it is usually practiced was/is a scam. To encourage worshippers to send in money with the ill-founded promise that God would bless them with more money than they gave should be illegal besides being immoral. If the prosperity gospel is valid, those preachers who preach it should be able to have all their financial needs met directly from God by giving God their own contributions and not have to rely on other people.

Jesus was not a rich man Himself (“The Son of man has no place to lay his head.” Matthew 8:20), and he never promised to make everyone financially wealthy. It is enough to know that God takes care of us in His own way. (“The eyes of all look to you, and you give them their food at the proper time. You open your hand and satisfy the desires of every living thing.” Psalm 145:15-16)

The other point that needs to be addressed is the practice of a healing ministry. If Roberts’ ministry was so effective, why did he need to build his own hospital? Why did not all sick people begin flocking to his revivals and put hospitals and doctors out of business? Why did Roberts himself suffer two heart attacks and a broken hip?

Jesus, who had a legitimate healing ministry, still acknowledged the role that medical personnel play in our lives. (“On hearing this, Jesus said, ‘It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick.’ “ Matthew 9:12) When ill, let us sincerely pray to God with all our hearts, but remember that God can and does heal us through medical science, if it is His will.

Assuming Oral Roberts repented of his sins and trusted Jesus for forgiveness and salvation, he is at this moment in heaven with the Savior. Only in Paradise can he, and we, be truly wealthy and healthy. 🙏📖

Washington Suicides

Eleven people in Washington committed suicide during the first six months of the state's new assisted suicide law. Another five patients were given lethal medication but died before they could use it. The law went into effect in March and mirrors an Oregon law that voters approved in 1997.—*Clearly Caring (4th Quarter, 2009)*

Despondent Japanese

An alarming rise in the number of Japanese jumping to their deaths in front of moving trains is leading some railroad operators there to try a novel experiment. They are installing special blue LED lights about railway platforms in hopes the lights will have a soothing effect and reduce suicides. Some experts say the color blue does have a calming effect while others are skeptical. Suicide rates in Japan have risen amid economic woes and may surpass the record of 34,427 set in 2003.—*Milwaukee Journal Sentinel (10/5/09)*

Global Warming Doubts

Fewer Americans believe the world is warming or that manmade pollution is causing the climate to warm. In 2006 77% believed in the global warming theory, but now just 57% do. Only 36% of the people surveyed believe human activities are causing a temperature increase. The Pew Research Center conducted the survey of 1,500 adults. Many scientists say the polar ice caps are melting and the oceans are warming.—*Milwaukee Journal Sentinel (10/23/09)*

Coral Reefs Recovering

A tsunami five years ago killed thousands of people in Indonesia and destroyed the coral reefs. Now the reefs appear to be bouncing back with surprising speed. Secular scientists have argued it takes hundreds of thousands of years for coral reefs to develop. However, creationist scientist Ariel Roth has studied the reefs and found they can grow much faster than that and within the biblical timeframe of a few thousand years.—*Answers (Oct-Dec, 2009)*

Now Teacher Glut

A few years ago there was talk of a growing teacher shortage. Now many recent college graduates with educational degrees are finding it difficult to get a job because of a teacher glut. Due to the economy, many school systems have shed jobs and many older teachers who were contemplating retirement or a switch in occupations have elected not to quit.—*The (Racine) Journal Times (11/13/09)*



Start Exercising Anytime

It's never too late to start benefiting from an exercise program. According to a study published in *BMJ*, sedentary men in their 50s who begin actively exercising eventually caught up to those men who had already been exercising at least three hours a week prior to the study. It took the latecomers about 10 years to catch up, but it gained them more than 2 years in life expectancy.—*Mayo Clinic (Nov., 2009)*

10% of World's Babies Are Born Prematurely

Almost 10% of the babies in the world are born premature, and one million infants die each year, according to a March of Dimes report. The problem is concentrated in poor countries with nearly 13 preemies born each year in Africa and Asia. However, in terms of percentage of the total population, N. America ranks right behind Africa. Scientists aren't completely sure what triggers preterm births or how to prevent them.—*Milwaukee Journal Sentinel (10/6/09)*

