

SALVO

Issue 62 Fall 2022

THE STARS WERE BORN

Ground Zero

Why General Relativity Is Such a Big Deal

by Hugh Ross

The End Game

Perfect Order & the Second Law of Thermodynamics

by Bob Perry

Resisted Science

Key Lessons from Old Controversies

by James S. Spiegel

A Scientist's Journey from Hard Atheism to Christianity

by Günter Bechly

Biochemistry's Purpose

Revealing Archaeology

Supernatural Sense

Uploaded Brains?

The Giraffe's Neck

Beware of "Influencers"

Public Ed's Stealth Success

White Supremacy's Roots

Social-Justice Jesus?



The Cartwheel Galaxy is a ring galaxy located about 500 million light years away in the constellation of Sculptor.

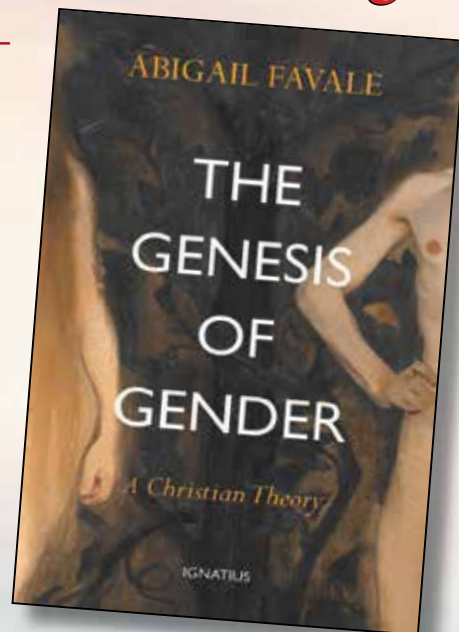
This image is a composite of images produced by the James Webb Space Telescope's NIRCam and MIRI detectors.

How to Understand the Gender Paradigm

The question of gender—who we are as men and women—has never been more pressing, or more misunderstood.

The Genesis of Gender weaves personal experience with expert knowledge to provide an in-depth account of the gender paradigm: a framework for understanding reality and identity that has recently risen to prominence. **Dr. Abigail Favale** traces the genealogy of gender to its origins in feminism and postmodern thought, describing how gender has come to eclipse sex, and how that shift is reshaping language, law, medicine, sexuality, and our own self-perceptions.

With substance, clarity, and compassion, Favale teases out the hidden assumptions of the gender paradigm and exposes its effects. It is also a powerful articulation of a Christian understanding of reality: a holistic paradigm that proclaims the dignity of the body, the sacramental meaning of sexual difference, and the interconnectedness of all creation. A vital, timely resource for anyone seeking to better understand the gender paradigm. **GGP . . . Sewn Softcover, \$17.95**



"A book I will share with my daughters. Favale's analysis is sharp, clear, and spoken in love—the right answer to a turbulent age."

—**Leah Libresco**, Author, *Building the Benedict Option*

"Essential reading for understanding how we arrived at such a confused state, and how we can lovingly promote the truth about human nature."

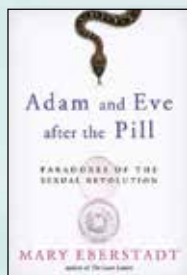
—**Ryan Anderson**, Author, *When Harry Became Sally: Responding to the Transgender Moment*

"Wielding the magic of her gifted pen, Favale has written a treasure that culls deep philosophical insights from her riveting intellectual and spiritual journey."

—**Erika Bachiochi**, Author, *The Rights of Women: Reclaiming a Lost Vision*

"Every culture in history understood that human beings are created male or female – until now. To understand how and why we got here so quickly and what to do about it, this is the book to read." —**Christopher West**, President, Theology of the Body Institute

Other Important Books



◆ Adam and Eve after the Pill

Mary Eberstadt

Ground-breaking book reveals how sexual freedom paradoxically produced widespread discontent. It examines in-depth the seismic social changes caused by the sexual revolution.

AEAPP . . . Sewn Softcover, \$16.95

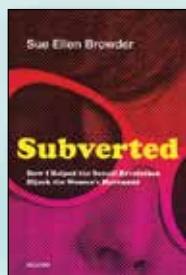


◆ The Abolition of Woman

Fiorella Nash

A unique and powerful book by a Pro-life feminist that uncovers the shocking exploitation of women worldwide that results when babies are treated as commodities.

ABWP . . . Sewn Softcover, \$17.95



◆ Subverted

Sue Ellen Browder

A compelling personal narrative with piercing observations from her work in women's media promoting a distorted feminism, showing how the sexual revolution hijacked the women's movement.

RBWP . . . Sewn Softcover, \$16.95



◆ Extreme Makeover

Teresa Tomeo

Full of riveting insights, this work empowers women to shed the toxic messages of our culture that enslave them, and become truly free by embracing the truth of being a beloved daughter of God.

EMH . . . Sewn Hardcover, \$17.95

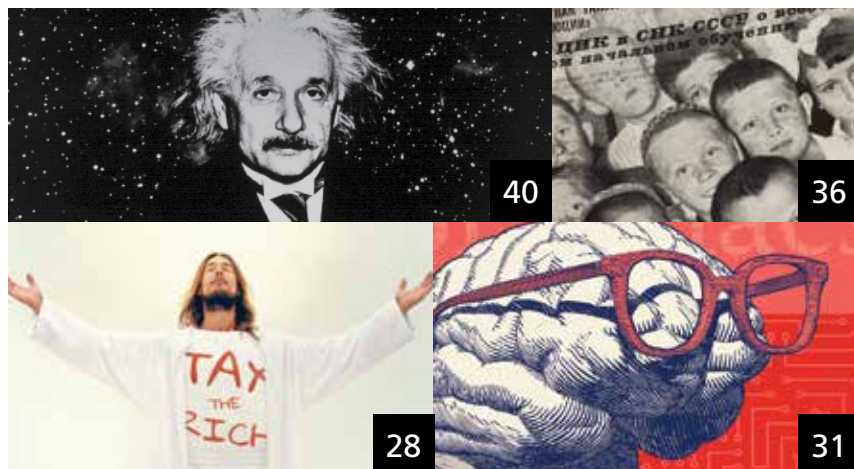


ignatius press

P.O. Box 1339, Ft. Collins, CO 80522

www.ignatius.com

(800) 651-1531



HEADQUARTERS

28 The Legend of Social Justice Jesus

The Latest Revision of the Biblical Messiah Examined

by Greg Koukl

FEATURES

31 Brainiacs

The Mythical Pipedreams of Transhumanist Tech Execs

by Clay Jones

36 Stealth Education

The Successful Humanist Subversion of Public Schooling

by Alex Newman

40 Ground Zero

Why Einstein's Theory Is Such a Big Deal

by Hugh Ross

COLUMNS



18 Undercover Reckless Abandon

Harriet Beecher Stowe on Modern Feminists & Divorce

by Rebekah Curtis



21 Biohazards Six Billion Tics

Social Media 'Influencers' & the Spread of Mental Disorders

by Bryan Just



24 Family Briefing Forgot Milk?

What Families Can Learn from the U.S. Formula Shortage

by Nicole M. King



26 Basic Training The End Game

Perfect Order & the Second Law of Thermodynamics

by Bob Perry



DEPARTMENTS

05 Opening Salvo Shoring Up the Foundations

Apologetics Equips the Church for the Ideological Arena

by Terrell Clemmons

06 Ammo

08 Shrapnel

10 Surveillance Misery Seeks No Company

Anti-Natalists Spread a Profoundly Misanthropic Message

by Terrell Clemmons

11 Decode: Sacrifice Sacred Offerings

by Rick Reed

12 Camouflage Grateful Eyes

Even the Pagans Saw Complaining as Harmful

by Devin O'Donnell

14 From the Field Revealing Digs

Here's New Evidence for Two Biblical Events

by Neil English

16 Maneuvers Supernatural Sense & Sensibilities

J. P. Moreland's Guide to Experiencing Miracles

by Peter Biles

51 Great Escapes

A Long Surrender

A Scientist's Arduous Path from Hard Atheism to Faith

by Günter Bechly

54 Archives

A Manly Knight to Remember

Sir Gawain & the Green Knight

by Rick Reed

56 Tactics

Resisted Science

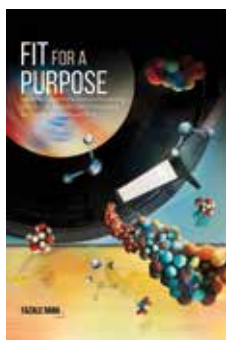
Key Lessons from Old Controversies

by James S. Spiegel

58 Person of Interest Syllogist for Life

A Conversation with Scott Klusendorf

by Katie Breckenridge



61 Featured Blip Finely Tuned Life

A Review of Fit for a Purpose: Does the Anthropic Principle Include Biochemistry? by Fazale Rana

by Emily Morales

62 Book Blips

63 Film Blips

64 Parting Shot Dad Reckoning

Shouldn't Children Be the Center of Our Concerns?

by Bobby Neal Winters

COLUMNS (CONT.)



