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Racine, Wisconsin 53402

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Well Designed:

Emperor Penguins



Josh Landis—U.S. Antarctic Program Photo Library

**Creation  
Web Sites**

**New Research Questions  
Theories of  
Human Evolution**

**Reflections on the Opening of the Creation Museum**



## LUTHERAN SCIENCE INSTITUTE, INC.

4130 Harvest Lane  
Racine, Wisconsin 53402-9562  
<http://www.lutheranscience.org>

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).

**OFFICERS:** ( ) denotes remaining years in office.

**PRESIDENT:** REV. GEORGE ENDERLE (2)  
421 Glen View Ct. S  
Slinger, WI 53086-9660  
E-mail: [enderle@charter.net](mailto:enderle@charter.net)

**VICE PRES.:** TED NOMMENSEN (1)  
1512 Roosevelt Dr. S  
West Bend, WI 53090-1325  
(262) 338-0145  
E-mail: [tonommy@nconnect.net](mailto:tonommy@nconnect.net)

**SECRETARY:** REV. MARK SCHOENECK (2)  
PO Box 237  
Marshall, WI 53559-0237  
(608) 655-3691

**TREASURER:** CRAIG SCHWARTZ (1)  
1710 Ulster St.  
Denver, CO 80220-2053  
(303) 393-8216  
E-mail: [jcs@ecentral.com](mailto:jcs@ecentral.com)

## BOARD of DIRECTORS:

RICHARD HECKEL (2)  
6524 16th Avenue  
Kenosha, WI 53143  
(262) 653-1810

MARCUS HAGEN (1)  
8205 Gina Drive.  
Racine, WI 53406  
(262) 886-6379

JEFFREY STUEBER (2)  
704 N. 2ND Street  
Watertown, WI 53098  
E-mail: [jstueber@charter.net](mailto:jstueber@charter.net)

MARK GROTH (1)  
5405 W. Nokomis Road  
Brown Deer, WI 53223  
(414) 355-5087  
E-mail: [MarkGroth@wels.net](mailto:MarkGroth@wels.net)

MELVIN SCHWARTZ (1)  
19900 128th St., Box 732  
Bristol, WI 53104-9403  
(262) 857-2934

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:** BRUCE HOLMAN, Ph.D.  
7832 W. Lorraine Pl.  
Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53222  
(414) 771-1425

**EDITOR:** WARREN KRUG  
4130 Harvest Lane  
Racine, WI 53402-9562  
(262) 639-4931  
E-mail: [WPKrug5@yahoo.com](mailto:WPKrug5@yahoo.com)

## MEETING SCHEDULE\*

- ◆ 4th Saturday in January, 1:00 p.m. — Shoreland
- ◆ 2nd Tuesday in June, 5:00 p.m. — held in conjunction with the S.E. Wisconsin District Convention or Pastor-Teacher Conference
- ◆ Last Thursday in October, noon — held in conjunction with the WELS Wisconsin State Teachers Convention
- ◆ Saturday before Thanksgiving in November, 1:00 p.m. — Shoreland

\*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.

## LSI Journal

Vol. 21, No. 4

July-August, 2007

### 4 Well Designed: The Emperor Penguin and Dolphins

Everything about Emperor penguins and dolphins points to design by an intelligent Creator.

### 7 Creation Websites

By Tom Buege

Exciting things are happening in the world of creation web sites and LSI is privileged to be part of it.

### 10 New Research Questions Theories of Human Evolution

This article shows once again the highly dubious nature of theories based on evolution.

### 12 Reflections on the Opening of the Creation Museum

By Warren Krug

This museum has aroused emotions like few other museums and has garnered attention not just nationwide but from around the world.

### 14 DVD Review: *Biology 101*

### 15 LSI News: Library Filling Up / Call for Candidates / LSI Publications May Be E-Mailed

### 16 News

### 20 Kids' Page: Vultures

### 22 My View: God's Word—the Answer for Both "Esteem" Problems

## Coming

### Can A Christian be a Good Scientist?

Christians don't have to put their brains in the closet to be good scientists.

### Darwin on the Galapagos

What you have probably heard about Charles Darwin, finches, and the Galapagos Islands may be a myth.

**THE LSI Journal** is published five times a year by the Lutheran Science Institute. [Views expressed herein are not necessarily those of the Institute.](#)

Send your suggestions, comments, and manuscripts to:

LSI JOURNAL  
4130 HARVEST LANE  
RACINE, WI 53402-9562

or e-mail: [admin@lutheranscience.org](mailto:admin@lutheranscience.org)

The Annual Meeting of the Institute is held the Saturday before 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*.

# Well Designed: The Emperor Penguin

One of the most remarkable birds is the Emperor Penguin which lives in the Antarctic, the coldest place on earth. Penguins are flightless birds, and although they are clumsy on land, they are amazing swimmers, using their wings as flippers. Emperors swim at 15 km/h (9 mph) or more, stay below water as long as 20 minutes, and have been known to dive to a depth of 565 m (1870 ft)! Their ears and eyes are specially designed for use underwater, and they have a special gland which removes the salt from sea-water.