Some Babies Can't Cry

One in a million newborns come into the world unable to cry, and Alabama's Devon Sutterfield is one of them. Doctors have determined that the one-week-old baby has paralyzed vocal cords but don't know the reason for it. Only able to make squeaking noises, Devon also has trouble breathing and swallowing. When he tries too hard to cry, he turns blue. While a tracheotomy might save his life, it may also prevent him from learning how to speak normally. Although his vocal cords may repair themselves within the first year of life, a successful outcome for Devin is anything but assured.—*ABC News (10/30/09)*

Women Eat Less When They Eat With Men

A study published in the journal *Appetite* says that women consume about 100 fewer calories when they eat with men than when they eat with other women. The caloric intake for men was not affected by the gender of their companions. — *Consumer Reports OnHealth (November, 2009)*

More Kids Abused

There has been a rise in the number of American children who are dying from abuse and neglect. Child-welfare advocates gathering for a rally in Washington said the latest federal figures show an estimated 1,760 U.S. children died from abuse and neglect in 2007, up 35% from 2001. In 2003 it was estimated the U.S. abuse rate was 3 times Canada's and 11 times Italy's. The recession isn't helping because many states have had to cut their budgets for child welfare programs.—*The Racine Journal Times* (10/21/09)

Binge Drinkers Alerted

One in ten binge drinkers got behind the wheel the last time they drank heavily. Half of those drivers left from a bar, restaurant or nightclub after downing five or more drinks. A new study was the first to try to determine the chances binge drinkers would drive. The findings suggest a need for greater efforts to prevent bars and restaurants from serving intoxicated patrons.—*(Racine) Journal Times* (9/1/08)



Don't Sit for Long Periods

Even if they exercise regularly, people who sit for a long time are at increased risk for premature death from cardiovascular disease and other causes. Recommendation: people with a desk job should get up as often as possible—*Bottom Line Personal* (October 15, 2009)

Baby Weighed 19.2 Lbs.

The heaviest baby ever to be born in Indonesia came into the world at 19.2 pounds, easily surpassing the previous Indonesian record of 14.7 pounds. Akbar Risuddin was born to a diabetic mother in a 40-minute Caesarean delivery. His two brothers weighed only 11.6 and 9.9 pounds when born. A doctor said Akbar's excessive weight was a result of his mother taking excessive glucose during pregnancy.—*Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* (9/26/09)

Kenya's Oldest Pupil

Kenya's oldest pupil has died. His name was Kimani Nganga Maruge and he was 90 years old. At age 84 he held the Guinness World Record for being the oldest person to start primary school. Political violence caused him to move to an old people's home, but he continued his studies and had two years left to finish his primary education. Maruge, who had cancer, said he wanted to learn to read the Bible. —*news.bbc.co.uk* (8/14/09)

More Good News for Adult Stem Cells

Ordinary human fat contains stem cells that can be quickly turned into pluripotent stem cells (iPS). The iPS cells are similar to embryonic stem cells but are taken from adults and do not require the destruction of human embryos, a fact that makes them more acceptable from an ethical standpoint. Stanford U. researchers discovered the cells during liposuction and said they can develop into other cells more quickly than cells found in the skin.—*Clearly Caring* (4th Quarter, 2009)

An Internet Birthday

Did the Internet celebrate its 40th birthday on October 29? Forty years ago on Oct. 29, 1969 a computer at UCLA sent a message to one at Stanford, the first time a complete message was sent computer to computer. Some people though trace the Inter-



net's birthday back to Sept 2, 1969 when two characters ("lo") were successfully transmitted before the computer crashed. Leonard Kleinrock, who led the research, prefers the Oct. 29 date.—*ABC News* (10/29/09)

A Space Elevator?

