

LSI Journal

The Lutheran Science Institute

January-March, 2013



What Science Tells Us About God And Why It Matters

- The Place of Reason in Defending the Christian Faith—Part 3
- Atheists and the Design Argument

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*

- ◆ 2nd Saturday in January, 1:00 p.m.
- ◆ 2nd Saturday after Easter, 1:00 p.m.
- ◆ 2nd Saturday in June, 1:00 p.m.
- ◆ 2nd Saturday in October, 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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What Science Tells Us About God And Why It Matters

By Dr. Bruce Holman



Those of us who have had the blessings of the clear Word of God for many years may well ask: “What can science tell us about God, and our relationship to him that the Bible does not?” And I wouldn’t object too strongly to someone who might at first reply: “Nothing.” After all, the Bible contains everything we need to know for faith and life. It contains specifically what God wants us to know. It is the very breath of God. Yet science can sharpen our appreciation of God’s word and be a particularly valuable apologetic tool for evangelism.

Someone might well say that a musical score contains everything you need to know about a symphony. Ideally, it should contain everything the composer wants you to know in order to play the composi-

tion, and a skilled musician should be able to understand it sufficiently. Some musicians can even hear the individual parts in the ear of their mind as they read the score. Still all that information may not be immediately obvious to someone less skilled. Even for the virtuoso, it is hard to discern how the various parts fit together to yield the final effect before the piece is actually played. Lastly there is often something that can be gleaned from an understanding of the historical and personal situation of the composer, and even the audience, that can inform

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an individual performance of the piece.

We get most of what God wants us to know by reading, but more insight can be gleaned by actually applying it. Genesis and John's Gospel says that God created the heavens and the earth by his word, but the devil asks: "Should you take that literally or figuratively?" We are told, and can observe that the Bible seems to be speaking as a matter of fact. The observations of science tell us that speech is made by our vocal apparatus, propagated by air molecules, and interpreted by our ear and nervous system. Does God have a mouth, and the elements of the universe an ear? The catechism tells us that God's word has authority by its very nature. But it can seem that that authority is disregarded without apparent consequences. These questions should force us back to God's word more humbly. The memory of these unanswered questions can cause us to be fascinated that God spoke to Elijah in a "still small voice" (1 Kings 19:13, KJV), and perhaps to Eliphaz the Temanite

"secretly" (Job 4:12), and that Jesus performed several miracles without apparently uttering an audible command. Over time it can be seen that the Gospel changes people's hearts, and those who disregard God's word suffer consequences indeed. All these things heightened our appreciation for the fact that "God's word is living and active... [and] penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit" (Heb 4:12). But for me, nothing demonstrates the power of his word like the creative acts of the six days realizing the vastness of the universe, and the instantaneous response produced in every photon and subatomic particle. Nothing humbles me like realizing that of all the matter, energy, and life forms in the universe, the only ones that hesitate to respond to his word is man, yet he suffered, and died to save only this disobedient race.

In Jesus' parable of the sower and the seed (Matt 13, Mark 4, Luke 8), the seed that fell on the path was eaten by the birds. The seed is God's word, the birds are the devil, and the ground is the hearts of those who hear the word of

God. Many hearts are hardened today by the tramping of daily life apart from the Bible. Many people are not willing to be patient with their questions, but use them as an excuse for rejecting the Bible. We hear the opinion that God must have let the universe go on all by itself, if he did create it, and that he couldn't possibly take note of an individual, if he exists at all. Many look at science as a second opinion to scripture, and rightly believe that scripture should be consistent with what is observed in the world. They doubt scripture because they have been misled to believe that science disagrees with the Bible about how everything came to be.

The truth is that God is acting and has acted exactly in accord with the Bible. When we make observations in daily life or in the study of history or science, we can interpret what we see in a way that misrepresents the facts. Our natural sinful nature wants to ignore God and cannot see his hand (or word) at work. But the Holy Spirit working through God's Word can train our eyes to see what our sinful

nature would ignore. The evidence of God's work is objectively there in science, history,¹ and life. It is hard for the sinful flesh to make excuses when that evidence is clearly pointed out to it. Jesus called those who hear his word and put it onto practice his mother and brothers. Too often WELS evangelists respond with silence to scientific arguments made so loudly and frequently by representatives of the devil, and by our silence we give the impression they are right. The ground of people's heart remains hard, and the birds will be back.

LSI is committed to defending the truth that scripture is not inconsistent with the observations of science and that the Bible is true when it speaks about creation, the flood, and all other matters. We call out the liars who say God's word is a fable. Help us with prayers and support - because the time left for the gospel to take root is short! LSI

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1. See for example: Wright, N. T., *The Resurrection of the Son of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003)

The Place of Reason in Defending the Christian Faith

—with ministry ideas
regarding creation/evolution

By Mark Bergemann


(Part 3 of 4)

The *LSI Journal* is printing this article in four parts. This print version has also been condensed by nearly half, primarily through removal of many supporting quotations. The complete uncondensed article (including all 4 parts and an appendix) is available in the on-line LSI Journal at **www.LutheranScience.org**. The four parts are:

- 1 – Introduction; What the Bible Teaches about Reason.
- 2 – Scriptural Examples of Arguments from Reason.
- 3 – Skeptics Exposed to the Gospel.
- 4 – Ministry Considerations Regarding Creation.

Mark Bergemann, a retired electrical engineer, serves on the LSI Board of Directors. He is an evangelism leader at Good Shepherd's in West Allis, WI. Mark holds a B.S. from UW-Milwaukee.

Part 3 – Skeptics Exposed to the Gospel

ometimes as witnesses, we can make use of a “point of contact” to lead into a law and Gospel message. In the previous section, “Part 2 – Scriptural Examples of Arguments from Reason”, we saw how Paul did this in Lystra (Acts 14) and at the Areopagus (Acts 17).