One of the most amazing things about Emperors, though, is the way they breed. The female lays her single egg at the beginning of the harsh Antarctic winter. She then passes the egg to her mate, and heads back to the sea



Josh Landis — U.S. Antarctic Program Photo Library

where she feeds on fish. The male keeps the egg on his feet, and covers it with a special flap of skin which has a rich supply of blood vessels—a kind of central heating system—that keep the egg at the right temperature. The penguins huddle in groups of up

Reprinted from publications of the Creation Resources Trust, United Kingdom; Geoff Chapman, director and editor.

to 6000 for two months of total darkness, with temperatures plunging as low as  $-60^{\circ}\text{C}$  and blizzards accompanied by winds that can reach 200 km/h (125 mph). The penguins on the outside of the group keep pushing inwards, so that they all get a turn in the warmer centre.

During all this time, the male penguin has no food, yet when the chick finally hatches he produces a milky substance from his throat to give the chick its first vital feed. The female then returns, finds her mate among the thousands of other birds, and takes over feeding the chick, while the male heads for the sea to get much-needed food. The

reason they hatch their eggs in the winter is to ensure that the chicks are strong enough to survive the following winter.

**Everything about the Emperor penguins points to design by an intelligent Creator, not mindless evolution. How did that specially heated incubation flap evolve — and in the male only? If penguins had to gradually adapt to such harsh conditions they would have been more likely to become extinct. And there is no evidence that they evolved from flying birds, as evolutionists claim—the oldest penguin fossils are 100% penguin!** [LS]

## Well Designed: Dolphins

Dolphins are some of the most intelligent creatures on earth. Evolutionists believe that these marine mammals evolved from land animals, although the fossil evidence doesn't support this theory. However, the purpose of this article is to highlight one part of the dol-

phin's design which evolution can't explain

Dolphins are very streamlined, and travel through the water at up to 25 miles (40 km) per hour. In 1936, a Cambridge scientist, Prof. James Gray, performed tests with rigid models of a dolphin and discovered that it was theoretically impossible for the dolphin to attain such speeds, as the energy required was ten times what its muscles could produce. He felt that there were two possible solutions to this "problem." Either the dolphin's muscles could generate much more energy than other animals—very unlikely—or the



Bottlenose Dolphin

BabyNuke photo

consists of a soft, waterlogged coating on a hard, fatty inner skin. The outer coating—only 1/16 inch thick—is made up of a diaphragm resting on thousands of tiny pillars, with waterlogged, spongy material between them.

Therefore, every tiny oscillation in the water on any part of the dolphin's body surface is automatically adjusted for. Kramer announced that he had discovered "a highly refined realization of the basic idea" of his 1938 patent. Tests with simulated models proved that this design reduced surface drag by as much as 60 percent!

dolphins possessed some means of reducing the friction drag of the water. The world's air forces and navies were keen to learn the dolphin's secret. Prof. Gray commented: "Nature's design for a dolphin is much more efficient than any submarine or torpedo yet produced by man."

### The Dolphin's Secret

In 1938, a German researcher, Max O. Kramer, patented a "Device for the Reduction of Friction Drag," which involved a method of reducing the turbulence caused by the flow of water over a battleship or air over a missile. His work was halted by the 2nd World War, but after the war he went to the USA, and during the sea crossing saw dolphins for the first time. Fascinated, he decided to learn more about these swift, graceful swimmers. He examined a piece of dolphin's skin under the microscope—and the dolphin's secret was out. The outer skin is not waterproof, but

**It seems incredible to believe that dolphins evolved from land mammals anyway, but to believe that this amazing device for reducing surface drag also evolved by chance stretches credibility to the breaking point. Even the world's most brilliant scientists couldn't invent anything as efficient, and when they discovered the dolphin's secret, they could only copy it! Such an ingenious design must owe its origin to God, the Master Designer. The real patent belongs to Him! LSI**

# Creation Websites



**BY TOM BUEGE**

The inaugural issue of the Lutheran Science Institute Bulletin asks its readers to recommend their favorite creation web sites. There are a great many such web sites on the Internet maintained by both regional and national organizations. Several are among the most popular Christian web sites on the Internet.

A good place to begin is our own LSI web site which has links to three of the most prominent creation web sites. LSI does have the following caveat, however:

"LSI does not necessarily agree with every statement made on the creationist sites listed above but does find that they contain much valuable information."

The following is just a sampling of interesting facts and impressions gleaned from each web site. Readers of this article may want to accept the challenge of the LSI Bulletin and analyze one or more of these sites in greater detail.

[www.answersingenesis.org](http://www.answersingenesis.org)



Answers in Genesis maintains

The author is an LSI member living in Greenville, Wisconsin.

the first creation link found on our LSI web site. It is also one of the most popular Christian web sites on the Internet. A few minutes spent exploring the site will show why.

AIG has a wealth of material ranging from technical and semi-technical articles to humorous cartoons. President and founder Ken Ham maintains a blog which he updates daily. The number of interviews, speaking engagements, and miles traveled are not only astonishing, but inspiring as well.

