

LSI Journal

The Lutheran Science Institute

September-October, 2008



SURVIVAL OF THE FAKEST— PART 2

- **Review of 2 Books on Darwin**
- **Crackdown on German Home Schools**

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).

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

MEETING SCHEDULE*

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

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

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Survival of the Fakest—Part 3

A look at Darwin's finches and the idea that apes became humans.

A Review of Ken Ham's Presentation on Creation/Evolution

The main issue is not about creation/evolution. It is also not about the age of the earth. The main issue is upholding the authority of the Word of God and confronting the forces of the secular humanists that are taking over the culture.

Survival of the Fakest



Part 2

SCIENCE NOW KNOWS THAT MANY OF THE PILLARS OF DARWINIAN THEORY ARE EITHER FALSE OR MISLEADING. YET BIOLOGY TEXTS CONTINUE TO PRESENT THEM AS FACTUAL EVIDENCE OF EVOLUTION. WHAT DOES THIS IMPLY ABOUT THEIR SCIENTIFIC STANDARDS?

— JONATHAN WELLS

Darwin's Tree of Life

Darwin wrote in *The Origin of Species*: “I view all beings not as special creations, but as the lineal descendants of some few beings” that lived in the distant past. He believed that the differences among modern species arose primarily through natural selection, or survival of the fittest, and he described the whole process as “descent with modification.”

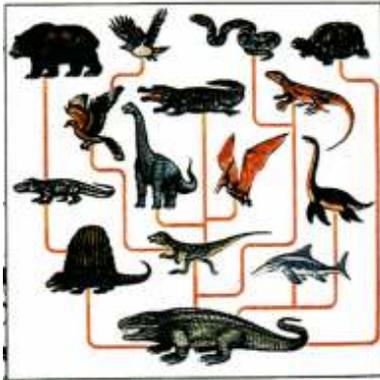
No one doubts, of course, that a certain amount of descent with modification occurs within species. But Darwin's theory claims to account for the origin of new species – in fact, for every species since the first cells emerged from the primordial ooze.

This theory does have the virtue of making a prediction: If all living things are gradually modified descendants of one or a few original forms, then the history of life should resemble a branching tree. Unfortunately, despite official pronouncements, this prediction has in some important respects turned out to be wrong.

The fossil record shows the major groups of animals appear-

This article originally appeared in *The American Spectator* magazine. Permission to reprint the article has been given by the Discovery Institute with headquarters in Seattle, Washington. It was written by Jonathan Wells.

ing fully formed at about the same time in a “Cambrian explosion,” rather than diverging from a common ancestor. Darwin knew this, and considered it a serious objection to his theory. But he attributed it to the imperfection of the fossil record, and he thought that future research would supply the missing ancestors.



But a century and a half of continued fossil collecting has only aggravated the problem. Instead of slight differences appearing first, then greater differences emerging later, the greatest differences appear right at the start. Some fossil experts describe this as “top-down evolution,” and note that it contradicts the “bottom-up” pattern predicted by Darwin’s theory. Yet most current biology textbooks don’t even mention the Cambrian explosion, much less point out the challenge it poses for Darwinian evolution.

Then came the evidence from

molecular biology. Biologists in the 1970’s began testing Darwin’s branching-tree pattern by comparing molecules in various species. The more similar the molecules in two different species are, the more closely related they are presumed to be. At first this approach seemed to confirm Darwin’s tree of life. But as scientists compared more and more molecules, they found that different molecules yield conflicting results. The branching-tree pattern inferred from one molecule often contradicts the pattern obtained from another.

Canadian molecular biologist W. Ford Doolittle doesn’t think the problem will go away. Maybe scientists “have failed to find the ‘true tree,’” he wrote in 1999, “not because their methods are inadequate or because they have chosen the wrong genes, but because the history of life cannot properly be represented as a tree.” Nevertheless, biology textbooks continue to assure students that Darwin’s Tree of Life is a scientific fact overwhelmingly confirmed by evidence. Judging from the real fossil and molecular evidence, however, it is an unsubstantiated hypothesis masquerading as a fact.

They All Look Alike: Homology in Vertebrate Limbs

Most introductory biology

textbooks carry drawings of vertebrate limbs showing similarities in their bone structures. Biologists before Darwin had noticed this sort of similarity and called it “homology,” and they attributed it to construction on a common archetype or design. In *The Origin of Species*, however, Darwin argued that the best explanation for homology is descent with modification, and he considered it evidence for his theory.

Darwin’s followers rely on homologies to arrange fossils in branching trees that supposedly show ancestor-descendant relationships. In his 1990 book, *Evolution and the Myth of Creationism*, biologist Tim Berra compared the fossil record to a series of Corvette models: “If you compare a 1953 and a 1954 Corvette, side by side, then a 1954 and a 1955 model, and so on, the descent with modification is overwhelmingly obvious.”