Our sinful human nature does not want us to listen to the Gospel. Unbelievers are often like King Felix, who cut short Paul's witness, “That's enough for now! You may leave. When I find it convenient, I will send for

Some unbelievers see desirable changes in their friend or spouse, after that friend or spouse becomes a Christian. Some of these unbelievers start reading the Bible, possibly for the first time. From this exposure to the Word, some come to faith.

you.” (Acts 24:25)

God uses all sorts of circumstances in getting unbelievers to listen to the Good News about Jesus. Our “point of contact” in witnessing is just one example. Following are other examples of how God brings unbelievers to listen to the Gospel message. These examples are of atheists, agnostics, and other non-Christians who were skeptical about the Christian faith, but for various reasons were exposed to the Gospel message. Some started reading Scripture for the very purpose of proving Christianity false.

Changes in a Friend or Spouse

Some unbelievers see desirable changes in their friend or

spouse, after that friend or spouse becomes a Christian. Some of these unbelievers start reading the Bible, possibly for the first time. From this exposure to the Word, some come to faith. Yale Law School grad and award-winning journalist Lee Strobel became a Christian under such circumstances. He writes:

For much of my life I was a skeptic. In fact, I considered myself an atheist. Leslie stunned me in the autumn of 1979 by announcing that she had become a Christian. ... I was pleasantly surprised – even fascinated – by the fundamental changes in her character, her integrity, and her personal confidence. ...I launched an all-out investigation into the facts surrounding the case for Christianity. ...I picked apart the Bible verse by verse.¹

Attempts to Prove the Bible Wrong

Some critics investigate the Bible to prove it wrong, are exposed to the gospel message, and become Christians. Josh McDowell was challenged to examine the Bible’s claims about Jesus. McDowell writes: “I thought most Christians were walking

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1. Lee Strobel, *The Case For Christ – A Journalist’s Personal Investigation of the Evidence for Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998), 13-14.

idiots. ... Finally I accepted their challenge, but I did it out of pride, to refute them. ... The background of my first two books was my setting out to refute Christianity. When I couldn't, I ended up becoming a Christian."²

Atheistic Evolutionist ...to Theist ...to Christian³

Some atheists and agnostics come to the conclusion that evolution is impossible without a creator. They became theists, believing that some unknown god is our creator. Some of these theists then look for the creator, sometimes studying Judaism, Christianity, Islam, and other faiths. They read a Bible or listen to a Christian talk about Jesus our Redeemer, and some become Christians. Dr. Jerry Bergman writes:

Many critics of the creation worldview conclude that creationists accept this worldview because they accepted Christianity first (and in many cases this is correct). Many people, though, accepted Christianity because they rejected evolutionism and accepted creationism first. Only then were they able to accept Christianity (and many of those who have rejected Darwinism have not yet accepted Christianity). Rejection of evolutionism may be the first step, and then accepting a creation worldview is the second step. Then Christianity

becomes a third step.^{4 5}

Dr. Richard Lumsden was a science professor who discarded his long held evolutionary

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2. Josh McDowell, volume 1 of *Evidence That Demands A Verdict – Historical Evidences For The Christian Faith*, revised ed. (San Bernardino: Here's Life Publishers, 1988), 364-365.
 3. This section quotes several Reformed Christians. Their Reformed theology shows in their writing, including decision theology and the non-biblical view that Christian faith can be strengthened by scientific evidence for creation. A few phrases like "able to accept Christianity" are in their words quoted here. Nonetheless, these quotes are valuable, as they show how these people went from atheism to theism. After that, they heard the Gospel message and became fellow believers in Christ.
 4. Dr. Jerry Bergman, "Cultlike Characteristics of Atheism," in *Persuaded by the evidence – True Stories of Faith, Science, & the Power of a Creator*, ed. Doug Sharp and Dr. Jerry Bergman (Green Forest: Master Books, 2008), 46-47.
 5. The phrase "accepting a creation worldview is the second step," is here used to mean coming to the conclusion that evolution is impossible without a creator. Such a person has not come to faith in Jesus, although they may do so in the future (the "third step").

As he listened to himself spouting the typical evolutionary responses, he thought to himself, This does not make any sense. What I know about biology is contrary to what I'm saying.

beliefs, and after that came to faith in Christ. Coppedge writes:

Dr. Richard Lumsden was professor of parasitology and cell biology at Tulane University. He served as dean of the graduate school and published hundreds of scientific papers. He trained 30 PhDs. All through his career, he believed Darwinian evolution was an established fact of science, and he took great glee in ridiculing Christian beliefs.

...This student went up to him after class and cheerfully exclaimed, "Great lecture, Doc! Say, I wonder if I could make an appointment with you; I have some questions about what you said and just want to get my facts straight." Dr. Lumsden, flattered with this student's positive approach, agreed on a time they could meet in his office. On the appointed day, the student thanked him for his time and started in.

She did not argue with anything

he had said about evolution in class, but just began asking a series of questions: "How did life arise? Isn't DNA too information-complex to form by natural law and chance? Why are there gaps in the fossil record between all major kinds of animals? What are the many missing links between apes and man?" She didn't act judgmental or provocative; she just wanted to know. Lumsden, unabashed, gave the standard evolutionary answers to her questions. But something about this interchange began making him very uneasy. He was prepared for a fight, not for a gentle, honest set of questions. As he listened to himself spouting the typical evolutionary responses, he thought to himself, This does not make any sense. What I know about biology is contrary to what I'm saying. When the time came to go, the student picked up her books, smiled, said, "Thanks, Doc!" and left. On the outside, Dr. Lumsden appeared confident, but on the inside, he was devastated. He knew that everything he had told his student was wrong.