The staff of the new creation museum also maintains a blog which is updated several times a week. Both blogs make frequent use of photographs which in themselves are often worth a visit to the web site.

[www.icr.org](http://www.icr.org)



The Institute of Creation Research, founded in 1970 by Dr. Henry Morris, is one of the oldest

creation organizations in existence. As such, its web site contains a treasure trove of technical, semi-technical, and popular articles about the creation-evolution issue. Many of these articles are reprints from Acts and Facts and other ICR publications dating back several decades.

ICR's web site also offers courses in various areas of science taught from the creationist point of view. The LSI Journal would certainly be interested in the experiences of any readers who may have taken one of these courses.

[www.creationresearch.org](http://www.creationresearch.org)



The Creation Research Society was founded in 1963 as a scientific society governed by scientists. Voting membership is restricted to applicants with a post-graduate degree in a recognized area of science. This is an excellent site to use when confronted with the claim that no true scientist believes in a young earth or

six-day creation.

The highly-qualified members of the CRS publish a peer-reviewed scholarly publication called the Creation Research Society Quarterly.

The CRS web site reports that of all the university and metropolitan libraries in Wisconsin, only seven subscribe to its quarterly—and two of these are our own Wisconsin Lutheran College and Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary. The ONLY public or university library in Wisconsin which makes the CRSQ available to its constituents is the Milwaukee Public Library.

One can only wonder if this apparent censorship by the public library system is a major reason why so many evolutionists firmly believe that creationists never publish any scholarly, peer-reviewed materials.

[www.lutheranscience.org](http://www.lutheranscience.org)

Before examining the three sites described above, it will certainly be worthwhile to peruse our own LSI web site. One of the main goals of the Lutheran Science Institute is to promote the teaching and enjoyment of science in our WELS schools. Teachers have commented to this reviewer that they have made



good use of the News Briefs found in the LSI Journal. These are now available on our web site.

Another feature which is not found on any of the major creation web sites is the collection of public-domain animal pictures which can be down-loaded and used in teaching situations.

Our LSI web site also contains reprints of many LSI Journal articles. Simply click "Complete Index" at the bottom of the purple column on the left-hand side of the home page. The articles are arranged according to topic in alphabetical order, ranging from "abiogenesis" to "water vapor canopy theory." This allows for quick and easy access equal or superior to more expensive sites.

Exciting things are happening in the world of creation web sites and LSI is privileged to be part of it. [S]

## New Research Questions Theories Of Human Evolution

*Editor's note: this article was chosen because it shows once again the highly dubious nature of theories based on evolution.*

**R**esearch recently conducted by scientists at the Harvard Medical School, MIT, and the Broad Institute of Harvard and MIT has called into question some evolutionary theories regarding the origin of the human race. According to the Harvard Gazette, this research suggests “that ancestral humans split from chimpanzee forebears more recently than previously thought and raise the possibility that the two nascent species hybridized before making their final separation.” (Powell 2006:11)

The Gazette further reported that these “surprise findings” also call into question the place on the primate family tree of fossils that scientists had thought were the bones of ancestral humans, but which are older than the newly determined time that the species diverged.” (Ibid)

The research in question was conducted by David Reich, assistant professor of genetics at the

Harvard Medical School; Nick Patterson, Daniel Richter, and Sante Gnerre of the Broad Institute; and Eric Lander of MIT, and it was published in the May 17, 2006 online edition of the journal *Nature*. They examined differences between the genomes of chimpanzees and humans, comparing the mutations in both to find out how long ago they shared a theoretical common ancestor. (Ibid.)

For many years, evolutionary scientists have been stating that the theorized split between chimpanzees and humans into distinct species occurred between 7.4 million and 6.5 million years ago. The new research, however, claims that the split occurred “about a million years later than the previously accepted range...” (Ibid.) Moreover, the new findings suggest that, as the two budding species theoretically split, members of each species may have interbred to form hybrid offspring.

“Under the hybridization scenario, the ancestors of humans

Reprinted from the December 4, 2006 issue of Christian News.

and chimpanzees split from their common ancestor. After that initial separation, however, members of the two new species interbred an unknown number of times. Fertile hybrid offspring then may have mated back into one or both original populations, bringing in genes from the other species and leaving traces in the genetic code.” (Ibid. 11-12)

According to Eric Lander, the director of the Broad Institute, “The genome analysis revealed big surprises, with major implications for human evolution.” (Ibid. 12) However, as with so many theories regarding human origins, this latest finding is not set in stone, according to the Gazette: “Reich cautioned that through hybridization would answer several questions raised by the research, the research itself does not prove that hybridization occurred.” (Ibid. 11) Nonetheless, Reich indicated that (in the Gazette’s words), “the findings may cause scientists to re-examine beliefs about speciation and the rule of hybridization. Current thinking is that although hybrids do occasionally occur in nature, they are sterile or less fit than the parent populations and so eventually die out.” (Ibid. 12)

Regardless of whether the hybridization theory holds true, the team’s findings have called into question “several prominent

fossils” that have been touted as modern humans’ evolutionary ancestors. (Ibid.) Premier among them is the Toumai fossil, *Sahe-lanthropus tchadensis*. Scientists have dated this fossil to between 7.4 and 6.5 million years ago. In recent years it has been held up as one of the earliest direct evolutionary ancestors of mankind. However, as the Gazette reported, Toumai may soon be dethroned: “Through it [the Toumai fossil] has humanlike features, the fact that it predates the time when human ancestors finally split from chimpanzee ancestors throws its place on the human family tree into doubt...” (Ibid.)