But Berra forgot to consider a crucial, and obvious, point: Corvettes, so far as anyone has yet been able to determine, don’t give birth to little Corvettes. They, like all automobiles, are designed by people working for auto companies. In other words, an outside intelligence. So although Berra believed he was supporting Darwinian evolution rather than the pre-Darwinian explanation, he unwittingly showed that the fossil evidence is

compatible with either. Law professor (and critic of Darwinism) Phillip E. Johnson dubbed this : “Berra’s Blunder.”

The lesson of Berra’s Blunder is that we need to specify a natural mechanism before we can scientifically exclude designed construction as the cause of homology. Darwinian biologists have proposed two mechanisms: developmental pathways and genetic programs. According to the first, homologous features arise from similar cells and processes in the embryo; according to the second, homologous features are programmed by similar genes.

But biologists have known for a hundred years that homologous structures are often not produced by similar developmental pathways. And they have known for thirty years that they are often not produced by similar genes, either. So there is no empirically demonstrated mechanism to establish that homologies are due to common ancestry rather than common design.

Without a mechanism, modern Darwinists have simply defined homology to mean similarity due to common ancestry. According to Ernst Mayr, one of the principal architects of modern neo-Darwinism: “After 1859 there has been only one definition of homologous that makes biological sense: Attributes of two organisms are homologous

when they are derived from an equivalent characteristic of the common ancestor.”

This is a classic case of circular reasoning. Darwin saw evolution as a theory, and homology as its evidence. Darwin’s followers assume evolution is independently established, and homology is its result. But you can’t then use homology as evidence for evolution except by reasoning in a circle: Similarity due to common ancestry demonstrates common ancestry.

Philosophers of biology have been criticizing this approach for decades. As Ronald Brady wrote in 1985: “By making our explanation into the definition of the condition to be explained, we express not scientific hypothesis but belief. We are so convinced that our explanation is true that we no longer see any need to distinguish it from the situation we were trying to explain. Dogmatic endeavors of this kind must eventually leave the realm of science.”

So how do the textbooks treat this controversy? Once again, they ignore it. In fact, they give students the impression that it makes sense to define homology in terms of common ancestry and then turn around and use it as evidence for common ancestry. And they call this “science.”

Nothing a Little Glue Can’t Fix: The Peppered Moths

Darwin was convinced that in the course of evolution, “Natural Selection has been the most important, but not the exclusive means of modification,” but he had no direct evidence of this. The best he could do in *The Origin of Species* was give “one or two imaginary illustrations.”

In the 1950’s, however, British physician Bernard Kettlewell provided what seemed to be conclusive evidence of natural selection. During the previous century, peppered moths in England had gone from being predominantly light-colored to being predominantly dark-colored. It was thought that the change occurred because dark moths are better camouflaged on pollution-darkened tree trunks, and thus less likely to be eaten by predatory birds.

To test this hypothesis experimentally, Kettlewell released light and dark moths onto nearby tree trunks in polluted and unpolluted woodlands, then watched as birds ate the more conspicuous moths. As expected, birds ate more light moths in the polluted woodland, and more dark moths in the unpolluted one. In an article written for *Scientific American*, Kettlewell called this “Darwin’s missing evidence.”

Peppered moths soon became the classic example of natural selection in action, and the story is still retold in most introductory biology textbooks, accompanied by photographs of the moths on tree trunks.



Peppered moths —
Biston betularia



In the 1980's, however, researchers discovered evidence that the official story was flawed – including the pertinent fact that peppered moths don't normally rest on tree trunks. Instead, they fly by night and apparently hide under upper branches during the day. By releasing moths onto nearby tree trunks in daylight, Kettlewell had created an artificial situation that does not exist in nature. Many biologists now consider his results invalid, and some even question whether natural selection was responsible for the observed changes.

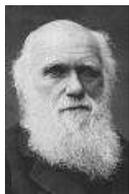
So where did all those textbook photos of peppered moths on tree trunks come from? They

were all staged. To expedite things, some photographers even glued dead moths to trees. Of course, the people who staged them before the 1980's thought they were accurately representing the true situation, but we now know they were mistaken. Yet a glance at almost any current biology textbook reveals that they are all still being used as evidence for natural selection.

In 1999, a Canadian textbook-writer justified the practice: “You have to look at the audience. How convoluted do you want to make it for a first time learner?” Bob Ritter was quoted as saying in the April 1999 *Alberta Report Newsmagazine*. High school students “are still very concrete in the way they learn,” continued Ritter. “We want to get across the idea of selective adaptation. Later on, they can look at the work critically.”

Apparently, the “later” can be much later. When University of Chicago Professor Jerry Coyne learned the truth in 1998, he was well into his career as an evolutionary biologist. His experience illustrates how insidious the icons of evolution really are, since they mislead experts as well as novices. LSI

Next: Darwin's Finches; Apes and Humans; more



Review of John West, *Darwin Day in America* and Benjamin Wiker, *Moral Darwinism*

By Jeff Stueber

In my online essay critiquing Christopher Hitchens' book *God is not Great*¹ I pointed out that he had ignored the impact of evolutionist theory on Western society while searching diligently for any impact religion may have had on any of the tragedies of Western civilization so as to blame it rather than evolution. How ironic it is that after I had finished that essay I was alerted to West's book in a Conservative Book club flier and immediately bought it. *Darwin Day* is richly documented and well researched and serves to buttress Hitchens' reluctance to give Darwinism its due credit for changes in our culture.