44 Deprogram

The Whitewashing

Darwin Apologists Obscure His Racism & Assist White Supremacists Today

by Denyse O'Leary



46 R & R

The Agony of Victory

Twelve O'Clock High

by Anthony Esolen



48 Operation ID

The Giraffe's Neck

Its Evolutionary Explanation Is One Long Stretch

by Jonathan Witt

FAKE AD



65 CHAOS: THE UNIVERSE IS SO RANDOM

SALVO

Senior Editors

Thomas S. Buchanan, Casey Luskin,
Richard A. Moselle (Founder)

Executive Editor James M. Kushiner

Deputy Editor Terrell Clemmons

Associate Editor Anita Kuhn

Art Director & Web Developer Jerry Janquart

Contributing Editors

Anthony Esolen, Bryan Just, Nicole M. King,
Regis Nicoll, Denyse O'Leary, Bob Perry,
Rick Reed, Hugh Ross, Jonathan Witt

Blog Administrator Robin Phillips

Blog Contributors

Joe Allen, Peter Biles, Mark Eckel, Neil English,
Cheryl Magness, Emily Morales, Pingnan Shi,
Amanda Witt, Diane Woerner

Business Manager William Blackburn

Office Associate Melissa Wagner

Published by:

The Fellowship of St. James

P.O. Box 410788, Chicago, IL 60641

Subscription Services: 1-800-283-8333

Email: editor@salvomag.com • www.salvomag.com

salvo n. (säl'vō)

1. A group of shots fired simultaneously for effect
2. A forceful verbal or written assault

A publication of The Fellowship of St. James (www.fsj.org), *Salvo* is dedicated to debunking the cultural myths that have undercut human dignity, all but destroyed the notions of virtue and morality, and slowly eroded our appetite for transcendence. It also seeks to promote the Christian worldview. The opinions expressed by individual contributors are not necessarily those of the editors or publisher.

SALVO (USPS #025-638) is published quarterly in Spring, Summer, Autumn, and Winter by The Fellowship of St. James at 4125 W. Newport Avenue, Chicago, IL 60641-4009. Periodicals Postage paid at Chicago, IL and at additional mailing offices.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to SALVO, PO Box 410788, Chicago, IL 60641-0788.

SUBSCRIPTION SERVICES: For new or gift subscriptions, renewals, changes of address, or questions about your subscription, contact: *Salvo* Subscription Services, P.O. Box 5866, Big Sandy, TX 75755, 1-800-283-8333. Back issues, missing or damaged copies: orders@fsj.org.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES: U.S.: \$29.99 for one year (four issues); \$54.99 for two years (eight issues). Canada: \$36.99 (U.S.) for one year; \$68.99 (U.S.) for two years. Other foreign: \$41.99 (U.S.) for one year; \$78.99 (U.S.) for two years. **Special rate for students** and those on reduced incomes: \$15.99 for one year. Digital only subscriptions are also available: \$15.99 for one year. Bulk rates are available. Visit salvomag.com for details.

Copyright © 2022, The Fellowship of St. James. All rights reserved. No part of this magazine may be reproduced in any form without permission.

Salvo 62 Image Credits—All images © Getty Images except for the following:

p. 10 Torontonian / Alamy Stock Photo; p. 22 Ink Drop / Alamy Stock Photo;

p. 36 Heritage Image Partnership Ltd / Alamy Stock Photo; p. 37 Heritage Image

Partnership Ltd / Alamy Stock Photo; p. 39 incamerastock / Alamy Stock Photo;

p. 40 Everett Collection Historical / Alamy Stock Photo; p. 47 C20TH FOX / Ronald Grant Archive / Alamy Stock Photo

Salvo Partner Organizations





Fall 2022

Günter Bechly, PhD (p. 51), is a German paleontologist, senior fellow with Discovery Institute's Center for Science and Culture, and senior research scientist at Biologic Institute in Washington state. He has written about 160 scientific publications, described over 180 new species, and been advisor for 3 BBC nature documentaries.

Peter Biles (p. 16) holds a degree in English Writing from Wheaton College and is pursuing an MFA in Creative Writing at Seattle Pacific University.

Katie Breckenridge (p. 58) is External Affairs Liaison and contributing writer for the children's rights organization Them Before Us and a Premier Fellow for the public policy organization Society of St. Sebastian.

Terrell Clemmons (pp. 5, 6, 8, 10, 62) is the Deputy Editor of *Salvo* and writes on apologetics and matters of faith.

Rebekah Curtis (p. 18) is the coauthor of *LadyLike* and has written for a variety of websites, magazines, and books. Her day job is housewife, church lady, and school mom.

Neil English, PhD (p. 14), is the author of 7 books in amateur and professional astronomy. His magnum opus, *Chronicling the Golden Age of Astronomy*, celebrates 4 centuries of telescopic astronomy and the characters who made it all happen.

Anthony Esolen (p. 46) is a professor at Magdalen College of the Liberal Arts in Warner, New Hampshire, and the author of many books, including *Life Under Compulsion* and *Out of the Ashes*.

Clay Jones (p. 31) is a visiting scholar at Talbot School of Theology, the Chairman of the Board of Ratio Christi, and the author of *Why Does God Allow Evil?* and *Immortal*. His website is clayjones.net.

Bryan Just (p. 21) is the Event & Executive Services Manager at The Center for Bioethics and Human Dignity. He holds a BA in psychology and MAs in church history and theological studies.

Nicole M. King (p. 24) is the managing editor of *The Natural Family*, the quarterly publication of the International Organization for the Family.

Greg Koukl (p. 28) is the founder and current president of Stand to Reason and an adjunct professor in Christian apologetics at Biola University. He has written 7 books, spoken on more than 80 campuses, and hosted his own radio show for over 30 years.

Emily Morales (p. 61) is an instructional designer/content developer for Moody Bible Institute. She lives in Cincinnati, Ohio, where she also teaches organic chemistry and physics.

Alex Newman (p. 36) is an international journalist, educator, speaker, homeschool father, and consultant. He is coauthor of *Crimes of the Educators* and executive director of Public School Exit, a ministry dedicated to rescuing children from government education.

Devin O'Donnell (p. 12) is the author of *The Age of Martha*, a book on leisure and education, and the Director of Family & Community Education at The Oaks Classical Christian Academy.

Denyse O'Leary (p. 44) is a Canadian journalist, author, and blogger. She blogs at *Blazing Cat Fur*, *Evolution News & Views*, *MercatorNet*, *Salvo*, and *Uncommon Descent*.

Bob Perry (p. 26) is recently retired from a professional aviation career that included 8 years in the U.S. Marine Corps and nearly 32 years as a commercial airline pilot. He blogs about Christianity and the culture at truehorizon.org.

Rick Reed (pp. 11, 54) is a retired secondary teacher of English and philosophy. For 40 years he challenged students to dive deeply into the classics of the Western canon.

Hugh Ross (p. 40) is an astrophysicist and the founder of the science-faith integration ministry Reasons to Believe (RTB) (reasons.org).

James S. Spiegel (p. 56) is Head of School at Lighthouse Christian Academy in Bloomington, Indiana. He has published over 90 articles and 11 books, including *Hell and Divine Goodness* and the two-volume *Idealism and Christianity*.

Bobby Neal Winters (p. 64), a native of Harden City, Oklahoma, blogs at redneckmath.blogspot.com and okieinexile.blogspot.com.

Jonathan Witt (p. 48) is a senior fellow with Discovery Institute's Center for Science and Culture and the author or coauthor of numerous publications, including *Heretic*, with Matti Leisola, *The Hobbit Party*, with Jay Richards, and *A Meaningful World*, with Benjamin Wiker.



Shoring Up the Foundations

Apologetics Equips the Church for the Ideological Arena

by Terrell Clemmons

Melissa Cain Travis is a philosophy professor affiliated with the Lee Strobel Center at Colorado Christian University. When her son was seven, he asked her, “Mom, how do we even know the Bible is true and not made up like other stories?” She responded by teaching him the cosmological argument for the existence of God. (The cosmological argument says that the universe having a beginning calls for a cause outside of itself to bring it into existence.) He kept asking questions as he grew, and she took each one seriously and responded as best she could.

Now 19, her son came home from a recent youth gathering frustrated. “Mom, I’m so tired of sermons and studies and retreat sessions that only tell you the *whats*. I know it’s super important to know *what* Scripture says about *what* is true and about *what* we should be doing as Christians, but where’s the in-depth training on the *how*? We’re told to share our faith with this messed-up culture, but these days that requires knowing how to engage on controversial issues like sexuality and the sanctity of life, how to make a philosophical case for God, and how to handle difficult theological topics like evil and suffering. Why isn’t *that* kind of training included? I wouldn’t have a clue about how to have good conversations with unbelievers if you and I didn’t talk so much about it.”

To be fair, pastors and youth leaders can only squeeze so much training into their own full schedules, let alone the limited time they have with their youth. But that leaves a multitude of emerg-

ing adults ill-equipped to navigate a postmodern minefield that has all but concluded God is dead, nothing is permanent, and life has no meaning apart from whatever meaning we make for ourselves.

Assumptions as Foundations

The Bible doesn’t so much address these anti-biblical tenets directly as it *assumes* their opposites and speaks from there. Assumptions are to belief systems as foundations are to buildings. When a foundation becomes compromised or undermined, the building may stand for a time, but unless the foundation is shored up, its collapse is inevitable. For Christianity as a belief system, apologetics is about shoring up the foundations. A simple definition of apologetics is “reasons for faith,” and this includes giving reasons to support the assumptions on which the faith rests.

For example, in this issue, Hugh Ross explains how new



research confirms Einstein’s theory of general relativity, further shoring up that cosmological argument (“Ground Zero,” p. 40). Neil English reports on archaeological finds consistent with Old Testament accounts of divine judgment (“Revealing Digs,” p. 14). And Bob Perry explains how the Second Law of Thermodynamics, as well as our instinctual cries against injustice, bears ongoing witness to our Creator and his character (“The End Game,” p. 26).

