

LSI Journal

A photograph of a flock of sheep walking across a green field under a blue sky with white clouds. The sheep are white with black faces and legs, and they are walking from left to right. The field is lush green, and the sky is a clear blue with scattered white clouds.

Mystery of Sheep

Geologic Column

State of the Institute

Games Richard Dawkins Plays

Dawkins: Evolution is an “Implausible Theory”

winter 2018

Lutheran Science Institute

Creation / Evolution: a Confessional Lutheran view

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Mystery of Sheep

by Jonathan Ross – for a high school audience

Growing up, my family moved from the busy city of Milwaukee to rural farm life in Minnesota. For many of us it meant some major adjustments. We now had to travel “long distances” to see a movie. There was a lot more grass to mow and snow to shovel. To aid in our “grass mowing” my parents decided to borrow some sheep from our neighbor farmers.

I never had the opportunity to observe sheep behavior before that time. If you ever get the chance, I encourage you to do so—it will often leave you scratching your head. I’ve witnessed sheep lodge their heads in fence-line, not able to get themselves out. I’ve seen sheep make a leap into the barn-house forgetting the door to the barn was closed. I’ve also seen sheep tremble in fear and huddle in the corner of the pen when our “big bad” Yorkshire terrier would come out to chase them. Sheep behavior will always be a mystery to me.

That’s not where the mysteries of nature end. When we look at the world around us, there is so much of creation which we have not yet understood or explored. Are there planets in the universe with atmospheres like earth? How does one communicate with cancer cells to make them stop growing? Just how many species of living things inhabit our planet? The more we dig into answering the mysteries of nature, the more we realize how intricate the design of God’s creation.

Yet when we break the First Commandment by not placing God first in our lives, we try to rob our Creator of this glory. Like sheep, we become ignorant of our surroundings, catching our heads in the fencing of human reason. Some people even try to remove God from his creation, removing the Bible as their authority, and instead look to evolution. Casting out the Creator from his creation can lead to casting out the Savior, and that closes the door to salvation. Those who reject their Savior will be found trembling in the corner confronted by death, when death has already been destroyed by Jesus. The all-knowing Creator of the universe can never be surprised or mystified, but if he could, we would so often make him scratch his head.

It's time to do a check of who's in charge. When God is our priority, we begin to see his creation like the Psalmist:

Yes, the word of the Lord is right, and everything he does is trustworthy. He loves righteousness and justice. The mercy of the Lord fills the earth. By the word of the Lord the heavens were made. By the breath of his mouth he made the whole army of stars. He gathers the water of the sea into a heap. He puts the depths into storehouses. Let all the earth fear the Lord. Let all the inhabitants of the world revere him. For he said, "Let it be," and it was! He gave a command, and there it stood. May your mercy, O Lord, be on us, even as we wait confidently for you. Psalm 33:4-9, 22 (EHV)

We will never fully understand everything in nature, but it is assuring to know that our God certainly does. And in all his knowledge and wisdom, he still found it vital that we were to be rescued from our foolishness. It's difficult to imagine you or I putting ourselves in harm's way to rescue a sheep, but that's exactly what God did for us:

I am the Good Shepherd. I know my sheep and my sheep know me (just as the Father knows me and I know the Father). And I lay down my life for the sheep. John 10:14-15 (EHV)

So, in thanks to our God, let's encourage each other to remain in God's Word, seeking him as our authority, and using our gifts of reason and intellect to his glory.

We pray:

Lord it is challenging sometimes to understand the world around us. When we wander, remind us of your love and promises through your Word, strengthening us to confront our doubt, and giving us the courage to face others who oppose your name. Amen.

Jonathan Ross teaches high school life science and calculus at Divine Savior Academy in Doral, Florida. He also serves as chair of the math department. He is a member of Divine Savior Church in Doral, Florida.

State of the Institute

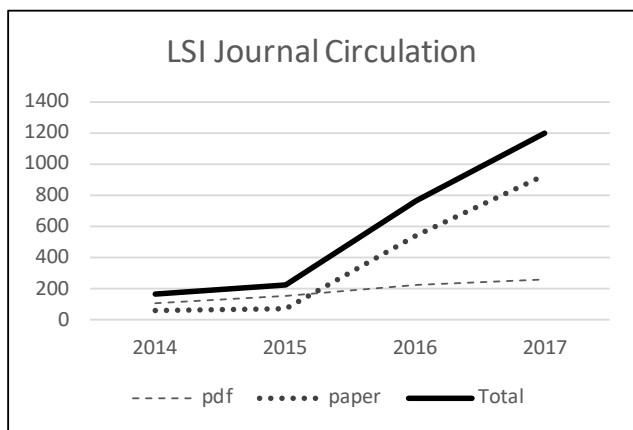
The Lord Has Richly Blessed LSI

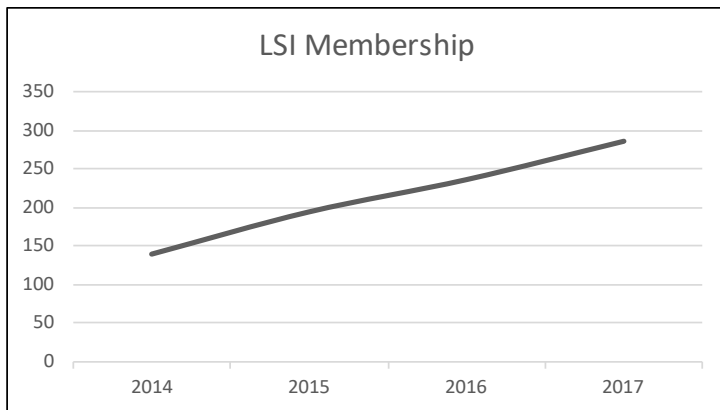
2017 Highlights

LSI Journals are used as textbooks for a new online creation apologetics course at Martin Luther College. Northwestern Publishing House began selling copies of the LSI Journal in its retail store for \$2.95. The Library of Congress assigned an International Standard Serial Number (ISSN) to the LSI Journal. Circulation of the LSI Journal rose by 55% to over 1,200. The number of schools and congregations receiving mailings of the print journal increased by 83% to 338. LSI Journal layout is now done with professional InDesign software, and the journal is now printed professionally with full page color. LSI membership grew by 21% to 288. The LSI Board approved a 2018 budget of \$5,600, a 17% increase over our 2017 budget of \$4,800. We closed 2017 in the black, with more income than expenses.