Those alien to these issues will be surprised at how prevalent evolutionism was before Darwin. West traces these ideas through Greece, reflecting on the

works of Epicurus and here one will find Wiker also useful. Epicurus believed there were two great disturbances that trouble us, the first that gods can influence us directly or cause things in the sky (moon, sun, lightning) to do so and the second the belief in the afterlife. The purpose of natural science is to remove these troubles and Epicurus relied on the atomistic theories of Democritus that all things were reducible to the movement of individual particles to do so. Wiker makes a clever point at this juncture: microscopes were not invented by this time and so none of Epicurus' arguments were based on direct evidence. They were biased presuppositions just as Darwinian presuppositions exist now. Epicurus did not believe in an immaterial soul, either, and allowed for the existence of free will only by sug-



Hitchens

The reviewer, a frequent contributor to the Journal and a member of the LSI Board of Directors, lives in Watertown, Wisconsin.

gesting that sometimes the collisions of particles are not predetermined.

Christianity put an end to such ideas, but they always remained in back of the minds of numerous intellectuals. Here John Chancellor and Ronald Clark speak plainly.

The Origin of the Species was the most important book of the nineteenth century. Its achievement was to teach people to believe in evolution. Not only the general public but also many naturalists were horrified by the theories, or by the implications of the theories, which Darwin propounded. He was, they said, trying to dethrone man from his proper place in the scheme of things and to challenge the incontrovertible truths of the Bible. He had dared to question the view that the human race was a unique and lofty species, created by God in His own image and quite independent of every other form of living thing. He suggested instead that species . . . had started as quite different creatures from those we see today: that they had undergone all sorts of subtle changes over the years, thus giving rise, by slow and natural processes, to new species.²

Today, it is impossible to appreciate the changes Darwin wrought in man's view of the universe, and of his own place in it, without understanding the basically differ-

ent outlook of the 1830s. The belief on which all rested was that the biblical story of the Creation was history rather than symbolic mythology. . . . Then came Darwin. Many years later, proof of Einstein's general theory of relativity had, as the *Times* put it, dealt with the fabric of the universe. Darwin was cartooned as the man tearing apart the fabric of belief.³

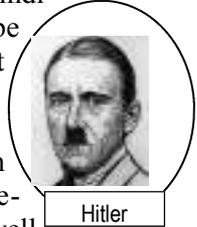
West's chapters on the impact of evolution on the legal profession are scary. Gradually our culture evolved (pun intended) from the acceptance people have free will and need to be judged accordingly to the belief people are helpless victims of material causes and hence not accountable. West says "by the end of the nineteenth century, American scholars were talking with excitement about the 'new school of criminal anthropology,' which sought to use science to identify the causes of crime." Just recently Duke University professor of psychology John Staddon noted that "nearly all psychologists believe that behavior is completely determined by heredity and environment." Often these ideas reached comedic proportions. Freudian physician David Abrahamsen tried to explain why a teenage boy frequently stole cars and eventually, through a long strain of argu-

ments, concluded that the car represented his mother and his theft was his attempt to find a substitute.

This reasoning makes perfect sense in a Darwinian world. If we are merely programmed to act by our genes and environment, then free choice is a myth. Hence, we can cure people of their bad choices by finding what causes them to act like they do. When we change their environment they will act correctly. This is the underlying religious nature of humanism: rather than preaching to someone the sinfulness of their act and their need to obey God, we can cure them of their maladaptive actions by altering their environment so they act correctly in the future. Of course there is a lethal contradiction in this reasoning: if criminals are conditioned to act as they do without the ability to change, then it is logically possible that we only believe this because our brains have been programmed by environment or heredity. Hence, we have no rational reason to suppose we have come to these ideas by rational thought and hence cannot necessarily believe they are true.

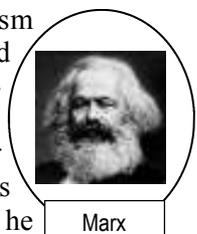
West has interesting chapters on evolution's impact on eugenics and here casual observers will be surprised at how much Ameri-

can biologists had in common with Adolf Hitler. Eugenicists presupposed that the poor and other defective individuals ought to be sterilized or kept from reproducing and, West says, "The American eugenics movement was so well established by 1912 that it was drawing favorable notices in Europe." In July of that year American eugenicists played a starring role in the first International Eugenics Congress in London and Professor Ruggeri from Italy recognized American eugenicists by saying "thanks to recent researches in the United States, it was now certain that the races of man acted in exactly the same way as the races of animals." Here eugenicists conflicted with the traditional view of religious social welfare workers who stressed the poor could empower themselves rather than claiming the poor were prisoners of their biology.