Regardless of whether the new theory posited by Reich and his colleagues proves true in the end, the team’s findings do demonstrate the highly cloudy nature of the search for human origins. It is inadvisable for one group of paleoanthropologists to laud their findings as the last word in human evolution, since it is highly likely that, sooner or later, a new group of scientist will make a discovery or come up with a theory that wipes earlier theories off the map.

—Stephen Caesar, Associates for Biblical Research

### Reference

Powell, A. “Findings cloud human, chimp origins.” *Harvard Gazette*. 18 May, 2006.



## Reflections on the Opening of the Creation Museum

By Warren Krug

The 27-million-dollar Answers in Genesis Creation Museum in northern Kentucky near Cincinnati opened up Memorial Day with a crowd of over 4,000 paying customers. This museum has aroused emotions like few other museums and has garnered attention not just nationwide but from around the world.

Thumbs up to the museum for featuring Martin Luther nailing the 95 theses to the church door, apparently as part of an exhibit on church history or perhaps as an illustration of how to use the truth to successfully challenge the establishment. That should make Lutherans feel more comfortable at the museum.

One report, however, said that visitors upon leaving were asked to “make a decision for Christ.” We would have preferred that the museum would have avoided doctrinal issues over which Bible-believing Christians disagree. While not trying to

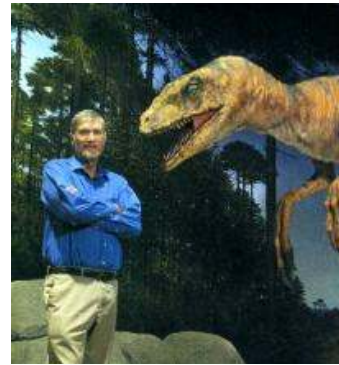
make too big a deal over this point, we must mention that Lutherans on the basis of the Bible believe natural man is unable to make a decision for Christ apart from God's Word and the Holy Spirit.

It was also surprising to see Adam and Eve pictured as Caucasians. Since they were the original parents of all humans, it probably would have been better to have shown them as a blend of the various “races.”

Some reports seemed to imply that the museum was designed to show that the entire Creation account could be scientifically proven. Don't think even Ken Ham, the founder of the museum, would suggest that we could scientifically prove that

The author is the editor of the LSI Journal. Opinions expressed are his and not necessarily those of the Lutheran Science Institute.

Eve was formed from Adam's rib, or that the creation took six days rather than six hours or six weeks, or that a snake tempted Eve. These things must be accepted by faith. On the other hand, more likely the museum's aim is to demonstrate that nothing in science contradicts the Creation account. With this we would wholeheartedly agree.



Ken Ham and friend

Demonstrators were on hand to protest the opening of the museum. Estimates of the number of protesters varied from 50 to 100, but they were accorded almost 50% of the coverage in many of the news reports.

Dinosaurs are big at the Creation Museum. Ham indicated that “we (creationists) are taking dinosaurs back” from the scientific establishment. But the anti-creationists were outraged to see people pictured together with dinosaurs or to see dinosaurs on

Noah's Ark. Evolutionists believe dinosaurs died out millions of years before the first humans. However, what do they have to say about that T-rex fossil discovered a couple of years ago that still contains soft tissue?!!!!<sup>1</sup>

One report out of Australia said this was the first creation museum to ever open. Not true, of course. Among several other creation museums is the Institute of Creation Research's museum in California that has been open for years. Also, coincidentally, still another creation museum was set to open its doors. The \$300,000 Big Valley Creation Science Museum in Big Valley, Alberta was set to open June 5.

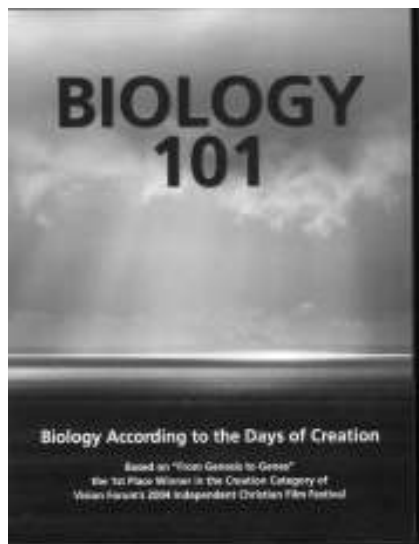
The AiG Creation Museum would seem to be a very worthwhile place for Christians (and non-Christians) to visit when in the area. First-day visitors who were interviewed about their impressions overwhelmingly gave the museum a “5” on a scale of 1 to 5. For more information on the museum's opening, check out the museum's web site: <http://www.creationmuseum.org>