Equipping the Saints

We don’t put these articles forth as “proofs” of Christianity, but rather as intellectual support—evidence, if you will—in its favor. You’ll also find in the following pages articles on how Darwinists play fast and loose with the truth (pp. 44, 48) and how secularists pin their hopes on foolhardy immortality projects (p. 31).

These won’t provide in-depth training on *how* to engage in the difficult conversations a messed-up culture provokes—that skill can only be cultivated by practice—but they can inspire confidence that good reasons for the faith *exist* and that reasons for fashionable anti-biblical assumptions *don’t*. This issue is packed. May God use it to equip you and yours to navigate the ideological arena with confidence. ☉

Undercover Mothers

After seeing sexual and political indoctrination in their children's private schools, a network of moms coalesced to expose it and put a stop to it. They



created a Substack newsletter called Undercover Mother to "circle our young to protect them from the abuse being inflicted by schools and the cartels of the regional and National Association of Independent Schools [NAIS]." They do this work "under cover" because of schools' enrollment contracts that threaten to expel students whose parents voice "strong disagreement" with school policy or curricula. Members are

politically diverse (many reported elite Democratic alliances) but united in opposition to repackaged Marxism flying under the guise of education. Calling the situation "elite capture," one mother explained that "1.2 percent of the nation's schools are NAIS private schools, but a third of Biden's cabinet went to these schools . . . once you've got the elite organizations, that changes the entire makeup of the country." A rollicking pack, the "Mom Collective" is out to destroy what one of them called the "head of the snake," demonstrating that even elite liberals know that something has gone very wrong in secular America. •

Source: breitbart.com/politics/2022/02/09/exclusive-undercover-mothers-moms-form-covert-network-to-expose-indoctrination-programs-plaguing-private-schools-across-the-country

Apologetics Training for Kids

Teaching Bible stories is easy. Understanding and supporting the foundational truth claims undergirding them is a different matter. For more than twenty years, apologetics ninja Dr. Frank Turek of CrossExamined.org has been defending the faith and its truth claims on college campuses and through resources developed from his powerhouse 2004 book, *I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist*,

co-authored with Dr. Norman L. Geisler. Now his team has produced teaching resources to help children think clearly about the faith, think critically about popular challenges to it, and become conversant with the wealth of supporting evidence for it.

"Yes, God Is Real," with Hanna Sims, covers the nature of truth, the existence of God, miracles, and the reliability of the New Testament accounts at a level appropriate

for grades 2–5. "Let's Get Real: Examining the Evidence for God," with Shanda Fulbright, covers the same material for grades 6–8 and is available in two forms: (1) conventional hardcopy teacher and student workbooks, or (2) a 13-week online course that includes fun demonstrations of lesson content via live, interactive Zoom sessions, with a live Q&A session with Dr. Turek in the final session. All of these materials feature Dr. Turek's characteristic razor-sharp logic and his equally piquant wit. •

More Signs of Gender Sanity

Summit Ministries, in partnership with the survey research firm McLaughlin and Associates, conducted a national survey earlier this year on attitudes about transgenderism. Despite media bombardment with trans-positive messaging, the vast majority isn't buying it. Two-thirds of those expressing an opinion did not believe transgenderism is a healthy

condition, although a third reported staying silent on the matter so as not to offend others. Seventy-two percent of the respondents opposed sexuality-based curricula in elementary schools, and 90 percent did not favor permanent body alterations for minors. Thankfully, 93 percent said it is possible to distinguish between men and women. No word on how many of them identified as biologists. •



Source: summit.org/about/press/poll-nearly-two-thirds-of-americans-believe-transgenderism-isnt-healthy-but-one-third-keep-views-to-themselves

Stillborn That Way?

In 1993, Dean Hamer, then at the NIH, published a paper in *Science* magazine hypothesizing that there existed on the X chromosome a gene or genes predisposing a man to same-sex behavior. The hypothesized X chromosome link stemmed from a small study of 114 families in which gay men had more gay relatives on their mothers' side than on their fathers'. It was a big speculation based on small data, but it made headlines, sparked the "born that way" meme, and prompted a scientific search for the "gay gene." Although eight major identical-twin studies disconfirming "born that way" over the ensuing 20 years should have settled the matter, the quest continued until a massive study published in 2019 laid it to rest for good, as far as genetics is

concerned. Using a mountain

of data from some half-a-million people, the genome-wide association study (GWAS) concluded that the genetic data "do not allow meaningful prediction of an individual's sexual behavior."

Even so, the "born that way" hope still has not breathed its last. While GWAS team member Ben Neale recognized "an important role for the environment in shaping human sexual behavior," he qualified the acknowledgement



with the attenuated hypothesis of "the contribution of many small genetic effects scattered across the genome." •

Sources: <https://dnascience.plos.org/2019/08/29/retiring-the-single-gay-gene-hypothesis>; <https://geneticsexbehavior.info/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/ganna190830.pdf>; science.org/doi/abs/10.1126/science.8332896#con1; orthodoxytoday.org/blog/2013/06/identical-twin-studies-prove-homosexuality-is-not-genetic

Challenging Pop-CRT on Campus

Last fall, a group of parents and alumni raised specific concerns about creeping wokeness and mission drift at Grove City College (GCC), a conservative Christian liberal arts college in Pennsylvania. Administrators brushed off the

concerns until a group of faculty members wrote an open letter to the Board of Trustees, who then appointed a special committee to look into the matter. The committee examined course content; policies and practices related to resident

assistance, diversity, and multicultural education; certain chapel programs; and a 2021 revision to the college's vision statement and found that the petitioners' concerns were valid. Ideas and materials based on Critical Race Theory had been uncritically affirmed and presented to students in an unbalanced manner.

In April 2022, the committee issued its report. The report affirmed that CRT "is incompatible with GCC's vision, mission, and values for many reasons," and acknowledged that there had been "specific instances of misalignment." It further spelled out "concrete steps" that were being taken to prevent similar occurrences. Some petitioners expressed disappointment that no disciplinary actions were taken, but the sequence of events shows that vigilant parties can have a correcting effect. •



Source: gcc.edu/Portals/0/Special-Committee-Report-and-Recommendation_0422.pdf

Digital Epidemiology & Eco-Anxiety

In 2021 Canadian health science professor Kiffer Card of Simon Fraser University, together with an interdisciplinary team of demographers, eco-social epidemiologists, environmental researchers, and climate activists, formed the Mental

Health and Climate Change Alliance (MHCCA). Using web-based surveys with self-reporting measures, they quantified mental health impacts of climate change among British Columbians and from that data built a pilot Climate Distress Monitoring

System (CDMS). University news site *SFU News* lauded the project as “one of the first quantitative population studies examining climate concerns.” Card calls the research methodology “digital epidemiology . . . the next frontier of epidemiological research.”

Now his team has received funding to expand data collection on climate distress, not from individuals or from healthcare professionals, but by “continuously and unobtrusively” monitoring social media activity. Card hopes the results will be used “to advocate for local and national action on climate change.”

So, with the express goal of provoking national (read: political) action, Card et al. will extract data from the most volatile, inexact, manipulable platform known to man, call the results “epidemiology,” and then use the “epidemiological” data as grounds to further a political agenda. What could possibly go wrong? •



Source: sfu.ca/fhs/news-events/news/2022/sfu-research-team-innovating-measurement-of-climate-related-distress-in-canada.html

SNL Science

As if there weren't enough reckless shenanigans going on in education, the 40,000-member National Science Teaching Association (NSTA) is instructing teachers in ways to infuse sex and gender into their science classes, whether or not they pertain to the subject in view, to the extent that scientific distinctions and biological classifications disappear altogether. At an April 2022 training session in Houston, for example, high-school chemistry teacher Jamie Kubiak, who uses the pronouns they/he, presented “Queer Your Classroom: Supporting LGBTQIA+ Students.” For a biology class on reproduction, they/he suggested that teachers refrain from saying,



“‘all men/boys have a penis’ or ‘all women/girls have a vagina,’ because that isn’t true.” Biological sex is “not always correct.” “Think about the message you’re sending when you say ‘ladies and gentlemen,’” the

presentation read. “What if someone is not a ‘lady’? What if someone is neither?”

What if someone is neither? This is the stuff of *Saturday Night Live* skits, not high-school science. •

Source: theepochtimes.com/national-association-of-science-teachers-trains-members-on-queering-your-classroom_4462545.html

Prep Schools & Cookie-Cutter Wokeness

While battles over left-wing ideologies in public schools have made for some dramatic news footage with parents confronting local school boards, the same political and sexual content has been flying under the radar in private schools. Earlier this year, Breitbart News reported that it had reviewed an extensive trove of documents and teacher training materials for “queer inclusive” and “LGBTQ+ inclusive” curricula put out by the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS), a membership organization servicing private K–12 schools. Teachers are being trained in ways to talk about gender, sexuality, and identity with children as young as four, and coached in strategies for keeping “meddlesome

parents” at bay. Documents show that the NAIS recommends school officials *not* treat parents as equals but rather assert their own dominance as the “senior partner” in the relationship.