Amazing Growth Since 2014

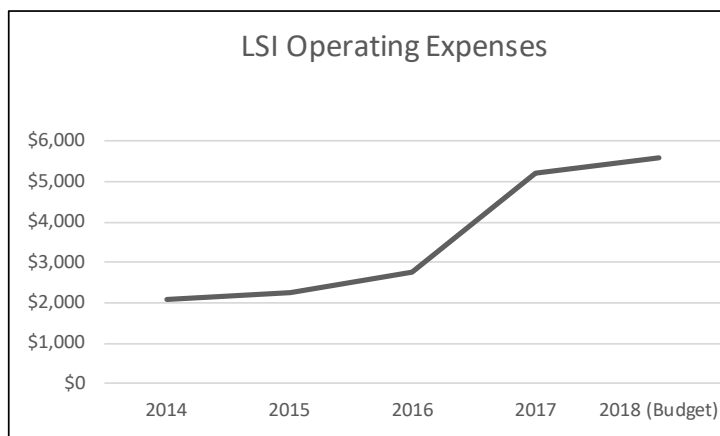
In May of 2014, the LSI Board approved a program of planned expansion for LSI. Since then, circulation of the LSI Journal is up over 600%, and membership is up over 110%. More pastors and teachers contact LSI for creation apologetic assistance than ever before.





Financial Cost of Growth

As our ministry grows, so do ministry costs. Our 2018 budget is 167% larger than in 2014. Most of these increased expenses are due to distributing LSI Journals at conferences and conventions to pastors, teachers, and laity, in mailing journals to all WELS high schools, and in mailing journals to college campus ministries, grade schools, and congregations who request them. In 2017, nearly 3,000 color print journals were distributed through these channels. ***These programs have been a driving force behind our increased visibility and increasing membership. The result is that we are now getting creation apologetic materials into the hands of more pastors, teachers, students, and laity than ever before.***

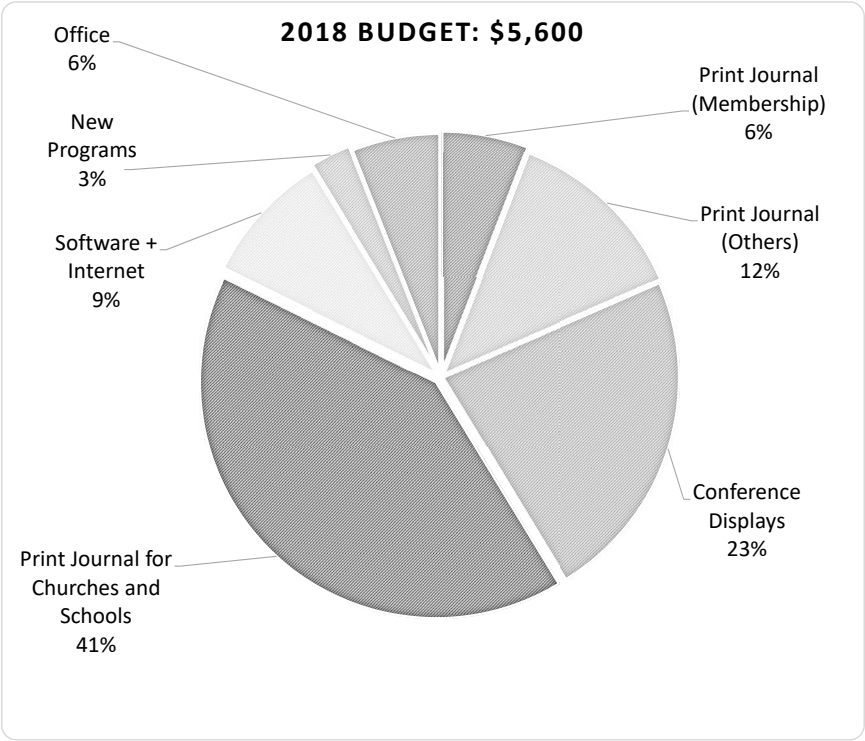


Gifts Essential to Ministry

Membership dues and payments for the print LSI Journal covered only 12% of our 2015-17 operating costs, leaving 88% to be covered by gifts. Over these past three years, LSI received 80 gifts ranging from \$1 to \$3,000, with a median size of \$30. Gifts of all sizes are important to LSI. The 52 gifts of \$30 and under covered 13% of our operating costs. We were also blessed with seven gifts of \$1,000 and above.