Dr. Lumsden had the integrity to face his new doubts honestly. He undertook a personal research project to investigate the arguments for evolution and over time, found them wanting. Based on the scientific evidence alone, he eventually decided he must reject Darwinism, and he became a creationist. But as morning follows night, he had to face the next

question, "Who is the Creator?" Shortly thereafter, by coincidence or not, his sister invited him to church. It was so out of character for this formerly crusty, self-confident evolutionist to go to church! Not much earlier, he would have had nothing to do with religion. But now, he was open to reconsider the identity of the Creator and whether the claims of the Bible were true. His atheistic philosophy had also left him helpless to deal with guilt and bad habits in his personal life. This time he was open. This time, he heard the good news that God had sent His Son to pay the penalty for our sins, and to offer men forgiveness and eternal life.

... "Truly, at that moment, I came to know Him, and received the Lord Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior." There's room at the Cross even for know-it-all science professors.⁶

Dr. Jerry Bergman is a member of MENSA, holds two PhDs and five masters degrees, and has taught college biology for over 20 years.⁷ His father was an agnostic and his mother was a Jehovah's Witness.⁸ At first he was a very active Jehovah's Witness. He then writes:

In time, I became totally disillusioned with not only the Watchtower, but also all religion. ...I became involved in the atheism movement and soon knew (and counted as friends) many of the

leading atheists of the day, including Gordon Stein, PhD; Garry DeYoung, PhD; and of course, Madalyn Murray O'Hair. I have also published scores of articles in their various magazines. I read atheistic literature religiously for years (and still do). It soon became apparent while I was devouring atheistic literature that the arguments atheists used to prove their worldview boiled down to only two basic concerns - the existence of evil in the world and the assumption that evolution (meaning evolutionary naturalism or Darwinism) could totally explain the existence of the living and nonliving world. Consequently, scientists had "no need of that hypothesis" (the hypothesis that a God exists) because they believed that everything, including life, could be adequately explained by naturalism.⁹

When I became convinced that evolutionism was simply wrong, just as I had become convinced that the Watchtower was wrong, I was led inevitably to the conclusion that, if life cannot be

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6. David F. Coppedge, "Mocker Turned Apologist," in *Persuaded by the evidence - True Stories of Faith, Science, & the Power of a Creator*, ed. Doug Sharp and Dr. Jerry Bergman (Green Forest: Master Books, 2008), 211-213.
 7. Bergman, 42, 48.
 8. Bergman, 39
 9. Bergman, 42

I started exploring the major world religions, and since I was convinced that life required a Creator, I focused on the three main theistic religions, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, that teach about a Creator God. My study of these three theistic religions has led me to the conclusion that Christianity, specifically historic Christianity, is true.

explained by naturalistic means, it can be explained only by an intelligent Creator, requiring theism. If a Creator existed, this meant that humans might have some obligation to Him. This led me to the conclusion that one of the theistic religions had to be valid. I started exploring the major world religions, and since I was convinced that life required a Creator, I focused on the three main theistic religions, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, that teach about a Creator God. My study of these three theistic religions has led me to the conclusion that Christianity, specifically historic Christianity, is true.¹⁰

David Bradbury is an atheist who decided in 1969 it would be easy to collect a \$1,000 prize by providing the first physically verifiable evidence elevating the hypothesis of macroevolution to the status of scientific theory. After several years he realized that there was no such evidence.¹¹ Bradbury eventually became a Christian. He writes:

Once the artificial "intellectual" (scientific) barrier against religion posed by evolution was exposed, and serious consideration again given to spiritual matters, my return to Christianity has been personally most rewarding. For a while I was led to accept Richard Dawkins's view that "Darwin made it possible to be an intellectually fulfilled atheist," but having once been blind, it makes the truth and light available to all mankind in Scripture all the more appreciated.¹² LSI

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10. Bergman, 46.
 11. David A. Bradbury, "A Reluctant Convert from Evolution," in *Persuaded by the evidence—True Stories of Faith, Science, & the Power of a Creator*, ed. Doug Sharp and Dr. Jerry Bergman (Green Forest: Master Books, 2008), 26-27, 32.
 12. Bradbury, 33.

Atheists and the Design Argument

Part 2

by Jeffrey Stueber



Other Voices

Dohanson, of course, is not the only critic of the argument to/for design. Atheists have their own niche on the internet and have compiled several common responses to the design argument which includes the following:

The Watchmaker analogy suffers from three particular flaws, over and above those common to all Arguments By Design. Firstly, a watchmaker creates watches from pre-existing materials, whereas

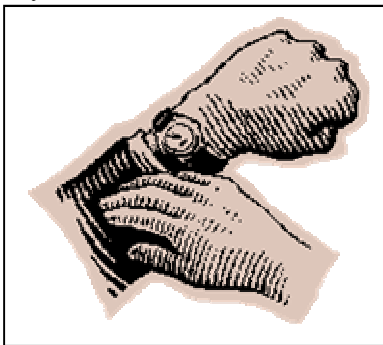
God is claimed to have created the universe from nothing. These two sorts of creation are clearly fundamentally different, and the analogy is therefore rather weak. Secondly, a watchmaker makes watches, but there are many other things in the world. If we walked further along the beach and found a nuclear reactor, we wouldn't assume it was created by the watchmaker. The argument would therefore suggest a multitude of creators, each responsible for a different part of

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creation (or a different universe, if you allow the possibility that there might be more than one). Finally, in the first part of the watchmaker argument we conclude that the watch is not part of nature because it is ordered, and therefore stands out from the randomness of nature. Yet in the second part of the argument, we start from the position that the universe is obviously not random, but shows elements of order. The Watchmaker argument is thus internally inconsistent. Apart from logical inconsistencies in the watchmaker argument, it's worth pointing out that biological systems and mechanical systems behave very differently. What's unlikely for a pile of gears is not necessarily unlikely for a mixture of biological molecules.⁷