According to former teacher, now whistleblower, Paul Rossi, the NAIS sets parameters for board

decision-making at 1,600 of the nation’s top private schools, thus dominating

all other private school membership associations in power and influence, but it has allowed itself to be taken captive by a bevy of educational consultants. The result is cowed parents, duped donors, demonstrably declining standards, and schools that are becoming “cookie-cutter woke.” •



Sources: breitbart.com/politics/2022/02/16/exclusive-footage-private-schools-nation-wide-pushing-queer-inclusive-curriculum-trans-ideology-starting-in-pre-k; <https://legalinsurrection.com/2022/02/project-launch-unmasking-national-association-of-independent-schools>

Suicide & Social Contagion

Discovery Institute’s Wesley J. Smith has long argued that widespread legalized physician-assisted suicide (PAS) would result in increased rates of assisted *and* unassisted suicide, in part because many people conflate what

is “legal” with what is “right.” Research is beginning to confirm his hypothesis. A 2015 study of CDC data from states with legalized PAS (Oregon, Washington, Vermont, and Montana, where legality remains a matter of dispute) showed an 8.9 percent increase in total suicides,

leading study authors to conclude, “The introduction of PAS seemingly induces more self-inflicted deaths than it inhibits.”

The same authors later compared suicide rates in European countries that were demographically similar but different in PAS legislation and found “very steep rises in suicide” in countries with legalized PAS. Most recently, a third study reviewed U.S. data from PAS states and found “very strong evidence that the legalization of assisted suicide is associated with a significant increase in total suicides.” The increase was highest in the over-64 age group and among women, for whom the estimated increase was 40 percent. “If we care as a society about preventing suicides generally,” Smith says, “surely the question of assisted suicide contagion should become a pressing concern in fashioning public policy.” •



Source: firstthings.com/web-exclusives/2022/05/suicide-contagion

STOP HAVING KIDS

Misery Seeks No Company

Anti-Natalists Spread a Profoundly Misanthropic Message

by Terrell Clemmons

Background:

In January 2021, Eric Dietz Goldberg, a Portland, Oregon area photographer who goes by "Dietz," incorporated a 501(c)3 nonprofit under the name "Stop Having Kids" (SHK). He created a website, started wearing masks that read, "Stop Having Kids," and began organizing street outreaches to promote his message. A Portland area high-school teacher explained it this way: "They're not saying that a particular group of people shouldn't have kids, they're saying that no one should have kids because kids themselves can't choose to be born."

SHK says it's about "normalizing anti-natalism, childlessness, and caring for already existing life." It defines anti-natalism as "a philosophical and ethical stance against human reproduction." Anti-natalists consider human reproduction to be "an irreversible, unnecessary, indefensible, and enduring form of harm, regardless of circumstances, situations, or consciousness in living."

SHK activists dress in black and hold signs bearing messages such as, "The world doesn't need you to continue your bloodline, genetics, or family name" or "The world is too backwards to move forward



with having kids." They've sparked reactions ranging from "bold, a little ambitious or even crazy" to "thinly veiled eugenics." SHK responds that it's not about eugenics. Rather, "We are totally against human procreation all across the board." "This isn't about hating kids at all," said Alex, an SHK volunteer organizer; "we encourage people to help kids who are already here." The group hopes to expand across North America and beyond.

Reason for Surveillance:

Honestly, could there be a more nihilistic outlook on human life than this? Unlike overpopulation catastrophists, SHK activists appear to be driven by nothing other than misanthropic misery. Their view of humanity is the diametric opposite of the biblical tenet that man

and woman are the pinnacle of Creation as bearers of God's image (even in our current fallen state) and the biblical mandates to fill the earth and subdue it (Old Testament) and make disciples of all nations (New Testament). Nothing on the SHK website overtly addresses biblical faith, but, given social media hashtags such as #jesus, #thebible, #bfruitfulandmultiply, and #dontcomply, SHK operatives obviously know that their message does, and they apparently want Christians to hear it. Whether that's to pick a fight or to recruit Christian youth is anybody's guess.

One of the reasons they give for their stance is "Eternal Dissatisfaction." But who are they to project their own emotional state onto everyone else? It's commendable to promote harm reduction and helping people who are already born, but while I think we should speak gingerly with any disaffected Stop Having Kids sympathizer, it should also be pointed out that their message is deeply harmful to people already born. It tells them their life is meaningless and that perhaps it would be better had they never been born.

Most Recent Campaign:

In early 2022, four new billboards went up around Portland and nearby Salem, Oregon, reportedly funded by an anonymous donor at an estimated cost of around \$8,000. One, overlooking Interstate 5, read, "A LOT OF HUMANS WISH THEY WERE NEVER BORN." Another said, "STOP HAVING KIDS," where the "O" in STOP was the universal "No" symbol  over a silhouette of a baby.

If SHK activists and sympathizers don't want to become parents, that is their prerogative. But if they want to alleviate suffering for the living, they could start by keeping their misanthropic messaging to themselves. Our Creator did not give up on fallen humanity, and neither should we. ☉

Sacred Offerings

by Rick Reed

SACRIFICE: n. an act of offering to a deity something precious; something given up

History:

The earliest definition for the noun form of *sacrifice* reads, "primarily, the slaughter of an animal (often including the subsequent consumption of it by fire) as an offering to God or a deity." The second definition indicates a change in the sense of what is offered: "anything (material or immaterial) offered to God or a deity as an act of propitiation or homage." The third definition, "offering by Christ of Himself to the Father as a propitiatory victim in his voluntary immolation upon the cross," points to both divine *justice* required as the cost of sin and divine *love* manifested in Christ's substitutionary gift. The first illustration of that third usage is found in a 14th-century collection of saints' tales expressing both: "The sacrifice [Jesus] made for man on the [cross]."

The first definition for the verb form of *sacrifice* in the *Oxford English Dictionary* is "to offer as a sacrifice; to make an offering or sacrifice of." The third definition simply reads, "to surrender or give up (something) for the attainment of some higher advantage or dearer object."

Etymology:

Sacrifice came into English from Latin through Old French in the late 13th to mid-14th century. The Old French cognate *sacrifise* meant "offering." That word had derived from the Latin *sacrificium*, "a sacrifice," which itself derived from *sacrificius*, "performing priestly

functions or sacrifices." Ultimately, the word's Latin parts—*sacra* ("sacred rites") and *facere* ("to make, to do")—were combined to yield an etymological definition: "a making sacred." That which is offered becomes holy. It becomes "set apart" as sacred. Though the word has an ancient lineage, it has undergone remarkably little essential change in meaning.

Effect:

A sense of the sacred persisted during World War II, when Americans on both the battle front and the home front understood that sacrifice meant giving up everything—from personal pleasure to daily staples to one's own life—to defeat two great enemies, an aspiration nearly all held sacred. Despite that history, *sacrifice* seems to have declined in frequency in political speech. Only a small minority of living Americans have been asked to make a similar sacrifice. Not even the Covid lockdowns were characterized in such a manner, although those actions did sacrifice childhood, mental health, and a healthy work ethic to a secular idol.

However, in *Beyond Order*, Jordan Peterson asserts, "You must sacrifice something of your manifold potential in exchange for something real in life." In other words, willing sacrifice is a necessity for growth. Though moderns may regard ancient animal sacrifice with incredulity and disgust, they need to understand the value of sacrifice in terms of delaying gratification. A student

may sacrifice time and money to achieve a degree or to qualify for a trade. The sacrifice magnifies the eventual payoff. Loving spouses sacrifice their own desires for their partner. Loving parents sacrifice time, ambition, and desires for the benefit of their children.

In *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, Gawain makes the mistake of sacrificing his honor to gain supernatural protection against a likely death, but his fellow knights sacrifice their pride to redeem his honor. Christ himself manifested the pinnacle of sacrifice on the cross. In a sentence Peterson regards as the crystallization of Christianity, he writes in *12 Rules for Life*, "The Word that produces order from Chaos sacrifices everything, even itself, to God." In Christian reality, we echo that ultimate sacrifice as we acknowledge it through our comparatively small acts of sacrifice, through which we follow Christ. ☉





Grateful Eyes

Even the Pagans Saw Complaining as Harmful

by Devin O'Donnell

It is a truth generally acknowledged that young people in possession of an affluent upbringing must be in the habit of complaining. Complaining marks a people gone soft, who have become unused to suffering. For most, there is a nagging sense that they shouldn't complain—but it doesn't stop them from raising their laments when they meet with the most commonplace hiccups.

For Christians, it goes without saying that the Bible condemns grumbling and complaining. But in a society that rewards grievance-mongering and exalts grumbling—cue the victimhood contests on social media—how can we avoid it?

Consider what a complaint actually is. When we meet with an ordinarily hard situation (getting sick, missing our flight, locking our keys in the car, waiting at the DMV), we freely express our discontent. We complain when we judge things to be unsatisfactory. The complaint reveals a thought about how bad things are. It makes a judgment about the world.

But anyone who has lived a year or two in this world knows we can't always trust our initial

assessment about things. The deeper question, therefore, is an epistemological one: how do we know our assessment of a given situation is unassailable? What kind of judgment are we pronouncing?

Hasty Judgments

Understood properly, a complaint represents a lack of wisdom, a hasty judgment before we have the whole picture. Recall what Job said to his wife after hearing her counsel to curse God and die: "You speak as one of the foolish women would speak. Shall we receive good from God, and shall we not receive evil?" (Job 2:10). The Preacher declared, "Better is the end of a thing than the beginning

thereof: and the patient in spirit is better than the proud in spirit" (Eccl. 7:8). It should be enough to move us that grumbling and complaining is always paired with divine judgment in Holy Scripture. But even the virtuous pagans understood complaining as a serious vice and a danger to one's own perfection.