Hitler

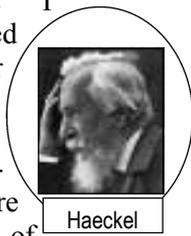
Of course followers of Marx and Communism quickly seized upon such theories as did Nazi Germany. Hitler told one of his colleagues that he



Marx

had “studied with great interest the laws of several American states concerning prevention of reproduction by people whose progeny would, in all probability, be of no value or be injurious to the racial stock.” Hitler took this idea to its fruition and several Americans were jealous of the Nazi success because, as West says, “it was much more comprehensive than patchwork American efforts.” However, American eugenics died while Nazi efforts flourished, but they too died because of what we found once we unearthed the horrors of the Nazi war machine.

Evolution has influenced a hedonistic culture and Wiker traces its impact through three individuals - Ernst Haeckel, Margaret Sanger, and Alfred Kinsey - and here Wiker is almost as well documented as I would have liked him to be. Wiker reproduces a quote from Haeckel that insinuates there are different races of man, some nearer to mammals (apes and dogs) than civilized Europeans, and we must assign a different value to their lives. Such an opinion today would be considered politically incorrect, but in Darwin’s day it was in vogue and Darwin himself relied



Haeckel



Sanger



Kinsey

heavily on Haeckel’s work (if that fact is not clear from reading Darwin’s *Descent*). Hundreds of thousands of Haeckel’s books were sold in Germany and he was constantly cited in texts about racial and social biology which were used to disseminate eugenics and Nazi ideas. Sanger likewise believed only the racially fit should reproduce and Wiker believes she relied heavily on Darwin. Sanger comes across as a sex-obsessed Darwinist when saying “Through sex, mankind may attain the great spiritual illumination which will transform the world, which will light up the only path to an earthly paradise.” Kinsey also embraced eugenics, but sexuality became his hobby. Kinsey assumed that nature was amoral and that deviations from present day sexual practices were not deviations from the norm but a return to the old natural order of life.

When reading these books, one comes to the conclusion that evolution has been embraced by intellectuals waiting to find an excuse either to fail to abide by conservative Christian sexual

dictates or waiting to find a reason to engage in totalitarian race-perfecting activities. The desire for Darwinism gives many a reason to engage in intellectual censorship, and West has examples of this in a chapter as well. Here we reflect back on Wiker early in his discussion of Epicurus.

One of the chief difficulties in advancing intelligent design arguments in the public square is that this square is guarded by those who are trained to believe that there are only the two stark alternatives: materialist science (which defines the very meaning of rationality) or immaterialist irrationalism. That there are rational arguments for the existence of an intelligent cause is simply ruled out by declaring if the argument is not materialist, then it must be irrational (or, more kindly, “theological”).

I recommend these books if you want to know how evolution has impacted our societies. I recommend Hitchens get these books as well. ☺

References

1. Webpages, charter.net/jeffstueber/hitchens.htm.
2. John Chancellor, *Charles Darwin* (New York, Taplinger, 1973), p. 13.
3. Ronald Clark, *The Survival of Charles Darwin: The Biography of a Man and an Idea* (New York, 1984), p. 5.

► LSI News

Next Meeting

The LSI Board of Directors is planning to meet on Saturday, October 25, at 5 p.m. in the Milwaukee area. Check our Web site during October for the exact location if you would like to attend.

Guest Blog Posts

If you have checked out our blog, you will note the posts consist of summaries of what we think are relevant articles on the Web, links to the articles themselves, and commentary. If you note a good article of a science or health nature that would be of special interest to Christians, feel free to e-mail your summary, the URL of the article, and your comments, and we will likely include it on our blog as a guest post.

Seek Candidates for Office

If you are interested in serving as an officer of LSI, we strongly encourage you to send us your name and the office(s) in which you are interested. We will need to elect a president, vice-president, secretary and three Board members. We normally meet only five times a year, mostly in the Milwaukee area.



NUGGETS



Ten Things Not to Worry About

1. **KILLER HOT DOGS.** (Nitrates! Carcinogens! Saturated fat! An Israeli test showed the dogs aren't all that bad for us.)
2. **YOUR CAR'S A/C.** (Edmunds.com says driving with open car windows saves no fuel over using the air conditioner.)
3. **FOREIGN FOOD.** (Food from afar can often be produced and shipped more efficiently than locally grown food.)
4. **CELL PHONES.** (Despite recent reports, there is no known mechanism for cell phones to be able to cause cancer.)
5. **PLASTIC GROCERY BAGS.** (They require less energy to produce than paper bags and require less space in landfills.)
6. **PLASTIC BOTTLES.** (BPA in huge doses may be bad for rats, but there's no real evidence it is bad for humans.)
7. **DEADLY SHARKS.** (There was exactly one fatal shark attack in the whole world last year.)
8. **MISSING ARCTIC ICE.** (There is currently *more* ice in the Arctic than there was at this time last summer.)
9. **UNIVERSE'S MISSING MASS.** (Whether the universe is expanding or collapsing, scientists can't agree on what if anything is happening to the dark matter.)
10. **UNMARKED WORMHOLES.** (Nothing to worry about!)