Increasing gift income is essential to the growth of our ministry. Please consider making a generous donation today. Gifts of all sizes are greatly appreciated, whether \$5, \$50, \$500, \$5,000, or more. Donations can be given using a credit card online, or by mailing a check to our address on page 2.

www.LutheranScience.org/donate



LSI Operating Fund		
Jan 1, 2017: Balance		\$3,247.71
Gifts	\$5,555.00	
Dues	\$121.00	
Print Journal Subscriptions	\$109.00	
Other	\$1.87	
Inflow Total		\$5,786.87
Expenses	\$5,220.25	
Transfer to Trust Fund	\$1,000.00	
Outstanding Liabilities	\$0.00	
Outflow Total		\$6,220.25
Dec 31, 2017: Balance		\$2,814.33

LSI Trust Fund		
Jan 1, 2017: Balance		\$6,112.56
Gifts	\$914.00	
Transfer from Operating Fund	\$1,000.00	
Interest on LACE notes	\$112.30	
Interest on checking	\$0.91	
Inflow Total		\$2,027.21
Dec 31, 2017: Balance		8,139.77

Consider Adding LSI to Your Will

The LSI Trust Fund is ready to receive estates of all sizes, whether \$5,000 or \$500,000. The LSI Trust Fund was created in late 2014 and is governed by the document at: www.LutheranScience.org/Trust

The LSI Trust Fund Serves Two Purposes:

- 1) To accumulate funds for larger ministry programs and eventually for a paid staff to do tasks our volunteer staff is unable to do.
- 2) To ensure LSI operating expenses are met in years of income shortfall, as occurred in 2016 when the trust provided \$2,000 toward operating expenses.

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Dawkins: Evolution is an “Implausible Theory”

Richard Dawkins, Ph.D. in biology and international champion of evolution for the past 41 years, wrote many books to show evolution is true. In one of his more recent works, *The Greatest Show on Earth*, he quickly summarized six of his previous books which attempted to convince the reader to believe in billions of years. He then wrote, “Looking back on those books, I realized that the evidence for evolution was nowhere explicitly set out, and that this was a serious gap that I needed to close.” To close that gap, he wrote *The Greatest Show on Earth*, “This book is my personal summary of the evidence that the theory of evolution is actually a fact—as incontrovertible a fact as any in science.”

Dawkins closes his “summary of the evidence” for billions of years with the chapter, “*There is Grandeur in This View of Life.*” As he wraps up that last chapter and closes the book, he makes a remarkable admission [*italics in original*],

The theory that we seek, of the origin of life on this planet, should therefore positively *not* be a plausible theory! If it were, life should be common in the galaxy. Maybe it is common, in which case a plausible theory is what we want. But we have no evidence that life exists outside this planet, and at very least we are entitled to be satisfied with an implausible theory.¹

This internationally famous defender of evolution, reflects on his

¹ Richard Dawkins, *The Greatest Show on Earth—The Evidence for Evolution*, hardcover ed. (New York NY: Free Press, 2009), 422.

(at that date) 33 years² of presenting proof for evolution, and determines he is “satisfied” to have an “implausible theory” of evolution!

That amazing admission is similar to what Dawkins wrote in his earlier 1986 best seller, *The Blind Watchmaker*, that evolution is “a leap of imagination so large, that to this day, many people seem unwilling to make it.” Dawkins writes,

A third respect in which our brains seem predisposed to resist Darwinism stems from our great success as creative designers. Our world is dominated by feats of engineering and works of art. We are entirely accustomed to the idea that complex elegance is an indicator of premeditated, crafted design. This is probably the most powerful reason for the belief, held by the vast majority of the people who have ever lived, in some kind of supernatural deity. It took a very large leap of imagination for Darwin and Wallace to see that, contrary to all intuition, there is another way and, once you have understood it, a far more plausible way, for complex “design” to arise out of primeval simplicity. A leap of imagination so large that, to this day, many people seem unwilling to make it. It is the main purpose of this book to help the reader make this leap.³

Dawkins seems to say that humans innately see nature as proof of a creator god, and that he wrote this book to help people reject that creator god. He also states that evolution is “far more plausible” than creation by a “supernatural deity.” Now, it is understandable that an atheist like Dawkins sees evolution as a “far more plausible” origins explanation than creation by a creator god. Yet Dawkins later admits (in our first quote above) that he sees this “far more plausible” origins explanation of evolution as “implausible.”

2 Amazon reports that Dawkins’ early book, *The Selfish Gene* (1976), is a “million copy international bestseller, critically acclaimed and translated into over 25 languages.”

3 Richard Dawkins, *The Blind Watchmaker*, 2nd ed. (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1996), xix. [First edition was in 1986.]

It's almost as if, in these quotations, Dawkins is doing his best to prove God right, when God reveals in Romans 1:18-23 (EHV):

Indeed, God's wrath is being revealed from heaven against all the ungodliness and unrighteousness of people who try to suppress the truth by unrighteousness. This happens because what can be known about God is evident among them, because God made it evident among them. In fact, his invisible characteristics—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen since the creation of the world, because they are understood from the things he made. As a result, people are without excuse, because, even though they knew God, they did not honor him or give him thanks as God. Instead, their thinking became nonsense, and their senseless heart was darkened. Although they claim to be wise, they have become fools, and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like a mortal human, or like birds, four-footed animals, and crawling things.

God reveals that everyone knows a powerful creator god exists because it is evident in nature. Dawkins writes that our “brains seem pre-disposed” to belief in a creator god.

God reveals that those who reject their Creator God “claim to be wise,” but they “try to suppress the truth” and become “fools” as they replace their Creator God with gods they make themselves. Dawkins, claiming to be wise, suppresses the truth and asks us to make “a very large leap of imagination” by rejecting our Creator God and instead being “satisfied with an implausible theory,” a theory invented by people.

If only everyone would accept their Creator God whom they see in nature, and their Savior God whom they see in Scripture. Pray for those blinded by unbelief.

MSB

Games Richard Dawkins Plays

Jeffery Stueber

It's football season. As I type this essay, I watch a familiar subplot play itself out on the field: the quarterback attempts to complete a pass in the end zone to a receiver with a history of dropping important passes. He's been a clutch receiver before, but this season he fails – continuously. However, his teammates have faith in him that someday, hopefully, he'll come through for them again. Despite his mistakes, there's truly nobody better to throw the ball to.

Dawkins apparently suffers from the same malady. He isn't throwing footballs around, of course, but he does have his favored arguments he continuously returns to hoping they will bear fruit while many casual readers miss the intellectual games he's playing.