### Reference

1. [http://www.answersingenesis.org/docs2005/0325Dino\\_tissue.asp](http://www.answersingenesis.org/docs2005/0325Dino_tissue.asp)

## ► DVD Review

### A Complete Biology Course on DVD?



***Biology 101.* Wes Olson, producer. 4-disc DVD. Kamiah, ID: Westfield Studios, 2006.**

How many biology teachers would like an entire introductory biology course on DVD? Well, this 4-disc DVD falls short of that, but it could form an important part of such a course. It will be included in our new library.

In 4½ plus hours of video, *Biology 101* presents the study of biology according to the days of creation recorded in Genesis.

Topics covered include the classification system, plants,

aquatic creatures, avian creatures, land animals, and man. The subject of genetics is covered in great detail.

A guidebook is included. The guidebook provides the text of the DVDs in written form along with additional information. There is a quiz provided for each of the six major sections.

A booklet called "Course Accreditation Program" gives suggestions on how to cover the course in 27 weeks. There are suggestions for lab work but no printed materials.

The DVDs themselves are well done with many full-action videos and color photographs. The whole set is well organized and graphs at the bottom of the screen keep the viewer in touch with how each life form fits into the system of classification.

Creative teachers who want to make this set of DVDs the basis of a course in biology will probably see the need for more printed materials, particularly a lab book or worksheets and possibly also additional review worksheets and tests.

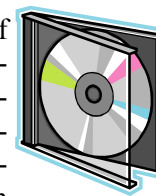
Biology teachers may want to rent this set of DVDs from our library in order to review it, and, if they like it, purchase it from one of the creationist organizations. We purchased our set from ICR for \$70.

—wpk

## ► LSI News

### Library Filling Up

Our new library is filling up with DVDs and videotapes. We have purchased over \$500 worth of these materials. All grade levels and various topics in the area of science are represented in this collection. These audio-visual aids present science from the biblical, creationist viewpoint.



In addition to the tapes and discs, we have a nice supply of science books which will also be added to the library. These books were accumulated by the editor as a reviewer for Northwestern Publishing House.

WELS and ELS churches and schools as well as LSI voting and associate members will be eligible to rent these materials. Members and schools—look for a catalog listing the materials as well as rental fees to arrive in your box sometime in August, God willing. The ability to rent these materials will also be made available via our web site.

We wish to thank the Thrivent insurance company for providing the funds to make this project possible.

## Call for Candidates

It's time to begin thinking about our next election. We invite all members and potential members to consider running for one of the positions.

To be elected later this year will be a vice-president, treasurer, and three members of the Board of Directors.

If you would be interested in running for an office but live a distance from southeastern Wisconsin and have a web cam, let us know. We have discussed the possibility of videoconferencing our meetings in the future if necessary.

### LSI Publications May Be E-Mailed

We have received a request from a member to have our publications, the LSI Journal and LSI Bulletin, e-mailed in Adobe Reader .pdf format rather than sent by way of the postal service. The LSI Board has approved this procedure for anyone interested.

E-mailing will save some mailing costs, particular the Bulletin which is mailed first class, and, for the environmentally concerned, it will save paper and ink.

Let us know if you would be interested in receiving either or both publications via e-mail in .pdf format.



## Galapagos Islands In Trouble

The Galapagos Islands, which are said to have inspired Charles Darwin's theory of evolution, are in trouble. Waves of tourists who visit the islands to see their unique array of flora and fauna are imperiling the ecosystem. The situation is so grave a UNESCO team is investigating to see if the islands should be listed as a major world heritage site "in danger." The introduction of insects that are harmful to plants and other animal species is a major concern.—*news.yahoo.com* (4/14/07)

## Religion Good for Children, Study Says

Religion is good for children, a new study says. A study led by a Mississippi State U. sociologist looked at the effects of religion on young child development. Parents and teachers of more than 16,000 children were interviewed. It was found that children with two parents who frequently attend religious services had better self-control, behavior and cooperation with peers—*www.worldnetdaily.com* (4/24/07) - thanks to Tom Buege



## Dinosaur Discovery Baffles Discoverer

"I was flabbergasted," the co-author of a study on dinosaur distinction said after discovering that the alleged disappearance of dinosaurs "65 million years" ago did not lead to a wave of new species, as a long-standing theory holds. The theory says that mammals were small during the time dinosaurs were around but larger mammals began showing up after the dinosaurs disappeared. However, the study found there was no burst of new species for ancestors of modern day mammals—*St Louis Post Dispatch* (3/29/07)



## Dinosaur Had No Feathers After All

A *Sinosauropteryx* dinosaur found in China and thought to have feathers now is known to have been bald, after a careful analysis of its fossil by researchers. The discovery calls into question the theory that dinosaurs began growing feathers as insulation and suggests that feathers were used as flight right from the beginning. The scientists said the distinctive patterns on the dinosaur's skin were not "protofeathers" but the remains of collagen fibers, the main connective tissue in animals.—*www.nature.com* (5/2/07)