—John Tierney, www.nytimes.com (7/29/08)



Penicillin

If you were once allergic to penicillin, you may not be any more. Sensitivity to penicillin often goes away after 5 to 10 years. The only way to know for sure is a penicillin skin test. Penicillin is a very useful antibiotic, but it can cause a life-threatening reaction in a very few people.

—Mayo Clinic Health Letter (March, 2008)

“Not only is creationism still a troubling force in America, it has gone global.”

—Dr. Michael Zimmerman, an evolutionist, noting the inroads the creationist movement is making around the world.



According to a *space.com* report, the Earth is going to be swallowed up by the sun. But there is hope for our planet, according to some astronomers. They are proposing a scheme to use the gravity of a passing asteroid to steer Earth out of the way of the sun and into cooler territory.

By the way, this catastrophe isn't expected to happen any time soon; 7.6 billion years is the prediction.

The truth is the Earth indeed will be burned up (2 Peter 3:10), but for believers the result will be most pleasant indeed.

—Creation Update (Spring, 2008)

Favorite Baby Names in 2007

BOYS

1. JACOB
2. MICHAEL
3. ETHAN
4. JOSHUA
5. DANIEL
6. CHRISTOPHER
7. ANTHONY
8. WILLIAM
9. MATTHEW
10. ANDREW



GIRLS

1. EMILY
2. ISABELLA
3. EMMA
4. AVA
5. MADISON
6. SOPHIA
7. OLIVIA
8. ABIGAIL
9. HANNAH
10. ELIZABETH

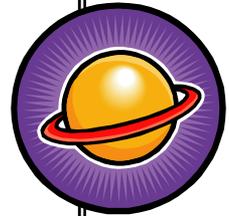


—*Parade magazine* (5-11-08)

HOW MANY PLANETS?

We have all heard that Pluto has been demoted to a “dwarf planet.” Counting Ceres and Eris, the two other space bodies classified as dwarfs, there are now 11 planets. A third grader from Montana has suggested the sentence—My Very Exciting Magic Carpet Just Sailed Under Nine Palace Elephants—to help us remember the planet names in order—Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars, Ceres, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, Neptune, Pluto and Eris.

—*Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* (3/2/08)



An “Evangelist” For Evolution

An “evolutionary evangelist”, Michael Dowd, is traveling around the country urging people to “thank God for evolution.” Dowd promotes the view that God used evolution to create life. He also says that “God blesses evolution,” and praised God for his girlfriend’s pregnancy. However, evolution is not compatible with a literal Genesis.—*Answers* (July-September, 2008)

Darwin Gets a Kickoff

Speeches and a scientific meeting in London in July were to kick off 18 months of celebration to mark the 150th anniversary of Charles Darwin. On July 1, 1848 Darwin along with fellow scientist Alfred Wallace first presented their theories on evolution. In February, 2009, the 200th anniversary of Darwin’s birth will be celebrated and in November, the 150th anniversary of the publication of his *On the Origin of Species*.—*Yahoo News Reuters* (6/4/08)

Oregonians End Their Lives

Oregon’s annual report released in March by the Department of Human Services indicated 49 Oregonians obtained lethal drugs to end their lives in 2007, more than in any year since the Death with Dignity Act took effect. Oregon first implemented the law in 1998 to allow physician-assisted suicide. The number shows a trend of slow, steady growth in the use of the DWD Act.—*Clearly Caring* (May/June, 2008)

Florida Education Board Supports Evolution

The Florida state board of education has approved new standards for teaching science, a decision which appears to be a victory for supporters of evolution. The board approved replacing the phrase “changes over time” with the word “evolution” but also added “theory” to every mention of evolution. The board also described evolution as the “fundamental concept underlying all of biology.”—*Answers* (July-September, 2008)



But Louisiana’s Senate Lets Teachers Debate It

The Louisiana senate has voted 36-0 and the House 94-3 to approve a bill that would give science teachers more freedom to challenge traditional theories including Darwin’s theory of evolution. The bill would allow science teachers to use supplemental materials in discussing such topics as evolution, global warming, and human cloning. The aim of the bill is to promote “critical thinking skills, logical analysis and open and objective discussion of scientific theories.” The ACLU has promised to fight the bill, but Gov. Bobby Jindal is expected to sign it.—*www.2theadvocate.com* (6/17/08)

Home schooling Parents In Germany Jailed

A court in Germany has sentenced a couple to three months in jail for home schooling their children. This was after they were assessed a fine of \$1,500. “They want to prevent creation of what they call ‘parallel societies,’” said a proponent of home schools, “but that’s simply bogus. Home schooling does not create parallel societies. Home schooling creates well-integrated, well-adjusted citizens who are engaged in the civil process.” Germany may be concerned about its growing Muslim population.—*www.onenewsnow.com* (6/23/08)

Baby Overcomes Bad Genes and Abortion

A British baby overcame both bad genetics and an abortion attempt when he was born alive and well in November of 2007. Jodie Percival, his mother, decided to abort him because he carried the MCDK gene, which triggers a condition where cysts grow on the kidneys of an unborn baby, a condition which is fatal when both kidneys are affected. Percival was unaware her baby survived the abortion attempt at 8 weeks when she later discovered she was still pregnant. After doctors told her the baby looked healthy, Percival and her fiancé decided to keep the baby and are now overjoyed at baby Finley’s birth.—*LifeSitenews.com* (8/8/08)