First, I'll establish a bit of history. In 1986, Dawkins explained that “Natural selection is the blind watchmaker, blind because it does not see ahead, does not plan consequences, has no purpose in view.”¹ By using the phrase “blind watchmaker,” Dawkins alludes to an idea from 18th century theologian William Paley who explained that we can observe and infer God's creation in much the same way we can infer a watch's creator.² However, natural selection, Dawkins says, is as creative as a watchmaker, but blind and purposeless. Dawkins' argument later became the bedrock of Phillip Johnson's critique of evolution as a “blind watchmaker theory” —the theory that all life came about from a purposeless process.³

1 Richard Dawkins, *The Blind Watchmaker*, 3rd ed. (New York: Norton, 2006), 29. [This sentence is at the start of chapter 2. The 1986 edition has different page numbers.]

2 Kenneth Einar Himma, “1.c. Paley's Watchmaker Argument,” chapter of “Design Arguments for the Existence of God,” *The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy – A Peer Reviewed Academic Resource*. www.iep.utm.edu/design/#SH1c (accessed Jan 3, 2018)

3 Phillip Johnson is a Christian lawyer who took to critiquing evolution in his book *Darwin on Trial*.

Nature often appears to be intelligently created, but Dawkins claims that inference is an illusion. Evolutionists cannot admit that life is the result of any kind of design, due to their anti-god philosophy. They must, instead, cling to believing life is the result of a mindless process. The challenge for them, then, is to explain how life came about. They sneak intelligent design into their arguments without being obvious about it, and without admitting what they are doing—a trick that might be as difficult to pull off as, say, a game-winning pass to a pass-dropping receiver in the corner of the end zone.

In his more recent book, *The Greatest Show on Earth*, Dawkins continues to push his evolutionist ideas, but often what he denies with one hand he affirms with the other. Dawkins quotes a very telling paragraph from Charles Darwin's *The Origin of Species*.

It may be said that natural selection is daily and hourly scrutinizing, throughout the world, every variation, even the slightest; rejecting that which is bad, preserving and adding up all that is good; silently and insensibly working, whenever and wherever opportunity offers, at the improvement of each organic being in relation to its organic and inorganic conditions of life. We see nothing of these slow changes in progress, until the hand of time has marked the long lapse of ages, and then so imperfect is our view into long past geological ages, that we see only that the forms of life are now different from what they formerly were.⁴

Dawkins informs us that in later editions of *The Origin of Species*, like mine, the word “metaphorically” was added to the above paragraph to rephrase the first sentence to say that natural selection *metaphorically* daily and hourly scrutinizes. Apparently, some critics believed that it wasn't clear whether Darwin thought natural selection acted with some type of intelligence. Dawkins quotes a French author named Janet, as reproduced

4 Richard Dawkins, quoting Darwin, *The Greatest Show on Earth*, (New York: Free Press, 2009), 64.

by fellow evolutionist Alfred Wallace, as complaining that Darwin too often compared natural selection to the type of selection humans employ. Dawkins seems sensitive to this as occasionally putting the word “chosen” in quotes to indicate the choosing natural selection does is metaphorical when, for instance, he argues that those individuals that are “chosen” because they possess superior equipment necessary to survive are the most likely to reproduce and pass on genes for possessing superior equipment.⁵

If Dawkins wants to be consistent in making a distinction between a *purposeful* process and *purposeless* process, then he must stop arguing that natural selection has intelligent planning abilities.

Yet, Dawkins cannot stop himself from granting intelligence to natural selection [*italics in original*],

Darwin’s special genius realized that nature could play the role of selecting agent. ...But it was Darwin who first spotted that you don’t have to have a choosing *agent*. The choice can be made automatically by survival—or failure to survive.⁶

This is strange language, because we normally attribute the act of making a choice to an intelligent agent. A rainstorm does not select what lands it will drench, and neither does an earthquake select what cities to destroy. However, a bird selects what branch to sit on, ants select where to build ant hills, and humans select where to build a house or what car to buy. If you read what Dawkins says at this point in the book with what he says elsewhere, it appears he wants to convince us that natural selection only metaphorically “selects” while at other times wants to argue that natural selection actually does the kind of selecting humans do. This is obvious at this point in his book because he’s essentially saying that natural selection is taking the place of an intelligent selecting agent.

Let me cement my complaint using an analogy apart from evo-

⁵ Dawkins, *Blind Watchmaker*, 63, 65.

⁶ Dawkins, *Blind Watchmaker*, 62-63.

lutionary biology. Assume for a moment that I had argued that a football *only metaphorically* chooses to go out of bounds or drift towards a receiver and, yet, had made it the hallmark of my arguments not just once but in many publications that a football can choose which way it wants to go. You, of course, may suspect that I really do think a football can consciously decide which direction to go, even as I claim I don't really believe it.

Now at this point, some readers may be thinking, "Evolutionists often speak metaphorically when suggesting natural selection makes choices just like people make choices, so what's the big deal about that?" My response is that evolutionists go way beyond speaking metaphorically, they actually grant intelligence to natural selection in their scientific models and in the way they describe those models.