"Don't be overheard complaining," said Marcus Aurelius, "Not even to yourself." Epictetus, the Stoic philosopher who deeply influenced Marcus Aurelius, said, "But He who gave also takes away. . . . And so, when you have received everything, and your very self, from Another [i.e., God], do you yet complain and blame the Giver, if He take something away from you?" This, of course, echoes the iconic statement of Job, who in reflecting upon the meaning of his own suffering declared, "Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord" (1:21).

The virtuous pagans knew that life is a thing where misfortune flourishes and bad things happen. They rightly knew that in such a world one could easily complain unceasingly. The Stoics knew they could do nothing about the circumstances of the external world, but only about the ordering of their internal one.

What many are discovering today by way of Jordan Peterson,

Epictetus told us long ago. He knew how many things in life are not under our control. We can't control the movements of the sun or the planets. We can't control whether a leaky ship makes it to port. We can't control other people. The one thing only that is possibly under our control is ourselves. Our own will, intentions, desires, thoughts, and actions. And the responsibility to govern these according to the Good is a gift.

The rage and complaints of Achilles did not express divine wisdom, for "he that is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city" (Prov. 16:32). He who controls his own soul, however, is the apotheosis of wisdom.

Habits of Wellbeing

It is said that thankful people are happier and live longer on this earth. In *Gratitude in Life's Trenches*, Robin Phillips writes, "There is a popular misconception that gratitude practices flow out of a prior attitude of thankfulness or gratitude. But usually, it works the other way around: we have grateful attitudes because we have first chosen to engage in gratitude practices." As the revelations of neuroscience tell us, neurons that "fire together wire together."

For most, becoming a thankful person has no shortcut; it's like losing weight or getting in shape. Author and poet Ben Palpant suggests collecting "Joshua Rocks" by writing on small stones the records of God's providence in one's life. Taken from the account in Joshua 4, this is an excellent biblical example of a creative practice to cultivate gratitude. Doing such things will doubtless make us healthier and happier people,

reducing our cortisol levels and possibly extending our lifespan.

But perhaps the most significant benefit of cultivating habits of thankfulness is not in the *physical* rewards but in the *metaphysical* ones. C. S. Lewis warned that if we aren't

The wise
man doesn't
complain.
He has a more
capacious vision
of the world.

critical of our own complaints, we'll become a complaint ourselves, moving from existentially *feeling* discontented to ontologically *being* a malcontent. The wisdom of gratitude (and its practices), however, changes

our perception of the world. It augments and filters our imagination, moral and social. And it supplements our ability to know things.

How do we know, for instance, that finding a leak in the roof of one's house might not be gift? How does a person know that a minor inconvenience is not a critical yet hidden step in another's salvation? How does a person know that the sickness he contracted was not God's grace? These are hard things. Hard things require wisdom, a depth of vision to see past the difficulty. Complaints, however, are shallow and myopic; they see only what is immediately present to the eye. They have no imagination.

The wise man doesn't complain. He has a more capacious vision of the world. As Shakespeare's Henry V says: "There is some soul of goodness in things evil, / Would men observingly distil it out." Such an observation demands the use not just of the physical eye but also of the inner eye of imagination.

For Eyes That See

In C. S. Lewis's *Till We Have Faces*, Orual's "complaint against the gods" eclipses her vision of the



truth. She is sure of her complaint until a series of apocalyptic visions reveals to her (violently in some cases) that her knowledge of herself, the gods, and the world was imperfect. All her life she had wanted a trial with the gods, Job-like, longing for the justification of her pain and a reason why the gods do not show themselves or speak to mortals. But the most striking revelation was that it was her *complaint* that kept her from seeing the truth.

The argument that she had, "idiot-like, been saying over and over" had darkened the clear sight of Reality. She was, to borrow a phrase from the poet Gerard Manley Hopkins, "beam-blind." "The eye is the lamp of the body," said Jesus, "and if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness" (Matt. 6:23).

If complaining darkens our picture of reality, then giving thanks does the opposite. It is like the aperture of a camera; the more gratitude, the more light is let into the frame, and the picture of reality becomes ever more perceivable. In an essay called "Onward Christian Spaceman," C. S. Lewis responds to those who seek to leave earth in order to find God. "If you do not at all know God, of course, you will not recognize Him, either in Jesus or in outer space."

We could go searching for God throughout the universe and not find him. But the fault would be in our own eyes. Perhaps this is why Paul exhorts us to "give thanks in all circumstances," that we might have eyes to see. ☺

Revealing Digs

Here's New Evidence for Two Biblical Events

by Neil English

We live in a golden age of science and technology, which has greatly enriched the lives of billions of people. It's arguably also the best time in all human history for science coming out in support of the truth of Christianity, not only in mainstream sciences like chemistry, physics, and biology, but also in a variety of other interdisciplinary avenues of human inquiry, such as biblical archaeology, which is producing a veritable revolution in our knowledge of the Holy Land and of the historical interactions between the ancient Hebrews and the nations that once surrounded them.

This article will look at evidence derived from archaeological discoveries that strongly affirms the authenticity of two biblical narratives concerning divine judgment: the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, and the events of the Exodus.

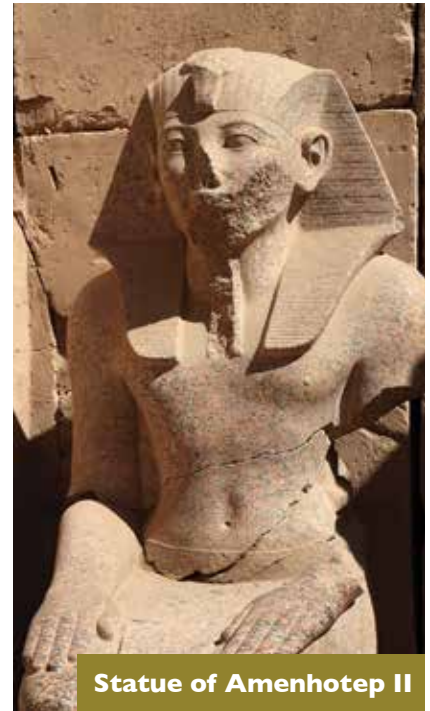
A Smoking Gun for Sodom & Gomorrah?

The biblical account of Sodom and Gomorrah, found in Genesis 19, tells us that God destroyed these cities on account of the alarming increase in evil-doing by their inhabitants, particularly with respect to sexual depravity, as seen when both young and old lusted after two angels sent by the Lord to enact his righteous judgment.

The biblical account of the destruction of these two cities has puzzled scholars for centuries, but in September 2021, an intriguing paper published in *Nature*, a prestigious international journal of science, presented considerable evidence that a real cataclysmic event occurred in the region about 3,600 years ago.¹

The team of scientists, including geologists, archaeologists, and geophysicists, headed by Allen West of the Comet Research Group in Prescott, Arizona, and James P. Kennett from the University of California–Santa Barbara, presented solid evidence that a cosmic airburst had destroyed Tall el-Hammam, a Middle-Bronze-Age city in the southern Jordan Valley northeast of the Dead Sea. The evidence presented showed that an approximately 22-megaton airburst had detonated, releasing energy equivalent to that of more than a thousand Hiroshima atomic bombs. The event super-heated the air to more than 2,000° C, destroying the city and its inhabitants, fusing quartz crystals, and melting metals into tiny spherules. The airburst also deposited huge quantities of salt from the nearby Dead Sea, preventing agriculture and causing a 300–600-years-long abandonment of settlements within a 25-kilometer radius.

These findings present the fascinating possibility that the Genesis narrative was likely an eyewitness account of this epochal event. The reference to salt is also



Statue of Amenhotep II

intriguing, as the Genesis account relates that Lot's wife was turned into a pillar of salt after she had looked back on the destroyed city.

"All the observations stated in Genesis are consistent with a cosmic airburst," Kennett said, "but there's no scientific proof that this destroyed city is indeed the Sodom of the Old Testament." That said, the researchers did suggest that the event may have started an oral tradition that included the Sodom and Gomorrah narrative and was passed down to later generations.² While the actual location of these cities has not been pinned down, the impact event would have destroyed many human settlements in the region, including Sodom and Gomorrah.

The Pharaoh of Exodus Identified?

In the Book of Exodus, we learn that Pharaoh refused to let the children of Israel go, but that God sent a multitude of plagues on the Egyptians to demonstrate his divine power, after which Moses led God's chosen people safely out of the land of Egypt, while Pharaoh's

whole army was destroyed when it followed the Israelites into the Red Sea.

Skeptics have long claimed that history is silent on such an event, but ongoing scholarship has now circumstantially identified the Pharaoh of Exodus as Amenhotep II and dated the events of the Exodus to around 1446 B.C.³

Considered one of the most boastful of kings, Amenhotep II recorded a campaign to Canaan, commemorated by the Elephantine Stele, dated to 1440 B.C., where it is claimed that he brought back 101,128 slaves into Egypt.⁴ The large number of captives is suspicious, though, as typically such military campaigns resulted in just a few thousand slaves being captured. Some scholars think the number was a deliberate exaggeration owing to the calamity that beset his rule, but others have suggested it indicates a desperate attempt by Amenhotep II to replace the huge slave population after the Hebrews had departed. (While the Exodus narrative states that Pharaoh pursued the Israelites, it does not specifically state that he died along with his army in the Red Sea.)