The first response above is weak because the two types of creations are different

only in the respective makeup of that creation (pre-existing material vs. material already existing) but this does not suggest anything else about the makeup of the designed object or objects. The second response does make a valid point, but the creationist has the rejoinder that he or she can



add other evidence which suggests which designer did the creating. This, to me, harkens back to B. C. Johnson's point about animals made by God or made by alien beings. The accurate-adjustment-of-parts criterion is not the only one used to match a particular item with a particular designer. The third reply misunderstands theist arguments about the design of the watch and the universe. The watch stands out from the randomness of the

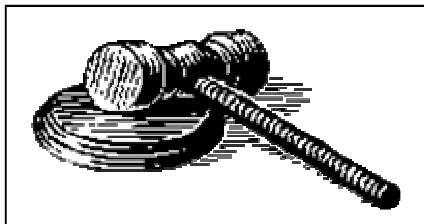
beach, not the randomness of the entire Earth and universe and that is why people would suppose it was designed. Not every facet of the universe or Earth is de-

signed (certainly not the beach) and so there are areas that are not designed in a way that the design of a watch can stand out from it.

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7. "Common Arguments 1997," *Secular Web*, <http://www.infidels.org/library/modern/mathew/arguments.htm> #design (accessed 11/29/11)

Some evolutionists oppose the design argument because it posits an unscientific explanation – a creation by a divine being. A scientific explanation to them is one that appeals to a cause guided by natural law. This was part of the criteria in Judge Overton’s 1982 court ruling against an Arkansas act requiring balanced treatment of evolution and creation. The best response to this reasoning comes from Jonathan Wells

who quotes philosopher of science Larry Laudan. Galileo and Newton established the existence of gravity



long before anybody could give an explanation for gravity. There must, therefore, be something wrong with this judge’s ruling.⁸ Lawyer Phillip Johnson, author of *Darwin on Trial*, reflects on this trial and notes that “Philosophers of science have found much fault with Judge Overton’s definition” and have hinted that many evolutionist witnesses at the trial “got away with a philosophical snow job.”⁹

The same reply applies to Richard Dawkins who, like

Johnson, attacks theistic arguments from improbability. A tornado going through a junkyard could not assemble a Boeing 747 - according to an argument by Fred Hoyle - and, Dawkins says, creationists have misappropriated this argument to suggest improbable things cannot originate without creation. Sometimes, he says, this suggestion takes the form of the idea there is no “free lunch.” (In other

words, there is no existing without something bringing it into existence.)

Dawkins laments that “However statistically improbable the entity you seek to explain by invoking a designer, the designer himself has got to be at least as improbable. God is the ultimate Boeing 747.”¹⁰

First, this assumes, of

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8. Jonathan Wells, *The Politically Incorrect Guide to Darwinism and Intelligent Design*, (Washington D.C., Regnery, 2006), 132-133.
 9. Phillip Johnson, *Darwin on Trial*, (Downers Grove: IL, Intervarsity, 1993), 114-115.

course, that God is an entity composed of parts that have to be combined in some fashion like molecules would in DNA. Second, this assumes that there is a top-down (or perhaps bottom-up) level of complexity where highly complex things can never be made by simpler beings or organisms. What evidence does Dawkins have that this is so? Lastly, we do not have to explain the existence of God to believe in or argue for His creation any more than we have to explain the existence of *any* being before we posit that being may have interacted in the world to create or produce something.

What of the position that any attempt to posit that life is created by an intelligent divine being is merely an attempt to push religious belief? That argument, of course, is not surprising considering in American a large portion of those who believe in intelligent design also are Christian or are heavily indebted to creationism in the Bible. However, Moslems also believe in a divine creator. Aaron Schachter, in an article in *The World*, tells of Adnaan Akhtar who, at an interfaith confer-

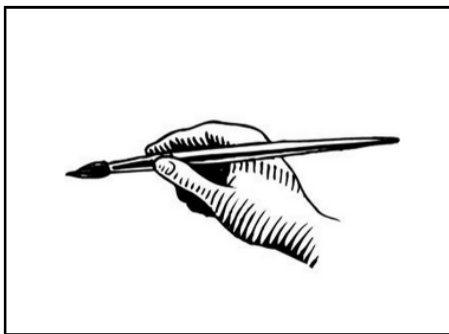
ence in Tel Aviv, told delegates to unite against Charles Darwin and materialism which are “the foundation of the conflict and corruption going on in the world.” His latest book, *The Atlas of Creation* is an 800-page refutation of evolution which he delivers to schools and research institutes around the world. While the Koran does not giving the timing of creation as the Genesis account does, Adnaan believes that God created the world and denounces believers in evolution as pagans and crackpots.¹¹ There may be good scientific reasons to suppose a divine creator did something, but science won’t by itself tell you who that creator is. That question remains within the realm of theology.