For instance, in chapter 3 of *The Blind Watchmaker*, Dawkins proposes several "computer models" to demonstrate how natural selection works.⁷ One model is a computer program which reproduces the output of a monkey typing on a computer trying to produce the phrase "Methinks it is like a weasel." The chance of producing this phrase from random typing, an example of what he calls "single-step selection of random variation,"⁸ is, according to Dawkins, 1/27 multiplied by itself 28 times.⁹ Dawkins realizes that is so unlikely that it would never happen, even in the supposed 14 billion years the universe has existed. He has a solution though; he changes the program a bit. This time the program begins with a random phrase, which is then duplicated many times with errors. The resulting phrase which most closely resembles the "Methinks it is like a weasel" target phrase is kept as the new starting phrase. Each time the program runs, it breeds off a new phrase closer to the desired target phrase. After 43 generations of a phrase duplications, the computer was able to recreate the target phrase. This is what Dawkins calls "cumulative selection,"¹⁰ and is supposed to replicate the type of selection Darwinian evolution builds upon. Dawkins thinks that natural selection builds upon mutations in the

7 Dawkins, *Blind Watchmaker*, 61-105.

8 Dawkins, *Blind Watchmaker*, 68.

9 Dawkins, *Blind Watchmaker*, 67.

10 Dawkins, *Blind Watchmaker*, 68.

same way this computer program builds upon reproductions, until it produces the required phrase. *Natural selection has a desired creature in mind and saves mutations which lead to that target creature.*

Are these just random occurrences of Dawkins' mistakes popping up like a Darwinian mutation? No, Dawkins was still making these same arguments decades later. Dawkins' *The Blind Watchmaker* was first published in 1986, and in it he proposed many computer models to simulate natural selection, such as the "Methinks" model described above. Decades later, Dawkins was still making these same arguments, where he sneaks intelligence into his natural selection models. He devoted many pages in each of several chapters in his 2009 book, *The Greatest Show on Earth*, to the computer models he proposed so many years before. Dawkins writes,

About 25 years ago I developed a computer simulation to illustrate the power of artificial selection: a kind of computer game equivalent to breeding prize roses or dogs or cattle. ...Although the Blind Watchmaker program starts off with a simple branching tree, it rapidly wanders off into a wonderland of evolved forms, many with strange beauty, and some—depending on the intentions of the human player—coming to resemble familiar creatures such as insects, spiders, or starfish.¹¹

Again, Dawkins is sneaking intelligence into his models of natural selection. This computer model of natural selection features human interaction. Dawkins reveals that "the intentions of the human player" lead the natural selection computer model to produce a line drawing somewhat resembling a desired animal such as an insect, spider, or starfish. Several dozen such creatures or "biomorphs" are shown on page 40 of *The Greatest Show*.

What Dawkins must believe when using such examples, is that natural selection knows what type of animal it will produce and what genetic sequences it must preserve. However, this type of knowledge and planning for the future are traits of an intelligent being and not an un-

¹¹ Dawkins, *Greatest Show*, 39, 41.

intelligent process. A quarterback will select what receiver he wants to throw the ball to and a coach will preserve those receivers most capable of catching the ball. However, natural processes don't do this, because they are *unintelligent* and *purposeless*.

Dawkins has found his substitute god—a god of natural selection that creates, plans, and preserves.

If we take Dawkins' arguments in their entirety, we get a good picture of how Dawkins thinks. It's obvious he must believe that natural selection is some nebulously intelligent agent that has knowledge of the future path of evolution and selects the proper genetic sequences it needs.

Each random mutation could be taken as a biological event, and the survival of the fittest in each instance of struggle for life are separate events in the history of life. You could say the mouse not getting eaten by the cat, the fish not getting caught by the fisherman, and the soldier surviving a battle are examples of natural selection in action. However, it would be a mistake to attribute some type of planning capabilities to a personified natural selection that builds adaptations in each of these examples. Yet, Dawkins appears to be claiming that is what happens.

Dawkins said, “Darwin made it possible to be an intellectually fulfilled atheist.”¹² Dawkins is certainly that. Here we see the reason Dawkins is intellectually fulfilled. He has found his substitute god that replaces the God of Christianity—a god of natural selection that creates, plans, and preserves. While a football team might eventually give up on a receiver who drops too many balls, Dawkins can never give up on his atheist philosophy, even if he has to make a god out of natural selection.

Jeffrey Stueber, a free-lance writer, serves as secretary of the Lutheran Science Institute. He is a member of St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church in Watertown WI.

¹² Dawkins, *Blind Watchmaker*, 10.

Geologic Column

Mark Bergemann

1. Introduction

A previous article in this series showed that natural selection is a mixture of reality and fabrication,

Natural selection is a significant scientific discovery. It helps us better understand how the Biblical kinds of plants and animals diversified into so many species. ... God built rich genetic diversity into living things allowing their offspring to change in size and color, to adapt to new environments, and to significantly modify their diets, behavior, temperament, and so much more, all “according to their kinds.”¹

Because evolutionists reject the possibility of a creator god, they need a way for new kinds of creatures to develop. The two examples of natural selection we examined so far do not meet this need. Enter fabrication. Even though it has never been seen to happen, evolutionists claim natural selection can produce new kinds of creatures (like birds descending from dinosaurs, or humans descending from ape-like creatures).²

¹ Mark Bergemann, “Natural Selection,” *LSI Journal* 30, no. 4 (2016): 31. www.LutheranScience.org/2016fall (accessed Jan 3, 2018)

² Bergemann, 29.

Like much of Evolution Theory,
the Geologic Column is a mixture
of reality and fabrication.

The vast time evolutionists assign to the column is the problem, not the rock layers and fossils in the column, nor their sequence.