## No Brain Evolution

U. of Chicago geneticist Chung-I Wu and his colleagues who studied the DNA sequences of genes in the brains of humans were surprised to find the brain genes "are surprisingly static," which implies human brains don't seem to be evolving. The scientists believe the extreme complexity of the human brain means "the wiggle room for evolutionary tinkering is limited."—*Discover* (April, 2007)



## No Connection Between Abortions and Cancer

There is no connection between abortions and breast cancer, according to a new Harvard study that looked at data from 105,716 women. However, the evidence does show that childbearing and breast-feeding do offer some benefits. Currently, three states—Texas, Minnesota, and Mississippi—require doctors to warn women seeking abortions of the purported link to breast cancer.—*Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* (4/14/07)

## A "Biblical-Style" Flood Created British Isles

According to Great Britain's *The Daily Telegraph*, a researcher has proposed that a "biblical-style flood" may have been the cause for the separation of the British Isles from the continent of Europe. Moreover, this separation could have happened in less than a day. — *Answers* (April-June, 2007)

## Drugs as Good as Surgery

Drugs may work just as well as surgery for many of the 1 million Americans who each year have angioplasty with stents inserted to open blocked arteries. A trial that tracked 2,000 people with stable coronary disease showed that angioplasty didn't cut the risk of death, heart attack, or other major heart complications. After five years, more than 70% of patients were free of angina pains whether they used drugs or had surgery.—*AARP Bulletin* (May, 2007)

## Exercise Helps Seniors

Aerobic exercise may increase the size of aging brains. A study published in November in *Journal of Gerontology: Medical sciences* seemed to show that the normal shrinkage of a brain in older people can actually be reversed with regular aerobic exercise. The six month study found an increase in both gray and white matter in the brains of participants who walked briskly for one hour 3 times a week.—*Mayo Clinic Health Letter* (May, 2007)

## New Surgery Technique Uses a Body's Natural Openings

A doctor removes a tumor through the nose. Other doctors have performed appendectomies through mouths of patients. Some still question the idea, but surgery through a body's existing openings leads to a faster recovery, less pain, and no visible scars.—*www.usa today.com* (4/29/07)

## Alcohol=Smaller Brain

Drinking alcohol, whether moderately or heavily, will lead to a smaller brain according to a new study. It is not clear yet whether the reduced volume of a brain equates to decreased cognitive function. However, with some studies suggesting a moderate use of alcohol is good for the heart, the chance that it may at the same time be bad for the brain has been raised by the study that was presented to the American Academy of Neurology.—*Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* (5/3/07)

## Good Headaches?

Migraine headaches may be good for you. A study has found that longtime, middle-aged migraine sufferers showed less cognitive decline and memory loss over a period of 12 years than a group of migraine-free adults. Researchers can't explain this surprising discovery but hope it can lead to new ways to preserve memory in aging brains.—*Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* (4/24/07)

## Fighting Alzheimer's

Mental stimulation and drug treatment could help reverse memory loss. According to research published in April, scientists placed mice with a condition like Alzheimer's into a "rodent Disneyland" in order to stimulate their brains. They also gave the rodents a drug to encourage growth of brain nerve cells. Both approaches seemed to improve the mental capacities of the mice.—*news.yahoo.com* (4/30/07)

## The First Europeans

Scientists are questioning the theory that the first humans in Europe traveled out of Africa and then settled in central and Western Europe before moving to Eastern Europe. New findings suggest the first Europeans were Eastern Europeans. A site in Russia includes bone and ivory artifacts that included an ivory figurine head, shell ornaments and carving tools that most likely were made by modern humans, and the artifacts were dated at "42,000 to 45,000" years, much older than anything similar previously discovered in Eastern Europe.—*Discover* (April, 2007)



## 'Lost Country' Found Below North Sea

A huge prehistoric "lost country" has been discovered below the North Sea. Archaeologists from the U. of Birmingham say hunter-gatherer communities once lived there before the land was swallowed up by rising water levels at the end of the last ice age. U. of Birmingham researchers say the people were sophisticated and would have had to relocate to higher ground by the rising waters. One scientist said the discovery is a warning about the impact of climate change.—*news.bbc.co.uk*—(4/23/07) - thanks to Tom Buege

### A Last Trip for Scotty

The cremated remains of actor James Doohan, "Scotty" of *Star Trek* fame, and former astronaut Gordon Cooper blasted into space in April. It was the first successful launch from Spaceport America, a private spaceport being developed in New Mexico. Because it was a suborbital flight, the rocket soon parachuted back to Earth. Doohan had requested such a flight for his ashes.—*Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* (4/29/07)

### New Chinese Rover

China unveiled a prototype rover that could be used in that country's first unmanned mission to the Moon in 2012. The machine should be able to transmit video in real time, dig into and analysis the soil, and produce 3D images of the lunar surface. The rover would be powered by a radioisotope thermoelectric generator that can convert heat from a radioactive source into electricity. Rival rovers are being developed at other locations in the country.—*news.bbc.uk* (4/3/07) - thanks to Tom Buege