Lastly, I’ll mention one of the most pertinent intellectual thought stoppers in this debate: the fear of creation as

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10. Richard Dawkins, *The God Delusion*, (New York, Houghton Mifflin, 2006), 138
 11. Aaron Schachter, “Islamic creationism,” *The World*, Sept. 10, 2009, <http://www.pri.org/stories/world/middle-east/islamic-creationism1616.html>

nothing but “god of the gaps.” David Mills sarcastically suggests that

Historically whenever primitive man lacked scientific understanding of an observed event, he created a “God of the Gaps” to fill the intellectual vacuum. A sailor who knew nothing of astronomy would interpret an eclipse of the sun as a sign from the Almighty. A mother, unaware of the existence of viruses and microorganisms, would ascribe her daughter’s illness as to the wrath of God (or perhaps the devil). A 14th-century farmer, knowing nothing of soil chemistry, would attribute crop failures to the sins of his family. Unaware of biological evolution, medieval man considered the complexity of his own anat-



omy to be evidence of Divine Creation. The wider the gaps in scientific understanding, the greater the historical need for a miracle-working “God of the Gaps.”¹²

Mills, of course, does land some punches. Too often people have attributed events to untrue causes (and not always for religious reasons). However, Mills is out of touch with

modern scholarship on this issue, particularly William Dembski’s “explanatory filter” which, he says, “is a criterion for distinguishing intelligent from unintelligent causes.”¹³ Whether it is accurate is another question that will be debated for a long time, but it does represent an attempt not to argue for design based on mere uncertainty.

While there will continue to be skeptical arguments against the possibility of divine design, this essay has shown that, despite the appeal to common sense, a large portion of skeptics’ arguments simply have no logical appeal. ❧

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12. David Mills, *Atheist Universe: a Thinking Person’s Answer to Christian Fundamentalism*, (Berkeley: CA, Ulysses Press, 2006), 85
 13. William Dembski, “Redesigning Science,” in William Dembski ed., *Mere Creation: Science, Faith & Intelligent Design*, (Downers Grove: IL, Intervarsity Press, 1998), 104

Tennessee: Teachers May Question Evolution

Tennessee governor, Bill Haslam, allowed a bill to become law which confirms a teacher's right to discuss strengths and weaknesses of controversial scientific theories. Evolutionists are upset and are claiming it allows religion into the public school classroom. However, the bill specifically states no religious indoctrination is permitted.—*Answers* (October-December, 2012)

Textbook Controversy in South Korea

A change in textbooks is causing controversy in South Korea. A textbook revision committee associated with a Korean creationist organization has succeeded in getting some textbook publishers to drop references to the supposed reptile-bird called *Archaeopteryx* as well as the famous horse evolution series. *Nature* magazine proclaimed, "South Korea Surrenders to Creationist Demands." However, creationist scientists believe the two references were inaccurate and outdated.—*Answers* (October-December, 2012)

Weather Predictions

Paul Pastelok, a meteorologist with AccuWeather, is making the following winter weather predictions: Northeast and Mid-Atlantic—above average snowfall; Central and northern Plains and Upper Midwest—less snowfall and above-average temperatures; Pacific Northwest—less snow than average.—*Bottom Line Personal* (11/15/12)

Beware of Green Aliens

Pennsylvania State University researchers affiliated with NASA have made an unusual warning about global warming. "Green" aliens, they said, might object so strongly to the environmental damage humans have caused on Earth that they will wipe us out to save the planet. Therefore, we need to limit our emissions of greenhouse gases so as not to attract the attention of aliens.—*Creation* (April-June, 2012)

Attendance Drops at Creation Museum

The Creation Museum in Petersburg, Kentucky, has announced its attendance figures for the year ending June 30—254,074. The figure represents a decline of 10% during the year, the fourth straight year of declining attendance since it drew 404,000 its first year of operation. Senior vice president, Michael Zovath, said the attendance figure was still over the budgeted figure of 250,000. Zovath blamed the slow U.S. economy for the decline in attendance.—http://www.citybeat.com/cincinnati/article-26546-creation-museum_attn.html (11/7/12)

China Plans New Space Launch in June

China plans to launch its next manned space mission in June of 2013, state media reports. The three-person crew could be made up of a woman and two men. Last summer the Shenzhou 9 spacecraft took part in the country's first manual space docking mission, a major milestone for China. In 2003 China became only the third country to send a person into space.—<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news> (11/10/12)

Penguins Remain Faithful to Partners

Researchers studying Magellanic penguins for 30 years off the coast of Argentina have made an interesting discovery. These birds are the most faithful mates in the animal kingdom. Using satellite imaging, one couple was found to remain loyal to each other for 16 years. This long-term devotion remained despite each penguin separating during winter feeding trips that took them thousands of miles apart. Yet, during the breeding season they came back to the same nest and same partner.—*Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* (11/26/12)



Magellanic penguins

Amazon Losing Species

The Brazilian Amazon forest is slowly losing species as the historical deforestation continues to take its toll. More than 80% of extinctions are still impending because it can take several generations for a species to completely die out. The time lag though provides a conservation opportunity to save some of the species, said Robert Ewers, lead author of a group studying the problem. "We can go to the ground to restore habitat and take remedial actions to try to regenerate new habitats," he noted.—<http://www.livescience.com> (7/12/12)

Uganda's Mountain Gorillas Rebound

According to a census in 2011, the population of mountain gorillas in Uganda has increased—from 302 in 2006 to 400. This discovery has encouraged conservationists trying to save the critically endangered species. Uganda's Ministry of Tourism credited sound natural resource management policies for the success. Uganda is now home to almost half of the world's mountain gorillas still living in the wild.—*myway.com* (11/16/12)

BMI Not so Accurate

Body Mass Index (BMI) is not as accurate at identifying obese people as are X-ray scans. BMI, which compares weight and height, has been used for 200 years. Yet, a study of 1,400 people found that when compared to a more definitive measure—body fat percentage as determined by X-ray scans, BMI was accurate only three-fifths of the time and especially inaccurate for women. The researchers suggest lowering the BMI threshold for women from 30 to 24 and to 28 for men. They also advise people to consider a body fat scan.—*Discover* (September, 2012)

Tattoos Can Burn You

Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) can cause burning in some patients with a permanent tattoo. Anything that contains metal could cause a burn, and some permanent tattoos use inks containing iron oxide. Anything that contains metal such as body piercings, hearing aids and removable dental work should be removed before an MRI.—*Bottom Line Personal* (10/15/12)

Chocolate-Health Food?