To a geologist who assumes deep time (millions of years), the Geologic Column shows over 500 million years of common descent. To a geologist who believes in creation, the Geologic Column shows created kinds of plants and creatures killed in the Noachian Flood and mostly deposited over a five-month period.³

This is a conflict between two worldviews (or two presuppositions): Those whose worldview is that there is a Creator as described in the Bible, and those whose worldview is that there is no creator.⁴ The conflict was the same over 200 years ago, when geologists on both sides of the issue debated. Dr. Terry Mortenson—Ph.D. in the history of geology—makes an observation about the origins debate of the early 1800s,

The controversy is not between science and religion, but between anti-biblical religions/philosophies and biblical Christianity. ... The origins debate was in the nineteenth century and still is today a worldview conflict, a conflict

³ Some creationists accept other possibilities for the origin of fossils, such as God creating fossils during creation week. This article presents the overwhelmingly predominant creationist view, that most fossils are a result of Noah's Flood. For a brief discussion of other possibilities, see "Dinosaur Fossils Explained" www.LutheranScience.org/dino (accessed Jan 3, 2018)

⁴ A large portion of evolutionists in the USA are Christians who believe that God used billions of years of death and suffering to create. While they believe God started evolution by causing the Big Bang, and God was involved when the first human received a soul, they write the evolution story assuming no creator was involved at any point. So in this regard, they too assume that there is no creator.

over the assumptions used to interpret the geological evidence and a battle over the reliability and authority of the bible.⁵

2. Scientific Development

Let's start by briefly looking at how the column was developed. Mortenson reports how ancient scholars viewed fossils,

Back to ancient Greek times, many scholars believed that fossils were the remains of formerly living things and many Christians (including Tertullian, Chrysostom, and Augustine) attributed them to the Noachian flood.⁶

So, leaders of the Christian church in the 3rd and 4th centuries believed that fossils were the remains of creatures which died in Noah's Flood. 1,200 years later, the modern scientific field of geology was developed from the 1500s through the 1700s.⁷

The geologist who invented the basic scientific concepts used to create the geologic column was Niels Steensen (Nicholas Steno), who believed the earth was about 6,000 years old and that the sedimentary rock layers and the fossils they contained were deposited by Noah's Flood.

In 1669 Steno published, "*Preliminary Discourse to a Dissertation on a Solid Body Naturally Contained Within a Solid.*" The University of California Museum of Paleontology reports on Steno's famous work,

Nicholas Steno's work on the formation of rock layers and

5 Terry Mortenson, *The Great Turning Point: The Church's Catastrophic Mistake on Geology—Before Darwin* (Green Forest, AR: Master Books, 2004), 16.
6 Mortenson, 25.

7 "*The fundamental features of geological study, namely, field work, collection, and theory construction, were not developed until the 16th to 18th centuries.*" Mortenson, 25.

the fossils they contain was crucial to the development of modern geology. The principles he stated continue to be used today by geologists and paleontologists. ... This is now referred to as Steno's law of superposition: layers of rock are arranged in a time sequence, with the oldest on the bottom and the youngest on the top, unless later processes disturb this arrangement. ... Steno himself saw no difficulty in attributing the formation of most rocks to the flood mentioned in the Bible. ... The data and conclusions that Steno put forth in his "preliminary discourse" were enough to have earned him the title of "Father of Stratigraphy."⁸

A large portion of geologists and other scientists from 1600 through 1790, including Steno, attributed sedimentary rock layers and the fossils they contained to Noah's Flood.^{9,10} However, by the late 1700s, "a number of factors were preparing the ground for the geological revolution of the coming century."¹¹ In 1795 James Hutton published his *Theory of the Earth*, which proposed "uniformitarianism: everything in the rock record must be explained by present day processes of erosion, sedimentation, volcanoes, and earth quakes."¹² Hutton rejected a planetary flood such as Noah's Flood. Between 1815-1817, William Smith published

8 Ben Waggoner, "Nicholas Steno (1638-1686)," The University of California Museum of Paleontology, 7-20-00, <http://www.ucmp.berkeley.edu/history/steno.html> (accessed Jan 3, 2018)

9 "The scientists in the 1600s and 1700s who began the study of geology thought fossil groups were stacked up in the order they were buried during the year of Noah's flood." Gary Parker and Mary Parker, *The Fossil Book* (Green Forest AR: Master Books, 2006), 19.

10 Scientists from this time frame who attributed some or all fossils to the Noachian Flood, include naturalist John Ray (1627-1705), geologist Niels Steensen or Steno (1669), geologist John Woodward (1695), mathematician William Whiston (1696), geologist Alexander Catcott (1768), and geologist Johann Lehman (d. 1767). Scientists who rejected the Flood as the source for fossils (although some still accepted that there was a Noachian Flood) include naturalist Martin Lister (1638-1712), scientist Robert Hook (1635-1703), geologist John Whitehurst (1778), geologist Jean Elieenne Guettard (1715-86), geologist Nicholas Desmarest (1735-1815), and geologist Giovanne Arduino (1714-95). Mortenson, 25-26.

11 Mortenson, 27.

12 Mortenson, 28.

three books where he used index fossils to correlate the rock layers in England and Wales, explaining the order and chronology of those rock layers.¹³ “By the end of the 1820’s the major divisions of the geologic record were quite well defined.”¹⁴ Between 1830 and 1833, Charles Lyell published a three-volume work, *Principles of Geology*, which added more uniformitarian ideas to those advanced by Hutton nearly four decades earlier. Mortenson reports,

Lyell’s work was the “coup de grace” for belief in the Flood, in that it explained the whole rock record by slow gradual processes. ...Lyell saw himself as “the spiritual saviour of geology, freeing the science from the old dispensation of Moses.”¹⁵

Response of the Christian Church to Millions of Years

Mortenson’s 272-page book, *The Great Turning Point*, chronicles an important controversy which took place in Britain in the early 1800s, when the “scriptural geologists,” a group of scientists and clergy, “opposed the new geological theories being developed at the time.”¹⁶ These men advanced what had, until the late 1700s,¹⁷ been the prevailing theological and scientific position, that the earth is thousands of years old and that much of the earth’s sedimentary rock was laid down during a planetary flood. Mortenson reveals the sad outcome,

As the 19th century progressed, the question of origins (astronomical, geological, and biological) was moving rapidly away from assumptions rooted in Christianity to semi-deistic, agnostic or atheistic framework. The rear-guard action of the scriptural geologists was too little and too late to stop this cultural shift in world view. By the publication of Darwin’s book in 1859 the scriptural ge-

¹³ Mortenson, 29.