### Earth May Spin Faster

The warming of the world's oceans will cause the Earth to spin faster, thus shortening the length of a day, say German researchers. Using a computer model, scientists at the Max Planck Institute in Hamburg have found that as the ocean warms, its mass will tend to move from the equator to the poles. This will make the planet spin faster.—*www.nature.com* (4/1/07)

### Stephen Hawking Goes Into Space

For 25 seconds famed astrophysicist Stephen Hawking was able to overcome the debilitating effects of ALS, Lou Gehrig's disease, when he experienced weightlessness in space. A modified jet carrying Hawking, lying on a pillow, climbed to 32,000 feet before diving down to 24,000 feet, thus providing the brief period of weightlessness. Hawking is known for his work on black holes and the origin of the universe.—*Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* (4/27/07)



### Win a Lottery and Ride Into Space

Buzz Aldrin, the second man to walk on the moon, has announced plans for a lottery, the winner of which would get to travel into space. Details to be worked out include what spacecraft to use and whether the lottery would even be legal. To date, the only civilians to travel into orbit have been the super wealthy who could pay for the flight.—*news.yahoo.com* (4/17/07)



### Grave Mystery Solved

Solved: the mystery surrounding the discovery of a mass grave in Portugal with bones that appeared to have been smashed and scorched by fire. Forensic experts and historians say the estimated 3,000 dead were victims of an earthquake that devastated Lisbon in 1755. The earthquake produced a tsunami and a six-day fire.—*news.aol.com* (4/29/07) - thanks to Tom Buege

### Hormones to Blame

Teenagers can blame their changing hormones if they are moody. Scientists have identified a hormone that can switch from soothing to stressful during puberty. In experiments with mice, researchers found THP or *tetrahydronprogesterone*, which normally is a stress-reducer, can have the opposite effect at puberty. This discovery could lead to therapies for anxious teenagers.—*www.sciencentral.com* (4/19/07) - thanks to Mark Groth

### Your Eyes Tell a Lot

A psychology graduate student in Sweden thinks he can tell a person's personality by looking at his eyes. After photographing the eyes of 428 volunteers and administering personality tests, Mats Larsson was able to associate a low number of crypts (the lines radiating out from the pupils) with tenderness, and warmth while extended furrows (the circular lines near the edge of the iris) were associated with impulsiveness.—*Discover* (May, 2007)

### Weighing a Cell

Researchers at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology have weighed a single living cell to an unprecedented level of accuracy. Samples as light as 1/1000 of a millionth of a millionth of a gram can now be weighed while they remain in fluid. Previous attempts at such precision failed because they required drying the samples which killed the cells.—*news.bbc.co.uk* (4/26/07)

### A Better Backpack

Young students often carry loaded backpacks that weigh 40 or 50% as much as they do. But the American Academy of Pediatrics says backpacks should never weigh more than 20% of a child's weight. As a result, a U. of Pennsylvania biologist is working on a new ergonomic backpack that uses bungee cords to lessen the stress of carrying a heavy load.—*www.sciencentral.com* (5/17/07) - thanks to Mark Groth

### Electric Plastic

Japanese researchers have created a sheet of plastic one millimeter thick that can deliver up to 40 watts of electricity to provide power for nearby devices. The plastic could be built into walls and desktops and promises that one day power cords could become a thing of the past. The sheet, which contains a transistor featuring pentacene, an organic molecule with electrical conductivity, must itself be plugged in.—*www.nature.com* (4/29/07)

### Power From Trash

A \$425 million plant is being built in Saint Lucie County, Florida that expects to generate 160 megawatts of electricity—enough to power 36,000 homes—from trash. Garbage will be heated to more than 10,000°F by using a torch made of plasma, an electrically induced stream of hot charged particles. The heat will produce gas that can drive turbines to produce electricity.—*Discover* (May, 2007)

### A Russia-Alaska Tunnel

It has long been a dream that the eastern and western hemispheres could be connected by a tunnel built below the Bering Strait. Now there is a new push supported by both Russians and Americans to build a \$65 billion highway below the stretch of water connecting the Pacific with the Arctic Ocean. The 68-mile tunnel would be the longest in the world and twice as long as the Chunnel connecting Britain and France.—*www.cnn.com* (4/24/07)

### An Africa-Europe Tunnel

A proposal for a new high-speed train tunnel connecting Europe and Africa is gathering steam. The tunnel would run beneath the Strait of Gibraltar from Tangier, Morocco to Tarifa, Spain as currently envisioned. Possible obstacles to construction include the price tag—\$13 billion (which may be an underestimate) and the poverty on the African side which could limit the flow of passengers and goods.—*Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* (4/22/07)