What's most intriguing, however, is another papyrus known as the Admonitions of an Egyptian Sage, the earliest surviving copy of which dates from the 13th century B.C. It records a series of calamitous events remarkably similar to those preserved in the Exodus account, including the Nile turning to blood, devastating plagues and pestilences, widespread destruction of grain crops, a disfiguring disease, a rebellion against Ra the



Carving on the Dream Stele of Thutmose IV

Sun god, children dying, jewelry being seized by slaves, and the sounds of death and mourning throughout the land.⁵ The striking similarity to the Exodus account is obvious. And while the papyrus in question does not date to the time of the Exodus, many scholars believe that earlier copies certainly

would have coincided with these events.

Yet another stele, erected between the paws of the Great Sphinx of Giza, from the reign of Thutmose IV, is the so-called Dream Stele.⁶ Standing eleven feet tall and carved in granite, it depicts the Pharaoh paying homage to the god of the Sphinx. An inscription beneath it recounts how, after hunt-

It turns out that Thutmose IV had an elder brother named Amenhotep, who had either disappeared or died. Thus, if Amenhotep II was the Pharaoh of the Exodus and had lost his firstborn son in the final plague as recounted in the Bible, then his younger son, Thutmose, would have taken the throne. Seen in this light, the inscription on the Dream Stele was merely a statement of "divine propaganda" cementing his right to the throne of Egypt.

Sound Reasons for Belief

Thus, although the evidence for both the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah and the calamities that beset the Pharaoh of Exodus remains circumstantial, it nonetheless presents sound reasons for believing that both occurrences were real historical events and that the Bible is a reliable source of historical truth. ☺

Notes

1. nature.com/articles/s41598-021-97778-3.
2. <https://scitechdaily.com/sodom-and-gomorrah-evidence-that-a-cosmic-impact-destroyed-a-biblical-city-in-the-jordan-valley>.
3. <https://biblearchaeology.org/research/exodus-from-egypt/2455-amenhotep-ii-as-pharaoh-of-the-exodus>.
4. Titus Kennedy, *Unearthing the Bible: 101 Archaeological Discoveries That Bring the Bible to Life* (Harvest House Publishers, 2020), pp. 56–57.
5. *Ibid.*, pp. 54–55.
6. *Ibid.*, pp. 58–59.

ing, Thutmose IV fell asleep and dreamed that the spirit of the Sphinx told him he would become king if he cleared away the sand from around the monument. This strongly suggests that Thutmose IV was not the natural heir to the Egyptian throne and thus had to concoct a story to solidify his legitimacy and appease the highly religious people of Egypt.

Skeptics have long claimed that history is silent on such an event, but ongoing scholarship has now circumstantially identified the Pharaoh of Exodus as Amenhotep II.

Supernatural Sense & Sensibilities

J. P. Moreland's Guide to Experiencing Miracles

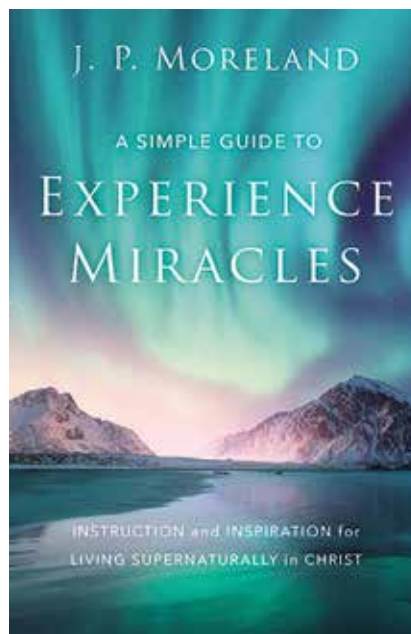
by Peter Biles

In February 2005, J. P. Moreland walked out of a church service with a terrible case of laryngitis. His throat and chest were irritated, and breathing, let alone talking, was incredibly painful. He left the church frustrated, not knowing what to do; he had no more days to take off at the university, and he had a full day of teaching scheduled for the following day. He planned to alert his secretary and cancel class, since he couldn't speak without unbearable pain.

But as he was leaving, two church elders asked if they might pray over him. Given his emotional state, Moreland was only vaguely in tune with what they said, but as they laid hands on him, something happened. After a couple of minutes of prayer, the laryngitis left his body. He started talking to the two elders completely pain-free, and the laryngitis never returned.

The following May, he spoke at a church retreat in Seattle. After his talk, a woman told him she had seen three angels standing behind him on the stage. Initially, Moreland kindly thanked her but thought no more about it. Later that year, however, two graduate students told him that *they had seen the very same angels* standing behind him in class: a tall one in the middle and two shorter ones on either side. Neither student knew of Moreland's visit to Seattle, but the message was clear. Guardian angels exist.

In 2019, Moreland spoke at a church in the Los Angeles area. While on stage, he sensed a "demonic presence" in one section of the sanctuary. Somehow, he became aware that someone in



that area was planning to commit suicide. Moreland notes that he was "75 percent sure it was the Lord" who gave him that awareness. Following what he believed to be a prompting from the Holy Spirit, he relayed his convictions to the congregants and directed them to turn and lift their hands toward that section. A few months later, he learned that there indeed

had been a young woman at the service who was under demonic influence. She was not a regular attendee at the church, and she had planned to commit suicide later that day. Now, she's loving the church and seeking to grow spiritually, all because Moreland risked looking foolish and acted on what he believed to be a literally life-and-death situation.

Modern Blindness

Are these stories too outlandish for our secular sensibilities? Many people in the U.S., including Christians, would probably say yes. Moreland posits that we in the West, under the influence of the Enlightenment, have grown numb to the miraculous and have turned a blind eye to miracles and healings in our midst. Meanwhile, Christians who move to the U.S. from such places as Africa and Latin America are shocked to find that many Americans don't believe in the supernatural or that divine intervention can occur in daily life.

In his new book, *A Simple Guide to Experience Miracles: Instruction and Inspiration for Living Supernaturally in Christ* (Zondervan, 2021), Dr. Moreland writes that, far from being abnormal, miraculous events are occurring all the time in every corner of the world. To use the creative phrase of C. S. Lewis, "Aslan is on the move."

A distinguished professor of philosophy at Talbot School of Theology, J. P. Moreland has for decades been conducting rigorous intellectual work that combines the keen mind of a philosopher with the gentle heart of a man who cares first and foremost about loving God and encouraging others. In *A Simple Guide to Experience Miracles*, he defends the viability of miracles and recounts personal encounters with the supernatural.

His hope is that the book will increase the reader's "attachment

love" for God. "We were created to function best in loving relational dependence on God, and attaching to him in love is one of the central aims of Christianity." His goal isn't merely to wow us with amazing stories but rather to show how such narratives reveal the heart and character of God, who wants to heal and restore the broken and the lost. God is good, and he works in miraculous ways to demonstrate his deep love for his children and for the whole world.

Moreland frames his discussion by first addressing some common questions about prayer and why prayers sometimes go unanswered. He also discusses some of the reasons Westerners are skeptical of supernatural claims. "We do absorb a naturalist view of things if we're not careful," he writes. "Since the 1930s . . . the default worldview has increasingly shifted toward a more naturalistic one. We believe science tells us what is real—and indeed, *all* that is real, and thus the only way to know reality is through the hard sciences."

The God Who Speaks

Admittedly, when I was growing up, I associated "miracles" with sham televangelists and faked healings in tent meetings. It was only when my sister-in-law Cierra experienced a miraculous healing that I started to reexamine my understanding of the miraculous. There was simply no other way to explain her sudden recovery.

I started to read the New Testament in a new light, and I realized just how central miracles, healings, and exorcisms were to

the ministry of Jesus and to the advancement of God's kingdom on earth. I read about the visions many Muslims have been experiencing in the Middle East, leading them to turn to the biblical God and give their lives to Christ despite the political and social risks of persecution. My own faith, which was struggling at the time, was deeply encouraged. He still speaks to those who have ears to hear.

Moreland's book made me realize just how often I live apart from an awareness of God's interactive presence in the world. I say I believe in God but usually live as a "functional atheist," denying that God is working powerfully in the world around me. I forget about

the miracles and wonders he's performed in my own life and in the lives of people I know.

Rational, Vetted & Confirmed

People should read this book to be *encouraged*. Moreland is a highly respected philosopher, and his accounts of the miraculous have been vetted and confirmed. "I

queried and got eyewitnesses and there's just no way to explain them away," he said. In addition to recounting stories of miracles and healings, he also discusses near-death experiences, showing how countless people have experienced post-mortem awareness and then "returned" to their bodies. These accounts, too, have been vetted and verified.



Moreland reminds us that it's rational to believe in God, and he shows us the manifold ways God's kingdom is advancing in the world today. Skeptics will have to decide what to do with the many credible accounts he relates, while believers can be encouraged in the knowledge that God is working miraculously across the globe.

We can also be reassured that we are called to participate in this work, in the power of the Holy Spirit, just as Jesus depended on the Spirit to work miracles during his earthly ministry. Moreland believes that, far from Christ's supernatural ministry being out of our reach, Scripture tells us his miraculous work was due to his radical dependence on the Holy Spirit. Jesus didn't perform miracles to let us know that we can't, but rather to reveal what human beings can do when fully submitted to God. This book will change the way you perceive "ordinary" reality and may well encourage you to take more risks in your own walk with Christ. As Francis Schaeffer wrote, "He is there, and he is not silent." ☉

Skeptics will have to decide what to do with the many credible accounts he relates, while believers can be encouraged in the knowledge that God is working miraculously across the globe.