¹⁴ Mortenson, 30.

¹⁵ Mortenson, quoting Roy S. Porter, 33.

¹⁶ Mortenson, 11.

¹⁷ See the previous paragraphs and footnotes 9 + 10.

ologists had almost become an “extinct species” of the human race. Lyell’s uniformitarianism had conquered geology. In addition, virtually the whole Christian church had accepted the idea of millions of years.¹⁸

Geologists (both evolutionists and creationists) agree that the worldwide order of the Geologic Column has a clear sequence, with the Cambrian layer on the bottom.

3. Reality in the Column

Geologic Systems and Index Fossils

Rivers, lakes, and oceans deposit particles which then may become compressed to form sedimentary rock like limestone and shale. The walls of the Grand Canyon are this type of rock. Geologists (both evolutionists and creationists) agree that there are vast layers of sedimentary rock all over the earth, and these rock layers can be categorized by the particular “*index fossils*”¹⁹ they contain. Geologists call each of these rock layer types a “*geologic system*.”²⁰ For example, one geologic system is called the Cambrian System, but the word “system” is normally dropped for brevity.²¹ The index fossils in the Cambrian include trilobites (one particular type) and nautiloids. There are 12 named geologic systems, and these are grouped into three “*super systems*.”²²

¹⁸ Mortenson, 236.

¹⁹ “*Index fossil, any animal or plant preserved in the rock record of the Earth that is characteristic of a particular span of geologic time or environment. A useful index fossil must be distinctive or easily recognizable, abundant, and have a wide geographic distribution and a short range through time. Index fossils are the basis for defining boundaries in the geologic time scale and for the correlation of strata.*” “Index Fossil,” Encyclopædia Britannica. <https://www.britannica.com/science/index-fossil> (accessed Jan 3, 2018).

²⁰ USGS, “Stratigraphic Notes 1985-86,” U.S. Geological Survey Bulletin 1775A, 55, 59 (pages 14, 18 in pdf). <https://www.nwrc.usgs.gov/techrpt/sta08.pdf> (accessed Jan 3, 2018)

²¹ USGS, 49 (page 8 in pdf).

²² Gary Parker and Mary Parker, 25.

Sequence of Rock Layers

Although all 12 named rock layers are not found together anywhere on earth, they are found with multiple layers on top of each other in many places. A sequence of layers in any one place is called a “*stratigraphic series*.” Geologists (both evolutionists and creationists) agree that the worldwide order has a clear sequence, with the Cambrian layer on the bottom. All 12 rock layers in this accepted vertical sequence is called the “*Geologic Column*.”²³ There are additional rock layers below the Cambrian, and these are referred to as “*Precambrian*.” The Geologic Column is depicted on page 31.

Creationist Andrew Snelling agrees, “The robustness of the overall fossil order and strata sequence of the geologic record has been clearly established.”²⁴ Creationist Roger Patterson also agrees,

The geologic column presented in textbooks is a composite of many smaller columns that can be identified from direct observation. However, the presence of a general order in the rock record is undeniable. Questions about the nature of the geologic column ultimately center on the origin of the rock record.²⁵

The Geologic Column is a significant scientific discovery. It helps us better understand the original diversity of creation.

²³ Gary Parker and Mary Parker, 19, 25.

²⁴ Andrew A. Snelling, “Doesn’t the Order of Fossils in the Rock Record Favor Long Ages?” in *The New Answers Book 2*, ed. Ken Ham (Green Forest AK: Master Books, 2008), 345. <https://answersingenesis.org/fossils/fossil-record/doesnt-order-of-fossils-in-rock-favor-long-ages/> (accessed Jan 3, 2018)

²⁵ Roger Patterson, *Evolution Exposed: Earth Science – Your Evolution Answer Book for the Classroom*, (Answers in Genesis, 2009), chap. 6. <https://answersingenesis.org/geology/geologic-time-scale/geologic-column/> (accessed Jan 3, 2018)

Noah's Flood

As previously documented, before 1790 it was common for scientists to accept Noah's Flood as the best scientific explanation for the source of fossil containing rock layers. The various fossil containing rock layers seem to reflect the places on earth (and the elevation) where these plants and creature lived before they were buried by the Flood, the sequence they were buried during and after the Flood, their ability to temporarily escape the Flood, and hydrodynamic sorting factors of the Flood waters.²⁶

It would be hazardous for people to live near dinosaurs, so you would not expect to find people buried with dinosaurs, because the two lived in separate places. Land animals did not live on the bottom of the sea, so you would not expect to find land animals buried with sea floor dwelling trilobites.

It took up to five months²⁷ for the flood waters to completely cover the entire earth. During those months, plants and creatures were not all buried at the same time. Creatures living on the sea bottom were probably buried first, forming the Cambrian, the lowest Geologic Column system. Creatures which lived in the lower and lower-middle depths of the sea were probably buried next, resulting in the Ordovician. Creatures living in the upper-middle depths of the sea, near the sea surface, or on land near the sea shore, may have been buried next, resulting in the Silurian and Devonian. Other rock layers reflect various places creatures lived, such as plains, forests, valleys, and mountains. We know that sequential rock layers can be deposited in only months. "The 1980 eruption of Mt. St. Helens showed thick rock layers can be deposited, and then canyons up to 600 feet deep cut through them, in months."²⁸

Gary Parker (Ed. D. Biology/Geology) makes this case with colorful charts and diagrams in *The Fossil Book*.²⁹ Andrew Snelling (Ph.D.

²⁶ Snelling, 347-354.

²⁷ Genesis 7:11-24, especially verses 17-20. Verse 24: "The waters surged on the earth 150 days."