A review of 20 studies on the benefits of eating dark chocolate has found that healthy adults who consumed dark chocolate for two weeks had a small but significant reduction in blood pressure. Dark chocolate is rich in antioxidant compounds called flavonols. Longer-term trials are needed to validate that the benefit remains over time.—*Consumer Reports on Health* (November, 2012)

Sleepwalkers Not Rare

Sleepwalking may be more common than experts have expected. A recent survey of 15,929 adults found one-third reporting they had sleepwalked at least once in their lives, and 4% said they did it in the past year. Alcohol abuse, depression, obsessive-compulsive disorder, and the use of antidepressants and sleeping pills all raise the risk.—*Consumer Reports on Health* (September, 2012)

For Some Americans—A Drop in Life Expectancy

For at least one group of Americans, children can no longer look forward to living longer than their parents. For poorly-educated whites, those lacking a high school diploma, life expectancy has actually fallen by four years since 1990. The reasons for this trend are not clear, but drug overdoses, higher rates of smoking, rising obesity, and an increase in the number of people in this group who lack health insurance may be factors.—*Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* (9/15/12)



Marijuana Linked to Drop in IQ

Heavy users of cannabis (pot, marijuana) can expect an 8-point drop in IQ, on average, according to a new study in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*. The finding was based on the decades-long Dunedin study in New Zealand. More than 1,000 individuals in this study have been assessed every few years from birth up to age 38, and researchers found the link between heavy pot use and lower IQ.—<http://blogs.discovermagazine.com/8/29/12>

Daily Aspirin Regimen Reduces Cancer Risk

A daily low-dose aspirin regimen not only may protect the heart, but the practice could reduce the risk of death from cancer. So said a report published in the June issue of the *American Journal of Medicine*. The analysis included data from 23 studies. The risk of cancer death was 23% lower among low-dose aspirin users compared to a control group, and the protective effects seemed to begin within four years. The possible risks: bleeding and other gastrointestinal side effects.—*Cleveland Clinic Men's Health Advisor* (September, 2012)

More News Briefs Online

Has Amelia Earhart's plane been located?

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Monday, December 3, 2012

Genetic Diversity and the World's Population Have Recently Exploded

Researchers have concluded most genetic variants and most of the increase in human population have happened within the past 5,000 years.



Summary: Most of the genetic variants in people today have appeared within the last 5,000 years, researchers reported online in the November 28 *Nature*. The human population exploded from a few million to 7 billion during that time.

As the scientists examined more than 15,000 genes in each of 6,515 people of European-American or African-American ancestry, they looked for the genetic variants. The researchers were able to date when most of the variants appeared. Of some 709,816 genetic variants in the European-Americans studied,

more than 81% popped up in the past 5,000 years while 58% of the 643,128 variants carried by African-Americans are less than 5,000 years old. This all happened in less than 5% of the time the scientists believe humans have existed in their modern form, says coauthor Joshua Akey, a geneticist at the U. of Washington in Seattle.

It takes time for a genetic variant to rise to prominence if it isn't discarded, and common variants — those found in at least 5% of the population — are generally older ones that have lasted because they usually don't have a big effect on health. According to Sarah Tishkoff, a geneticist at the U. of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia, the new study will help scientists understand how the recent population explosion has affected human genes. It may also help identify variants that affect the risk of people developing common diseases. At present, scientists can only partially explain the genetic role in diseases.

According to the researchers, when humans migrated out of Africa “about 70,000 years ago,” they carried with them mutated versions of genes that might have been eliminated had they stayed in Africa. However, the potentially harmful mutations stayed with the migrants and were passed down to their descendants when they expanded in Europe. The potentially harmful variants in European-Americans tend to be younger than those in African-Americans, 3,000 years old versus 6,200 years. And populations outside Africa went from zero to billions in less than “100,000 years.” In neither group has evolution had time to eliminate the harmful changes.

Akey thinks some of the genetic changes could give humans an evolutionary advantage, but which ones are hard to predict. He adds that one thing is certain: “If we stop changing, we're evolutionarily dead.”

To read the entire article, go to

[http://www.sciencenews.org/view/generic/id/346687/description/Genetic diversity explored in recent millennia](http://www.sciencenews.org/view/generic/id/346687/description/Genetic_diversity_explored_in_recent_millennia)

Comment: Whatever genetic evidence these researchers think they have uncovered, some of their observations are indeed

interesting. First, they think the population has zoomed from a few million to billions in just a few thousand years. They also think genetic diversity, the degree of variety seen in humans, has also increased significantly in that time.

I believe creationist geneticists would basically agree with these conclusions. Forget the hundred thousand years or so evolutionists think modern humans have been around. If the first humans appeared only a few thousand years ago, as the Bible suggests, then there is no need to try to explain why the human population did so little to expand for some 95% of the time *Homo sapiens* has allegedly been on the planet.

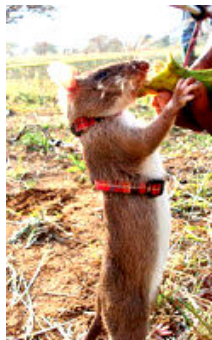
If the human race began a few thousand years ago with two people and has descended more recently from a group of only eight people on board an ark, we also have an answer for the apparent explosion of genetic diversity. Creation geneticists believe the humans and each pair of animals on board Noah's Ark, with obvious limited genetic diversity at that time, nevertheless had all the information in their genes necessary to explain the greatly increased genetic diversity within both humans and animals that we see in the modern world.