Bill Would Define the Unborn as "Persons"

A bill has been introduced in both houses of Congress to define the unborn as "persons." The "Life at Conception Act" declares the unborn to be children under the 14th Amendment to the Constitution. Eleven co-sponsors introduced the bill in the House and four co-sponsors in the Senate. They believe the Roe versus Wade legislation that legalized abortion actually left the door open for personhood to be established at conception.—*www.onenewsnow.com* (6/12/08)

Seniors and Suicide

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reveals senior citizens have the highest suicide rate in the country, especially for those between 75 and 84 years of age. Nearly 9,000 suicide deaths were reported in 2007. Mental health issues, particularly depression, was the most common factor for those considering suicide.—*Clearly Caring* (July/August, 2008)

Skin Cells Ease Disease

Symptoms of Parkinson's disease in rats were eased when treated with skin cells that were reprogrammed to act like embryonic stem cells. It could be the first step in tailoring treatments for people that would avoid concerns about using human embryos. Reporting in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, researchers said eight of nine rats with conditions like Parkinson's showed improved movement after treatment with the reprogrammed cells.—*news.yahoo.com Reuters* (4/7/08)



Sue Planned Parenthood

A \$50 million lawsuit has been filed against Planned Parenthood in Washington, D.C. The lawsuit alleges an abortion on a 13-year-old caused multiple medical problems and permanent injuries. The girl was brought to the facility by her mother.—*Clearly Caring* (July/August, 2008)

Another Person Dies from RU-486

A teenager in Britain has become at least the 14th person to die after using the controversial abortion drug RU-486. The girl essentially bled to death, said Dr. Randall O'Bannon of the National Right to Life Committee. The doctor also believes there are hundreds of other women who have had serious side effects from using the abortifacient.—*www.onenewsnow.com* (6/17/08)

'Tree of Life' Revived

What some ancients called the "Tree of Life" has been revived from a 2,000-year-old sleep with the germination of a seed found along with similar seeds in the Masada area of Israel. The sapling was found to have a genetic fingerprint suggesting it is the Judean date palm. This variety is mentioned in the Bible and was long thought to be extinct. Scientists reported recently that radiocarbon dating gave the seeds calendar dates ranging from 206 B.C. to 392 A.D.—*www.sciencenews.com* (6/12/08)

More Rings For Planets

For more than 300 years scientists thought the planet Saturn was the only body in the solar system with rings. Then the Voyagers 1 and 2 spacecraft found rings also around Jupiter, Uranus, and Neptune. Recently, astronomers were surprised to find rings around another space body, Rhea, Saturn's second largest moon. "A ring system around a moon comes as a surprise because the parent planet's gravity should destabilize any ring system that might form," one scientist said.—*Discover* (July, 2008)

Japanese Look for E.T.

A project by Japanese astronomers is making a concerted effort to find out if there is life in outer space. More than a dozen Japanese observatories will closely study a star thought to be a possible home for extraterrestrials. Previously Japanese scientists have listened for alien radio signals and looked for laser emissions in starlight. The participants think there is only a slim chance to find what they are looking for.—*Yahoo News Reuters* (6/20/08)

Sunspots Disappear

Some solar researchers are worried about the sun. Sunspot activity seems to have stopped and has refused to restart. The last time this happened was 400 years ago when the "Little Ice Age" began. During that event New York harbor froze over and Eskimos were reported paddling canoes off the coast of Britain. A Russian scientist thinks the world is headed for a chilly spell that may last beyond the year 2100.—*www.climate-science-center.national.org* (2/9/08)

Pluto Now a 'Plutoid'

The former planet known as Pluto is now being called a plutoid, according to the International Astronomical Union. Plutoids will be defined as celestial bodies in orbit around the Sun farther away than Neptune and must have a near spherical shape and not have swept up other smaller objects in their orbits. Eris is another plutoid.—*Yahoo News Reuters (6/11/08)*

Mercury is Shrinking

Mercury is not only the solar system's smallest planet, now that Pluto has been demoted to a plutoid, but Mercury also appears to be shrinking. New measurements by NASA's Messenger spacecraft indicate the planet has shrunk by more than a mile in diameter over its history. Scientists attribute this shrinkage to the cooling of the planet's core.—*Milwaukee Journal Sentinel (7/9/08)*

Some Scientists Fear The New Atom-Smasher

The most powerful atom-smasher ever built could make some major discoveries, but it is also creating fears among some critics that it could spawn a Earth-swallowing black hole or spit out particles that could destroy the planet. Scientists supporting Switzerland's Large Hadron Collider, 17 miles in circumference and buried 330 feet underground, said these fears are ridiculous. Set to begin test runs in August, it is expected to take months before ramping up to full power. The collider will hunt for signs of "dark matter", "dark energy" and even extra dimensions.—(*Racine Journal Times (6/29/08)*)