Reckless Abandon

Harriet Beecher Stowe on Modern Feminists & Divorce

by Rebekah Curtis

If ever there's been someone who set records straight, it's Harriet Beecher Stowe, *capiche*? We know her as *the little woman who wrote the book that started this great war*, as Abraham Lincoln, another guy out to make corrections, once quipped.

Yet her profound rectitude, so much in evidence in her writing, cannot but give pause at this point:

It was because woman is helpless and weak, and because Christ was her great Protector, that he made the law of marriage irrevocable. . . . If the sacredness of the marriage-contract did not hold, if the Church and all good men and all good women did not uphold it with their might and main, it is easy to see where the career of many women . . . would end.



So wrote Stowe in *Pink and White Tyranny*, an 1871 novel that she identified upfront as a moral-driven parable. It is the story of John and Lillie, a disciplined Christian man and the undisciplined woman he marries. It is a story of charm and beauty, beauty and truth, and how awkward it can be when all three try to get together.

John falls for Lillie because she's a hyper-babe. The poor man thinks that a girl who's pretty on the outside must be pretty on the inside. Hijinks ensue, of course. Lillie could

be worse, but she could be a whole lot better, and John's pious mind could imagine nothing but the latter. When reality visits their marriage, John is moved to greater virtue by his virtuous sister Grace, whereupon Lillie is eventually moved to both repentance and [spoiler alert] death.

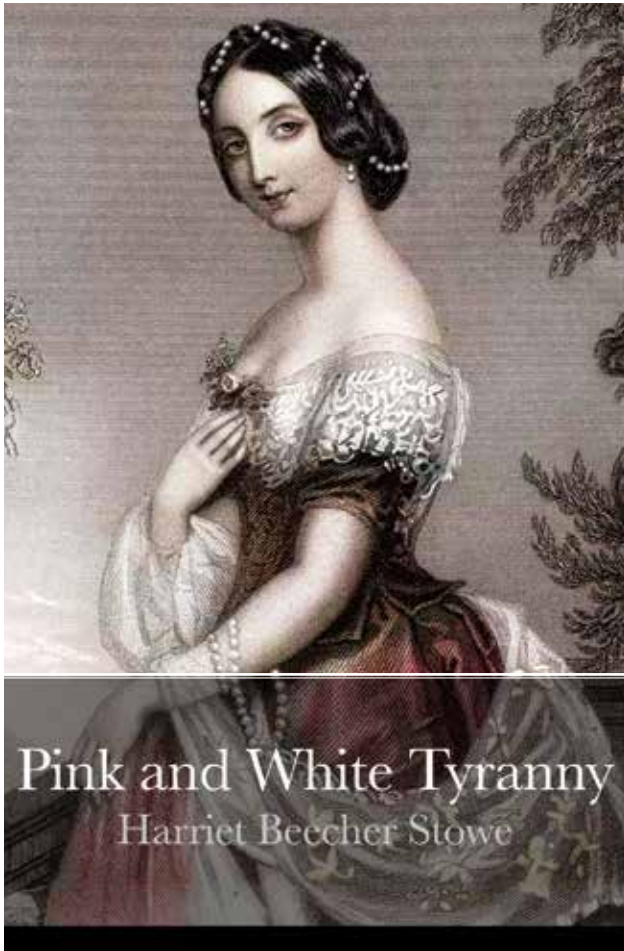
This turn of events is what gives occasion for Stowe's moral, cited above. But the visitation of reality in our own time calls the moral into question. Can marriage really be claimed to protect women if so many women are willingly abandoning it?

RESTLESS WIVES

In September 2021, the *New York Times* published a personal reflection of law professor Lara Bazelon: "There was no emotional or physical abuse in our home. There was no absence of love. . . . I divorced my husband not because I didn't love him. I divorced him because I loved myself more."¹

A few months later, *The Atlantic* aired a similar disclosure from editor Honor Jones:

I didn't have a secret life. But I had a secret dream life—which might have been worse. I loved my husband; it's not that I didn't. But I felt that he was standing between me and the world, between me and *myself*. . . . The worst part was that it wasn't remotely his fault; this is probably exactly what I asked him to do when we were 21 and first in love, even if I never said it out loud. . . . But now it



was like I was always on my tiptoes, trying to see around him.²

What is their problem, exactly? It's that one can have no complaints about her husband, and still have negative use for him. The solution to the problem is to leave.

Women with the wherewithal to make their musings everyone's business are not the only ones making such decisions. The Survey Center on American Life recently published data revealing that 66 percent of divorces are initiated by women.³ Surveys don't include stories, but the Fourth Estate is happy to fill in that gap. Women like Lara and Honor aren't happy, so they leave. And what woman isn't like Lara or Honor?

Married women keep telling us that they are intractably miserable with husbands who do not beat them, drink too much, disappear, or carry on with other women. These men aren't doing any of the things that were once sold as pretexts for making divorce widely available to women. They just aren't making their wives' lives happy anymore.

THE GRACE EFFECT

The deserting wives seem to experience boredom, frustration, or annoyances as pain. Whatever may be said of this, their ruminations sound a lot like John's in *Pink and White Tyranny*. Lovely Lillie is morbidly selfish and has no integrity. The process of discovering this devastates John:

I have nothing to live for,—nobody and nothing. My wife, Gracie! she is worse than nothing,—worse, oh! infinitely worse than nothing! She is a chain and a shackle. She is my obstacle. She tortures me and hinders me every way and everywhere.

There will never be a home for me where she is; and, because she is there, no other woman can make a home for me. Oh, I wish she would go away, and stay away! I would not care if I never saw her face again.

Grace acknowledges that Lillie is a wreck of a person but frames this wreckage as spiritual sickness. Under his marriage vows, John would care for Lillie if she fell ill, and it is clear that Lillie is a "moral invalid."

With the committed help of Grace and other friends and neighbors, John finds the strength to cleave to his chronically ill wife and nurse her toward wellness to the extent that her misshapen character is able to possess it.

The difference between Stowe's story and those of Lara and Honor is a lack of Grace. Apparently, no one told them they had a duty toward the helpless and weak—the husbands who had no recourse under a laughably dissoluble contract or the children whose worlds shatter when a parent radically reconfigures the family.

Steeped in the first-wave feminist milieu, Stowe was not in a position to foresee that the losers under a lax divorce ethos might end up being someone

Steeped in the first-wave feminist milieu, Stowe was not in a position to foresee that the losers under a lax divorce ethos might end up being someone other than women.

other than women. She could not have known that decades of policies crafted on the pretext of bailing women out of bad situations would end with the betrayal and abandonment being recklessly visited on men and children.

Far less could anyone have imagined the flippancy with which marriages would be voided. Honor Jones was driven to crisis, which she then visited on her husband and children, by crushed Cheerios in her house. Lara thinks understanding divorce as a “radical act of self-love” is insightful rather than contemptible.

A PERVERSE FREEDOM

In *Pink and White Tyranny*, Stowe shows how the seemingly powerless partner in a marriage is able to subvert, manipulate, and injure the “almighty” head of the house. Feminine tyranny no longer has to go to the trouble of being pink and white. Any time a wife is unhappy, the court of public opinion will likely find her husband at fault. Moreover, a wife can leave her husband and children at any time, for any reason, and be applauded for her brave decision. If she’s feeling generous, she can spread her reasoning to the less fortunate by way of a prestigious publisher.

Least of all is a diagnosis of moral illness admissible in public judgments of marital defectors. To people raised on second- and third-wave feminist values, self-sacrifice on the part of wives and mothers

is a pathology. Surrendering any form of personal comfort or satisfaction in the interest of a husband’s or child’s well-being is evidence of internalized sexist oppression.

Beloved Mrs. Stowe, champion of human freedom, would find herself far less popular were her moralizing on marriage to gain a wider readership:

Men have the power to reflect before the choice is made; and that is the only proper time for reflection. But, when once marriage is made and consummated, it should be as fixed a fact as the laws of nature. And they who suffer under its stringency should suffer as those who endure for the public good.

Was Stowe not as arrestingly right as she is usually memorialized to be? Or is it possible that she had a better understanding of freedom than ravenous Lara and jaundiced Honor?

Walking out on an unoffending man and powerless children is not liberated but libertine. Pursuing personal gain even when it cruelly wounds people is the perverse “freedom” of that undisputed moral invalid we now revile, the slaveholder. If only someone would write a book about that. ☹

Notes

1. [nytimes.com/2021/09/30/opinion/divorce-children.html](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/09/30/opinion/divorce-children.html).
2. theatlantic.com/family/archive/2021/12/divorce-parenting/621054.
3. americansurveycenter.org/research/emerging-trends-and-enduring-patterns-in-american-family-life.



www.salvomag.com

- Subscribers have access to over 60 issues
- Manage your account
- Read the blog! New posts every week
- Log in to read everything
- Share your favorite articles and fake ads

Read Salvo everywhere



Six Billion Tics

Social Media 'Influencers' & the Spread of Mental Disorders

by Bryan Just

In October 2021, doctors from around the world gathered via Zoom to discuss a new type of tic disorder becoming increasingly prevalent among adolescents. While the disorder resembled Tourette syndrome (an illness characterized by involuntary movements and vocal sounds), these new patients displayed tics that did not fit a Tourette diagnosis. Most Tourette patients are male; they begin displaying symptoms in early childhood (around ages 5–7); and while their tics gradually worsen, very few progress to the point of extreme tics (such as uncontrollably shouting obscenities).