When science fiction writer Arthur C. Clarke wrote about a space elevator in his novel *The Fountains of Paradise* it was fantasy. Now serious research is taking place around the world to see if a space elevator can become fact. A space elevator would help carry people and supplies into space cheaper and more easily than rocket launches. NASA has offered \$2 million to anyone who can build a prototype of an elevator able to crawl up a kilometer-high tether carrying a heavy payload. Inventing a strong enough cable though is still a big problem.—*CNN* (11/5/09)

More News Briefs Online

How many passengers can the largest cruise ship hold? Who is happier—the young or the elderly? What huge prehistoric animal was found in the UK? Find these and still more News Briefs online at www.lutheranscience.org

Lizards

“A lizard can be caught with the hand, yet it is found in kings’ palaces.” Proverbs 30:28 (NIV)

Lizards may not seem like very smart creatures to us. Often we can catch them with our hands, and they don’t make much of an effort to get away. Yet, they are honored enough to have ended up as guests of kings.

What are lizards?

Lizards belong to a class of animals called reptiles, which also includes turtles, alligators, snakes and some other animals. Most reptiles are covered with scales, lay eggs, and are cold-blooded.

What are some features of lizards? They usually have four legs although some lizards are legless. Their skin is dry and scaly

and most kinds of lizards from time to time shed their skin in patches. Lizards have teeth both on the roof of the mouth and on the lower jaw. They range in size from less than an inch to 10 feet in length (Komodo dragon).



Komodo Dragons

What are some unusual features of many lizards?

Many lizards can shed their tails to confuse predators and then grow new ones. Also lizards commonly have the ability to change the color of their skin. The chameleon can change from brown to green but other

lizards can change their color from dark to light.

Are some lizard species dangerous to humans?

Most aren't, but the Komodo dragon and some other large species have been known to attack humans. Also, the Gila monster and beaded lizard are poisonous although their poison is usually not deadly. But they do have powerful jaws and can deliver painful bites.



Chameleon

What are some other common species of lizards?

There are over 3,000 known lizard species. Some other well-known lizards are geckos, iguanas, and thorny devils.

Where do lizards live

and what do they eat?

Lizards are found all over the world except on the continent of Antarctica. Depending on the species, they may be found eating fish, tadpoles, snails, seaweed, insects, etc.

Sources: Grolier Encyclopedia and Wikipedia

Like lizards, we are humble, sinful creatures that don't deserve God's love or attention. But because of what Jesus did for us on the cross, God is now inviting us to live in his kingdom. This is truly good news.

Activity: See if you can unscramble the letters to make important words from our story.

TEELIPR _____

NORDAG _____

NIGK _____

CEGOK _____

AAUING _____

ROLOC _____

SLACES _____

► My View



If You're Going to Meditate, Why Not Use God's Word?



editation can cut the risk of heart attacks, stroke, and death by almost 50% in patients with existing coronary heart disease. Relaxation and mental focusing can be as effective as powerful new drugs.

This is the opinion of preventive medicine specialist Robert Schneider and endocrinologist Theodore Kotchen who ran a test on 201 patients. The patients were all African-Americans with narrowed coronary arteries.

Their experiment made use of transcendental meditation (TM), which is a widely used meditation technique invented by Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, an Indian guru.

The technique requires the practitioner to focus on repetitions of a single sound or mantra, such as a phrase from Hindu scripture. It has been shown to decrease blood pressure, reduce stress, and improve mental health, but its effect on overall health or with other ethnic groups is not clear.

In the trial a control group

was given standard treatment involving drugs and also an educational course in cardiovascular health. A second group was told to practice TM for 15 to 20 minutes a day. After 5 to 9 years, the TM group was found to have had 47% fewer heart attacks, strokes, and deaths, while statin drugs, which reduce cholesterol levels, tend to lower life-threatening events by only 25-30%.

The reason meditation seems to work is not clear to scientists, but Herbert Benson, a cardiologist says other stress-reducing techniques, "even prayer," may be just as powerful.

For Bible-based Christians, meditations make perfect sense, but the type of meditation is very important. Why would we want to fool around with a practice that comes from a non-Christian religion when we have the Word of God on which we can and should meditate?

"Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful." Joshua 1:8 (NIV)

Also we should not ignore prayer. "This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us." 1 John 5:14 (NIV) 📖

—Warren Krug, editor

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