Evolutionists are engaged in wishful thinking, I believe, if they think genetic changes can give humans an "evolutionary advantage." Genetic changes, also known as mutations, when big enough to be noticed are almost always harmful. The few so-called beneficial mutations are limited in their effects. Genetic changes or mutations are not helping the human race. Genetically speaking, we seem to be going downhill.
(<http://lutheranscience.org/12-11-14.html>)

To go uphill, we need a boost from the Creator of our genes, our whole bodies, and our souls. This physical boost won't happen in this life but in the life to come. However, we can experience a spiritual boost the moment we begin following the Savior, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, all the way to eternal life in heaven. "When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, **"I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life"** (John 8:12).

Questions of the Day

What is an effective four-legged bomb detector?



A Gambian Pouched Rat. These animals are being trained to sniff out landmines. Their sensitive noses can find the bombs and, being small of stature, they do not trip the mines. (Photo from Wikipedia)

Source: *Answers* (April-June, 2012)

How did Neanderthals get their name?

It is ironic, but this group of early humans was named after Joachem Neander, a German minister who wrote the well-known hymn, "Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, the King of Creation." A valley or "tal" was named after Neander ("Neander-tal"), and 200 years later an unusual human skeleton was found there. Evolutionist scientists named the skeleton a "Neanderthal."



Source: Dennis R. Petersen, *Unlocking the Mysteries of Creation*.

What has happened to the typical size of hamburgers and French fries served in restaurants since the 1950s?

The average hamburger in the 1950s weighed 3.9 ounces. Today it is 12 ounces. A serving of French fries then was about 2.4 ounces; now it is almost 7 ounces. Sodas also have increased in size, from 7 ounces to 40 ounces.

Source: Centers of Disease Control and Prevention, quoted in *Bottom Line Personal* (9/1/2012)



NUGGETS

Evolution Hits a Bull's Eye (?!)

"To get a universe that has expanded as long as ours has (an assumption) without collapsing or having its matter coast away would have required extraordinary fine tuning. A Chicago physicist calculated that the odds of achieving that kind of precise expansion...would be the same as throwing an imaginary microscopic dart across the universe to the most distant quasar and hitting a bull's eye one millimeter in diameter."

—*National Geographic* (June, 1983), page 741 — quoted in Petersen, Dennis R., *Unlocking the Mysteries of Creation*, El Dorado, CA: Creation Resource Publications, 2002-2012.

Unusual

☐ Marie Curie's notebooks are still too radioactive to be picked up by hand.



☐ Gasoline was once sold in small bottles as a cure for lice.

☐ Around one in every four million lobsters is born with a rare genetic defect that turns it blue.

☐ Paraskevidekatriaphobia is the fear of Friday the 13th.

☐ When P.T. Barnum fell gravely ill at age 81, he convinced *The New York Sun* to publish his obituary in advance so he could see it in print.

Source: an advertisement from Mental Floss

PLANTS' ABILITY TO REPAIR THEMSELVES

Besides the complexity of the photosynthesis process itself, the continuous repair capability of the plant cells has to be taken into account. Any damaged part, such as a broken chlorophyll molecule, is replaced with a new one when required. Mankind have not designed a robotic system with such a self-repair capability. The Intelligent Designer designed and built a robust repair system into plants that will continue to help plants provide food for all his creatures until the end of time."

—Dobberpuhl, Dale.
The First Four Days,
WinePress Publishing,
2011, page 133



STEPS TO HELPING CATS LOSE WEIGHT

At least 55% of cats are seriously overweight, says the Association for Pet Obesity Prevention. Some steps that might help rotund cats lose excess pounds include..

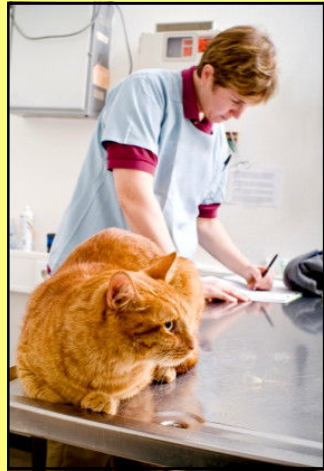
△ More exercise (Cats, especially indoor cats, may need to run, climb and play more)

△ Better food (Seek out food especially prepared for neutered or spayed cats, which are especially vulnerable to putting on excess weight).

△ Seek remission (If diabetic, a cat needs insulin just like humans suffering from diabetes. With exercise and a high-protein diet, the cats may lose weight and go into remission).

△ See a vet (Veterinarians can offer advice on food for overweight cats and other suggestions).

Source: *USA Weekend* (December 14-16, 2012)



NUMBERS-PRODUCT OF THE MIND OF GOD



How is it that numbers are conceptual—the result of a mind—and yet they go beyond the human mind’s capacity to fully understand (such as infinity) and predate the existence of the human mind? The answer is that numbers are not the product of a *human* mind, but rather the product of the mind of God.

—Dr. Jason Lisle, “Evolutionary Math,” *Acts & Facts*, December, 2012

“I have a certain niggling sympathy for the creationists, because I think, in a way, the writing is on the wall for the religious view that says it’s fully compatible with evolution. I think there’s a kind of incompatibility, which the creationists see clearly.”

—Richard Dawkins, *Adventures in Democracy*, ABC-TV, (3/8/2010)



MORE NUGGETS

GOOD BUDDIES: SHRIMP AND GOBIES

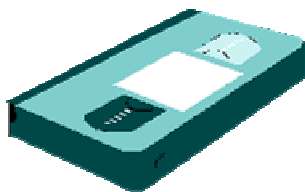
A snapping shrimp has very poor eyesight. A fish called the goby (pictured) has excellent vision. They share the same burrow and cooperate. The shrimp digs out the burrow while the goby guards it. The shrimp uses the goby like a blind person uses a seeing-eye dog, always keeping one antenna on the goby. Another example of cooperation between species which only a Creator could design.