California City Withstands Earthquake

Chino Hills, California withstood a magnitude-5.4 earthquake in July with almost no damage despite the fact it was only a few miles from the epicenter. This young city of 80,000 consists mostly of buildings constructed within the past 10 years to strict earthquake standards. Since the 1930s California has gradually increased its building standards which now require such things as reinforced sheetrock walls, a new way of welding steel to make it less likely to crack, and a height limit of four stories in most commercial buildings. The new rules appear to have paid off.—(*Racine Journal Times (7/31/08)*)

U.S. Still No. 1 In Science, Technology

The U.S. is still No. 1 in science and technology, according to a RAND Corporation report that also admits the country gets a big boost from foreign students, scientists and engineers. Along with Europe and Japan, the main competitors of the U.S., China, India, and South Korea all showed rapid growth in S&T (science and technology), but they all still trail America. The U.S. accounts for 40% of global spending on scientific research and development, employs 70% of all Nobel Prize winners, and boasts 3/4 of the world's top 40 universities.—*www.abcnews.go.com (6/12/08)*



Travelers at Airport Can Avoid the Patting Down

Travelers at the Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport now have the option of passing through security without having to be patted down. They can choose to walk through a full-body screening machine that uses radio-waves to produce 3-D scans of passengers' bodies that can also show metals, plastics, and liquids between the skin and bodies. The downside of the invention: the images reveal every part of the person's body as well as intimate medical details such as colostomy bags.—*Discover (May, 2008)*

Tiny Spy Plane Planned

An engineering professor at the U. of Florida is working on a very small unmanned spy plane that will be less expensive to build and maintain and, more important, less easy to spot than its bigger brothers. The 4½-inch wide plane would have flexible wings that can keep it on a steady course even in gusty winds. Its main downside—it can fly for only 15 minutes before its battery needs recharging.—*Discover (June, 2008)*

Funeral Web casts Become More Common

Web casts of funerals are becoming more common across the United States and in other countries in order to accommodate those who for some reason cannot physically attend the services. All that is needed is a camera, computer, specialized software and a high-speed hookup to the Internet. Viewers must know a password to be able to access the funeral.—*Milwaukee Journal Sentinel (6/18/08)*

Egypt Fights Smoking

Smoking is so entrenched in Egypt that patients sometimes light up in hospital rooms. But now, using stark visual warnings, the government is launching a new campaign to warn Egyptians about tobacco's dangers. Cigarette labels will now show images such as a dying man in an oxygen mask, a fetus at risk, a coughing child, and a limp cigarette symbolizing impotence. The campaign is expected to face a tough challenge among Egypt's die-hard smokers.—*(Racine) Journal Times (6/19/08)*

Drop in Teenage Smoking Levels Off

New federal data show the campaign to reduce teenage smoking has leveled off after a sharp drop in smoking among teenagers from 1997 to 2003. Antismoking advocates urged the government to increase efforts to reduce tobacco use. In 1997 about 36% of students smoked, but that figure fell to 22% in 2003 and hasn't varied much in recent years.—*(Racine) Journal Times (6/29/08)*

Iron Lung Fails

A Tennessee woman who spent almost 60 years in an iron lung has died because a power failure shut her machine down and kept her from breathing. Dianne Odell was diagnosed with polio as a three-year-old and the iron lung was her home for the rest of her life. Unable to use modern ventilators because of a spinal deformity, Odell still managed to earn a high school diploma and write a children's book, *Less Light*, by means of a voice-activated computer.—www.cbsnews.com (5/28/08)

Exercise Good for Both Heart and Brain

Exercise benefits both the heart and the brain. A recent study showed regular exercise can reduce inflammatory markers in the blood and lower blood pressure, thus reducing risks of cardiovascular disease. Another study found that adults who were overweight and had central obesity ("a big belly") had a 360% risk of developing dementia. However, exercise was shown to significantly decrease the risk of dementia and Alzheimer's.—*Mayo Clinic Health Letter (July, 2008)*

Mississippi Fattest State

The South is the fattest region and Mississippi is the most obese state, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The South has had high death rates from heart disease and stroke, health risks often linked to obesity. More than 30% of Mississippians were obese in 2007 compared to 19% in Colorado, the leanest state.—*(Racine) Journal Times (7/18/08)*

More Than Half of Americans Take Meds

For the first time ever, more than half of all Americans are taking prescription medicines for chronic health problems. According to a study by Medco Health Solutions Inc., the most widely used drugs are for lowering high blood pressure and cholesterol—problems linked to heart disease, obesity and diabetes. Doctors say that with the need for these medicines growing and the pharmaceutical industry's relentless advertising, this trend will only increase.—www.time.com (5/14/08)

Honey Bees on Decline

Food prices could rise even more unless the mysterious decline of honey bees is reversed. Farmers have reminded lawmakers in Washington that without bees, there can be no crops.