²⁸ Mark Bergemann, "Assumptions of Evolutionists," *LSI Journal*, vol. 31 no. 4 (2017):14. www.LutheranScience.org/2017fall (accessed Jan 3, 2018)

²⁹ Gary Parker and Mary Parker, 18-25.

geology) provides a much more detailed explanation of how the Flood could sort and deposit these fossil layers.³⁰

Geologists who accept Noah's Flood

Geologists who accept Scripture's historical account of a planetary flood on earth, see the geologic column as evidence of created kinds of plants and creatures killed in the Noachian Flood and deposited in about a five-month period.

Based on their belief in *Scripture*, they assume each of the 12 geologic systems (or rock layers) were deposited during *and after the Noachian Flood*. The oldest and bottom layer, the Cambrian, is thought to have been deposited *near the start of the Flood, thousands of years ago*. The most recent and top layer, the Quaternary, is thought to have been deposited *near the end of the Flood and after the Flood, thousands of years ago*. Fossils in the Cambrian and Jurassic layers are thought to be the remains of creatures who lived in different *places at the same time*. People, dinosaurs, and trilobites lived in separate *places at the same time*.³¹

4. Fabrication in the Column

Geologists who reject Noah's Flood

Geologists who reject the possibility of a planetary flood on earth (including atheists and most Christians), and instead assume natural causes over millions of years, see the Geologic Column as evidence of common descent over 500 million years. Evolutionists use the above terms, but also have additional terms, reflecting their assumption that each layer is from a different time period. "Systems" are also called "Periods." "Super Systems" are also called "Eras" or "Erathems."³² The previous paragraph has been duplicated below, except the underlined parts have been changed

³⁰ Snelling, 347-354.

³¹ Gary Parker and Mary Parker, 20, 25.

³² USGS, 59 (page 18 in pdf).

to show where evolutionists differ from creationists.

Based on their belief in *natural causes*, they assume each of the 12 geologic systems (or rock layers) were deposited during *12 sequential and very long periods of time*. The oldest and bottom layer, the Cambrian, is thought to have been deposited *between 543 and 490 million years ago*. The most recent and top layer, the Quaternary, is thought to have been deposited *over the last 2 million years*. Fossils in the Cambrian and Jurassic layers are thought to be the remains of creatures who lived in different *time periods*. People, dinosaurs, and trilobites lived in separate *time periods*.³³

**Why not start a discussion
with the parts of the column on which
creationists and evolutionists can agree,
then move to the parts where we differ?**

7. Application and Conclusion

Many creationists attempt to show evolution wanting when they say, “The Geologic Column does not exist anywhere in the world, except in textbooks.” This is a true statement, but it has much less apologetic value than these creationists think. There is strong and convincing evidence for the overall sequence of the Geologic Column. Why imply there is not? Creation geologists agree with evolutionists in the sequence of the Geologic Column. Recall our previous quote from creationist Andrew Snelling, “The robustness of the overall fossil order and strata sequence of the geologic record has been clearly established.”³⁴

Why not start a discussion with the parts of the column on which creationists and evolutionists can agree, then move to the parts where we differ?

³³ Gary Parker and Mary Parker, 20, 25.

³⁴ Snelling, 345.

Creationists and evolutionists agree on the sequence of the fossil containing rock layers, but disagree on the time scale. Creationists do not accept as valid the “no creator,” “no flood,” and “deep time” unproven assumptions which direct and constrain the science of evolutionists. [See “Assumptions of Evolutionists” in the Fall 2017 LSI Journal.] The catastrophic planetary flood described in Scripture seems to be a solid explanation for the Geologic Column. The 500-million-year common descent explanation of evolutionists seems to have many problems, some of which we will examine in the next issue of the LSI Journal.

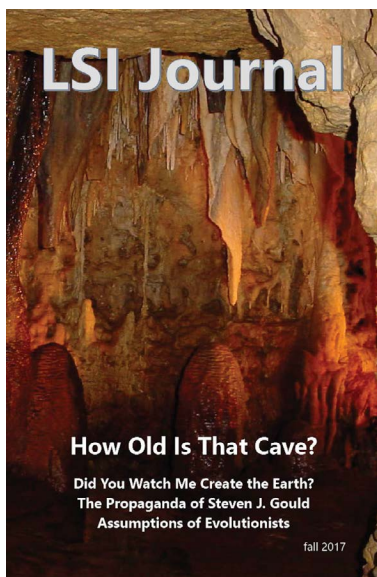
Like natural selection, the Geologic Column is a significant scientific discovery. It helps us better understand the original diversity of creation. So many amazing and unique plants and animals God created have gone extinct.

More importantly, the Geologic Column reminds us of God’s judgment on the pre-Flood world. Everyone will eventually face their Creator, and so will we. We who trust Jesus as our Savior from sin are already wearing Jesus’ robe of righteousness. God sees us as He sees His Son, sinless heirs of eternal life. Those without faith in Jesus will spend eternity completely separated from God in eternal darkness. May His kingdom come to the hearts and minds of all unbelievers, so they too can share an eternity with Jesus.

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Page 31 image credit: 2017 Mark Bergemann. List of “appearing” life forms based on details in: *Guide To Creation Basics*, (Dallas, TX: Institute for Creation Research, 2013), 30.

Super System	System	Appearing
Cenozoic <i>Late and Post Flood</i>	Quaternary	Mankind
	Tertiary	Mammals
Mesozoic <i>Mid Flood</i>	Cretaceous	Seed Bearing Plants, Dinosaurs
	Jurassic	Some Birds
	Triassic	Cycads, Some Dinosaurs
Paleozoic <i>Early Flood</i>	Permian	Some Reptiles
	Pennsylvanian	Some Insects
	Mississippian	Many Crinoids
	Devonian	Cartilage Fish, Some Seed Plants
	Silurian	Some Land Animals
	Ordovician	Some Bony Fish
	Cambrian	Invertebrates, Brachiopods, Trilobites
Geologic Column		2017 Mark Bergemann



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