—<http://www.creationmoments.com/radio/transcripts/seeing-eye-fish>



THE UNKNOWN ZONE

According to a Beloit (WI) College survey of incoming college freshman, most are basically ignorant of the following—actual airplane “tickets,” baggage meant to be carried rather than wheeled, Los Angeles ever having an NFL team, music on the radio, new printed encyclopedias, Rod Serling’s *Twilight Zone*, floppy discs, and videotapes,
—(Racine) *Journal-Times*



AFTER EDEN

by Dan Lietha



“Isn’t it sad how a man in a white beard with a fictional story has turned so many people’s thinking away from God?”

Source: answersingenesis.org

It’s better to light a candle than to curse the darkness.

**--A Chinese proverb,
quoted on <http://www.inspirational-words.org>**

MYTHS ON IMPROVING GAS MILEAGE.

1. *Use premium gas instead of regular.* Only use premium if your vehicle calls for it.
2. *Use a gas-saving device such as Fuel Doctor or Fuel Genie.* They don't work.
3. *Use a gas additive.* Some additives may clean the fuel injector which can help improve mileage, but, for the most part, they are ineffective.
4. *Replace a dirty air filter.* In older cars this can help, but new cars automatically adjust the air-to-fuel ratio which keeps the mileage constant.
5. *Open car windows instead of using air conditioning on warm days.* Avoid running the A/C and you can help your engine not work so hard, but opening the windows on the road increases aerodynamic drag.

Source: *USA Weekend* (March 2-4, 2012)

The “Gills” in Human Embryos

A month-old human embryo has folds that some evolutionists have referred to as “gill slits.” These scientists claim the embryo is going through the various stages of its evolutionary history as it develops, and the gills represent the fish stage. However, these fold do not develop into gills, of course, but into the human jaw, neck, etc.



Source: Thomas Heinze, *The Vanishing Proofs of Evolution*, pages 21-25

Mules

Do not be like the horse or the *mule*, which have no understanding but must be controlled by bit and bridle or they will not come to you. Psalm 32:9

It is clear that mules are not as smart as humans. To get them to follow directions, their owners must sometimes use a bit and bridle. A *bit* and *bridle* are the mouthpiece and the strips of leather that surround the head of the animal.

What are mules? Mules are animals that have a *donkey* as a father and a *horse* as a mother. If an animal has a horse for a father and a donkey for a mother, it is called a *hinny*.

Is it true that mules can never have baby mules?

There are no known cases where a male mule has ever produced children. But in very rare cases female mules have been known to have *foals* (babies).

How can the appearance of a mule be described?

Like a donkey, a mule has a short thick head, long ears, thin limbs, small hooves and a short mane. But in height and body, shape of neck, coat and teeth, it is more like a horse.

What sound does a mule make? When a mule makes a sound, it often starts with a *whinny* like a horse but ends with a hee-haw like a donkey. Sometimes mules will whimper.



Appaloosa Mule

What colors are mules?

The most common colors for a mule are light reddish-brown, black or gray. Mules can also be white or tan or have coats that appear bluish or reddish. Some mules have *palomino* hides, which means it has a golden coat with a white mane and tail. Appaloosa mules have spots on their hides.



How do mules serve people? Mules are working animals and are well-known for carrying packs on their backs. They are strong and courageous like horses. They don't get tired easily and are patient animals. They also don't get sick easily and aren't bothered as much by insects as are

horses. Some farmers use mules instead of horses at pulling *plows*, especially when the fields have clay soil.

Source: <http://en.wikipedia.org>
Photos from Wikipedia.

Mules have the reputation, whether or not it's deserved, of sometimes being very stubborn. Let that not be said of us, unless it is said that we are stubbornly holding on to our faith in Jesus Christ as our Savior.

Activity—Word Search.

See if you can find the 10 *italicized* words from the story in the Word Search:





Mass Murders Are Nothing New

The world and especially the United States was shocked when on December 14 a gunman killed his mother and then 26 teachers and young children at an elementary school in Newton, Connecticut.

Oh, if only such a human-caused tragedy were rare. In one sense, it is. Regarding shootings in schools, if one considers the number of schools in the U.S. (125,000 according to one report I read) and the number of days each year a typical school is in operation (around 180 days), then such an event as Newton is indeed quite rare.

On the other hand, mass shootings and other mass murders are nothing new. Discovery News in a recent post provided a long list of such despicable events including...

In 1764 a teacher and 10 students were shot dead in Green-castle, Penn.

In 1893 11 people including an infant were killed with guns and swords in Osaka, Japan.

In 1913 a man in Germany

stabbed his wife and four children to death before driving to another town where he opened fire on 20 people, killing at least nine.

Here in Wisconsin, we have had our share of recent massacres—the Aug. 5 shooting at a Sikh Temple in Oak Creek, Wisconsin that left six dead and four wounded and the Oct. 21 shooting at a Brookfield, Wisconsin spa that resulted in three deaths and four injuries.

Murders go back a long ways, all the way to the beginning of history when Cain murdered his brother, which surely must have represented the largest percentage of the world's population ever wiped out at one time by a murderer.

Whether these murders were precipitated by truly evil people or by people with a certain degree of mental disease, the ultimate cause is still the same—the introduction into the world of sin which has ever since caused the whole universe to be in a state of misery (Romans 8:22).

The solution to sin and its consequences is Jesus Christ. Jesus took our sins upon Himself (Isaiah 53:4-6) and made it possible for us through faith to look forward to a heaven where murder and every other sin will be a thing of the past.

God be praised. LSI

—Warren Krug, editor

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