About three-fourths of flowering plants depend on birds, bees and other pollinators to help them reproduce. Beekeepers have lost 36% of their colonies this year. Nobody knows the reason for the decline, but some experts suspect pesticides, a new parasite or pathogen, poor nutrition, bad water and/or the need to move bees long distances for pollination.—www.cnn.com (6/27/08)

Brain ≠ Intellect

The size of a brain is no indication of intellect, according to researchers in the United Kingdom. More important appears to be the complexity of connections between brain cells. Cambridge's Sanger Institute looked at the number of proteins in the synapses (the junctions between nervous system cells) of a mammal (mouse), fruit flies, and yeast cells which have no brain. They found mammals have 600 proteins in the synapses, fruit flies half as many, and the yeast cells only 1/4 as many.—news.bbc.uk (6/9/08)

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Cedar

“(Solomon) said to Nathan the prophet, ‘Here I am, living in a palace of cedar, while the ark of God remains in a tent.’ ”
2 Samuel 7:2 (NIV)

David, the great king of ancient Israel, lived in a palace with walls covered by precious cedar wood. He was bothered though the Ark of the Covenant, the sacred container God ordered Moses to make for Him, had to be kept in a tent.

David wanted to make God a beautiful Temple where the Ark could be kept. As we know though, God wanted David's son, King Solomon, to actually be the one to direct the building of the Temple.

What is cedar? Cedar is a type of coniferous tree similar to fir trees. A

coniferous tree is one that is usually an evergreen tree which has cones with seeds.



A cedar in the country of Lebanon.

What do cedar trees look like? Cedar trees are normally from about 100 feet to 200 feet tall. They are evergreen trees with level branches and needle-like leaves. Their seeds come in cones.

What do the cones look like? The cones are shaped like barrels and usually measure from about 2½ to 4½ inches in length. They are grayish-brown in color. Something interesting about the seeds is that they have an unpleasant taste, probably to protect them from being eaten by squirrels.



A cedar cone.

Where do cedars grow?

Cedars live in mountain climates where they can enjoy winter snows. The first cedars grew in the western Himalaya mountains and in the Mediterranean region, which includes the Bible lands. So, it's no surprise King David knew all about cedar trees.

Why is cedar considered a very valuable wood?

Cedar wood has a very pleasant scent or aroma. Most people like the color and grain (patterns) in the wood. The wood also resists decay, which means it doesn't rot easily. It surely was good wood for a king's palace.

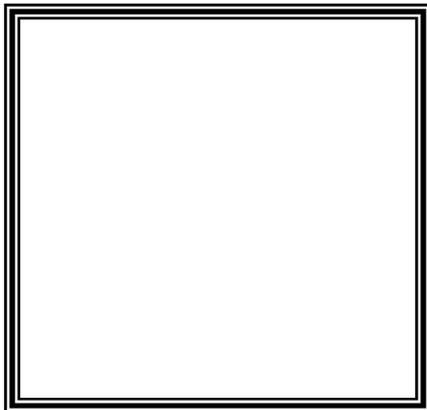
What are other uses for

cedar wood? The wood can also be good for house shingles and furniture such as chests. Since moths don't like cedar wood or cedar oil but love woolen clothes, cedar wood is sometimes used to cover walls in closets.

—Source: Wikipedia

God has given us many valuable plants like the cedar. He also has given us a free trip to heaven if we believe Jesus has died for our sins. Like King David, we will want to show our love and thankfulness for God's gifts by giving Him our hearts and obedience.

Activity: Think of God's gifts as you draw pictures of a cedar tree and cone below.



► My View



Crackdown on German Home Schools is Scary

T rue Lutherans will always have a soft spot in our hearts for the nation of Germany for giving us the great reformer, Martin Luther.

Among his many accomplishments, Luther's support of education for youth is noteworthy. Many books have been written on that subject.

Of course, Luther didn't want to leave education just to teachers employed for that purpose. He also stressed the role that parents have in teaching their children the ways of the Lord.

So it's very discouraging to hear what is now happening in the land of Luther. Ignoring Luther's strong advice, the German government is cracking down on home schooling parents.

According to the Web site, *www.onenewsnow.com*, German home school parents have been fined large sums, sentenced to jail, and even have had their children taken away from them.

Juergen and Rosemarie Dudek of Archfeldt, Germany, have been ordered to serve three

months in jail. They also were assessed a fine equal to \$1,500, all because they chose to home school their children instead of sending them to German schools.

The parents have retained attorneys to fight the case, but an interested American, Mike Donnelly of the Home School Legal Defense Association, is not optimistic about the outcome.

Germany contends it requires children to go to the government schools in order to integrate them into one society. Donnelly thinks the real reason is Germany wants to prevent creation of "parallel societies," but home schooling doesn't do that, he says.

In our own country, in February an appeals court in California ruled parents have no right to home school their children if they are not certified teachers. However, authorities there now seem to be backing away from pursuing home school cases.

Is this matter important enough for the German parents to be disobeying the government? Probably not. Yet, Germany should recognize that most home school parents are educated and highly motivated, and those schools offer no threat to the country or its government.

When Lutheran schools are not available, home schools should be an option. ❧

—Warren Krug, editor

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