### Stress Hurting Troops

Stress is leading many U.S. troops in Iraq to unethical attitudes if not unethical actions, a recent survey has discovered. Less than half the troops said they would report a member of their unit who killed or wounded an innocent civilian, and more than 40% supported the use of torture in some cases. Soldiers are often caught in situations where using too much force could lead to charges of abuse and not using enough force could put their lives in danger.—*Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* (5/5/07)

### No YouTube for Soldiers

Access to YouTube, MySpace, and 11 other popular Web sites has been cut off for troops in combat areas. The Defense Department said use of these sites by troops wanting to stay in touch with friends and relatives was threatening to overwhelm the military's Internet network and risk the disclosure of combat-sensitive material. Troops will still be allowed to visit the sites from non-military computers when available.—*washingtonpost.com* (5/15/07)

### More News Briefs Online

Will a chimpanzee be given the rights of humans? What may be behind the old Hatfield-McCoy feud? Is Superman's "kryptonite" a real mineral? Why is a Scottish company making robot falcons? Find these and still more News Briefs online at [www.lutheranscience.org](http://www.lutheranscience.org)

# Vultures

“These are the birds you are to detest and not eat because they are detestable: the eagle, the vulture....” Leviticus 11:13 (NIV)

God gave the Old Testament Israelites rules to live by including what birds such as vultures they weren't allowed to eat. These rules helped them avoid the unbelieving nations around them.



Turkey vultures—a New World Vulture

**What are vultures?** These birds get most of their food in a way that make us want to, as the Bible says, detest or avoid

them. They feed mostly on dead animals.

**What are the two main kinds of vultures?** Old World vultures are closely related to eagles, buzzards and hawks and are found in Africa, Asia and Europe. They find their food mainly by sight. New World vultures are closely related to storks, and they can be found in North and South America. Many of these vultures have a good sense of smell which can help them find food.

**How many species of vultures are there?** A web site lists 22 species—15 Old World and 7 New World vultures (including California Condors and Turkey Vultures).

**What do vultures look like?** When they soar through the sky they may look like hawks, but, up close, one can notice the bald head on most vultures. The featherless head is a



Griffin vulture—an Old World vulture

design feature which helps vultures keep their heads clean of harmful bacteria when they stick their heads into the bodies of dead animals.

**Why are vultures such valuable birds?** God has given them a valuable role as nature's garbage collectors. They can help rid the ground of the rotting flesh of dead animals. Often this dead meat contains harmful bacteria, but God has designed the stomachs of vultures to actually destroy the bacteria without harming the birds.

**Do vultures hunt at night?** No. Vultures cannot see in the dark.

**Are vultures a danger to pets who may be outside?** No. Vultures ignore moving animals.

Sources: [www.vultures.homestead.com](http://www.vultures.homestead.com)  
[wikipedia.org](http://wikipedia.org)

God's rules for what to eat and what not to eat are no longer in effect today. However, He still wants us to keep our distance from people who may try to destroy our faith.

**Activity:** Can you find the 12 underlined words from the story above in the word search below?

D	A	R	K	S	O	A	H
L	U	L	T	T	M	C	V
A	S	K	R	O	T	S	G
B	T	U	R	E	W	S	A
G	O	R	H	E	A	D	R
B	M	A	N	A	A	O	B
B	A	C	T	E	R	I	A
H	C	E	D	G	S	T	G
A	H	S	E	L	G	A	E
W	S	E	S	W	S	L	E
K	R	K	A	S	G	H	A
S	E	R	U	T	L	U	V

## ► My View



### God's Word — the Answer for Both “Esteem” Problems

**W**e've heard much in recent years about a problem that many young people have with a lack of self-esteem.

Depression, suicides, eating disorders—these all have been held up as, and likely are, signs that many young adults see themselves as lacking in worth.

However, parents, teachers, and others who work with young people know there can be another side—“too much self-esteem” among many of the youth.

So, it was not a big surprise to read of a comprehensive new study by five psychologists who worry that there is a real trend toward narcissism (self-love) and self-centeredness growing among college students.

Professor Jean Twenge of San Diego State U. and her crew worry that this could be harmful to personal relationships and American society unless checked.

They examined the responses of 16,475 collegians nationwide who finished an evaluation called the Narcissistic Personality In-

ventory between 1982 and 2006.

The NPI asks for responses to such statements as “If I ruled the world, it would be a better place,” “I think I am a special person” and “I can live my life any way I want to.”

The researchers have noted an increase over the years in the “narcissistic” scores with two-thirds of the students now earning that designation.

A breakdown of personal relationships, a lack of emotional warmth, dishonesty, a controlling personality, and violent behavior are all possible consequences of narcissism, the study says.

Not surprisingly, the Holy Scriptures have an answer for those suffering this disorder who wish to pay attention to the Bible.

“All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,” (Romans 3:23) and “all our righteous acts are like filthy rags” (Isaiah 64:6) and similar passages should help anyone having a problem with conceit.

But there are words of comfort for those of low self-esteem. “God loved the world” (John 3:16) and “the very hairs of your head are numbered. So don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows.”

God's Word and, when helpful, medical assistance and counseling are the best ways to treat all esteem problems. ☞

—Warren Krug, editor

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