In contrast, the new cases tended to be in adolescent and teenage girls with no history of tics and with severe tics appearing suddenly; some girls shouted over a hundred different words or phrases

in addition to displaying numerous physical tics. Perhaps most curiously, these doctors realized, many of their patients displayed similar, if not identical, tics (such as shouting the word “beans”).¹

What might these teens, spread across the globe, have in common? The likeliest answer is social media.² As researchers look into this phenomenon, they find that many of their patients’ tics mirror those of prominent social media influencers. A relatively new phenomenon involves online communities being built around those who have a particular disease or illness. In the case of tic disorders, certain influencers, such as Evie Meg from the U.K. or Jan Zimmermann from Germany, have garnered huge followings (Zimmermann has over two million subscribers on YouTube; Evie Meg has

nearly fifteen million followers on TikTok).³ On TikTok alone, videos with #tourettes have been viewed more than six billion times.⁴

MASS SOCIAL MEDIA-INDUCED ILLNESS

In an article published in Oxford Academic's *Brain* in February 2022, researchers hypothesized that we are witnessing a novel phenomenon—the first recorded cases of a “mass social media-induced illness” (MSMI).⁵ Unlike mass sociogenic illness (or what was previously called mass hysteria), which is localized to a specific group or area, MSMIs can spread wherever there is internet access and a social media account. Researchers note that the youth who suffer from MSMIs are not making things up or “faking it.” What these young people are experiencing is very real to them, even though it is not necessarily related to Tourette the way they may suppose.

Influencers with tic disorders are not the only ones with large followings on social media. Other, more extreme disorders have their representatives as well. For example, “The A System” is a TikToker whose posts focus on his dissociative identity disorder (DID; previously known as multiple personality disorder), and his account has reached over 1.2 million followers.⁶ He claims to be a “system of 32ish” distinct personalities, and his videos feature him and his many “alters” (alternate personalities), some of which he occasionally switches between mid-video. Much less has been written about the growing popularity of DID videos, although some outlets are beginning to take notice.⁷ Given that this genre is closing in on one billion views, these are clearly having an influence on teens and young adults.⁸

While there are many other similar online communities, one more worth special mention is the transgender community. In her book *Irreversible Damage*, Abigail Shrier includes an entire chapter on social media influencers and the pull they exert on young women. The trans influencers she studied and interviewed shared similar messages with their listeners, including: “If you think you might be trans, you are”; “If you’re not supported in your trans identity, you’ll probably kill yourself”; and “Deceiving parents and doctors is justified if it helps transition.”⁹

Shrier views these trans influencers as a part of the explanation for why many adolescent girls are suddenly developing transgender identities. This fits with earlier research by Lisa Littman, who found that 87 percent of parents reported their child had either increased internet/social media use or belonged to



a social group that included transgender-identifying friends at the time of their rapid onset of gender dysphoria.¹⁰

ILL-FOUNDED COMMUNITIES

The potential for online communities of influence to contribute to the spread of mental illness is alarming and raises a number of ethical issues. The oft-given defense of these groups is that they provide “community” and a “safe place” for those who suffer from their illness. It can be comforting to know that there are others like you and that you are not alone. These goods, however, need to be balanced against the potential harms that are resulting. At the very least, greater awareness on the part of parents, teachers, and doctors about the kinds of social media content youth are consuming is warranted, and perhaps greater protections are necessary.

Another oft-cited benefit of having communities and influencers devoted to different mental illnesses is that they can eliminate the stigma around mental illness by talking about it openly and honestly. While reducing the stigma of mental illness is a worthy goal, it is again worth asking whether these influencers are actually helping people better understand these illnesses.

In the case of the Tourette community, doctors have noted that many influencers do not seem to have the syndrome at all. While some seem to have a mild form of Tourette, others display evidence of a different condition called functional movement disorder (FMD).¹¹ In the DID community, its influencers commonly present in ways that go completely against established diagnostic criteria, such as having far more alternate personalities than is typical, switching between them seemingly at will, and having an awareness of each one. Influencers in the trans community at times encourage lying to medical

professionals in order to receive the desired diagnosis.

These influencer behaviors raise another concern. If the influencers in these communities do not actually have the disorder they purport to have, or if they have an exceedingly unusual presentation of it, their viewers will get a skewed, if not an entirely incorrect, account of how the illness manifests.

This is not to say that no influencers suffer from a mental illness or that they are actively trying to deceive people. However, it does demonstrate that, as should be expected in a medium dominated by peer-to-peer sharing, misunderstanding and misinformation abound. While it could be easy to write this off as harmless or less important than the benefits they offer, the fact that more and more adolescents are being pulled into these communities and even developing similar conditions themselves should give us pause.

If the influencers in these communities do not actually have the disorder they purport to have, their viewers will get a skewed, if not an entirely incorrect, account of how the illness manifests.

THE POPULARITY FACTOR

This relates to a similar issue with social media popularity—it creates a number of perverse incentives. For most people suffering from a mental illness, their desire is to mitigate symptoms or recover. However, social media influencers who have built their following *because* of their mental illness will be incentivized to avoid improvements that could cost them followers. In fact, they may even be incentivized to get worse—more extreme symptoms tend to make for more interesting content.

Similar incentives apply to those who consume their content. While social media is available to all, it is hard to feel a part of a community, especially a community built around illness, if you do not have that illness yourself. Additionally, influencers hold a glamorous position; they often show themselves as living idealized lives, and even when they share their

struggles, those watching are bound to question how difficult their situation really is if they are still consistently able to produce videos and build a following.

It seems only natural, then, that more and more adolescents are diagnosing themselves with disabilities they see online. Developing a mental illness allows them to be part of a community and to identify with those they look up to and whose content they consume, and it gives them the chance (however remote it might be) to become popular and develop a following of their own. It would not need to be on a large scale or even on social media; for some, being able to fit into a clique at school or to gain the approval and admiration of friends might satisfy this desire for a following.

It is easy to write off warnings about social media and the influencers who populate it as hyperbolic. After all, it might be argued, most people who view influencers with Tourette or DID are not going to go out and develop an illness themselves. While this may be true, we should also remember that we have a responsibility to the vulnerable. Even if only a small subset will be adversely affected (although this number seems to be growing), we should be aware of the dangers, be ready to warn those who might be at risk, and be prepared to help those who are searching for understanding and community. ☺

Notes

1. Helen Lewis, "The Twitching Generation," *The Atlantic* (Feb. 22, 2022): theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2022/02/social-media-illness-teen-girls/622916.
2. Sirin Kale, "'The Unknown Is Scary': Why Young Women on Social Media Are Developing Tourette's-Like Tics," *The Guardian* (Nov. 16, 2021): theguardian.com/media/2021/nov/16/the-unknown-is-scary-why-young-women-on-social-media-are-developing-tourettes-like-tics; Julie Jargon, "Teen Girls Are Developing Tics. Doctors Say TikTok Could Be a Factor," *The Wall Street Journal* (Oct. 19, 2021): [wsj.com/articles/teen-girls-are-developing-tics-doctors-say-tiktok-could-be-a-factor-11634389201](https://www.wsj.com/articles/teen-girls-are-developing-tics-doctors-say-tiktok-could-be-a-factor-11634389201).
3. "Gewitter im Kopf—Leben mit Tourette," YouTube (accessed June 9, 2022): youtube.com/channel/UCh2Nc3OwjSwuXrUdFNXqFbQ; "thistrippyyhippie," TikTok (accessed June 9, 2022): tiktok.com/@thistrippyyhippie.
4. #tourettes, TikTok (accessed June 6, 2022): tiktok.com/tag/tourettes.
5. Kirsten R. Müller-Vahl et al., "Stop That! It's Not Tourette's but a New Type of Mass Sociogenic Illness," *Brain* (Aug. 23, 2021): <https://doi.org/10.1093/brain/awab316>.
6. "The A System," TikTok (accessed June 9, 2022): tiktok.com/@theasystem.
7. For example, see Lo Styx, "Dissociative Identity Disorder on TikTok: Why More Teens Are Self-Diagnosing with DID Because of Social Media," *Teen Vogue* (Jan. 27, 2022): teenvogue.com/story/dissociative-identity-disorder-on-tiktok; Jessica Lucas, "Inside TikTok's Booming Dissociative Identity Disorder Community," *Input* (July 6, 2021): inputmag.com/culture/dissociative-identity-disorder-did-tiktok-influencers-multiple-personalities.
8. "#dissociativeidentitydisorder," TikTok (accessed June 9, 2022): tiktok.com/tag/dissociativeidentitydisorder.
9. Abigail Shrier, *Irreversible Damage: The Transgender Craze Seducing Our Daughters* (Regnery, 2020), 41–57.
10. Lisa Littman, "Parent Reports of Adolescents and Young Adults Perceived to Show Signs of a Rapid Onset of Gender Dysphoria," *Plos One* (2019): <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0214157>.
11. For more information on FMD, see "Functional Neurological Disorder," National Organization for Rare Disorders (NORD): <https://rarediseases.org/rare-diseases/fnd>.



different), so importing most formulas is impossible. It is also a heavily tariffed product, which makes it unappealing to import.

Forgot Milk?

What Families Can Learn from the U.S. Formula Shortage

by Nicole M. King

One thing the pandemic and related supply chain shortages have revealed is how very fragile our food system is. One chicken-slaughtering house is shut down, and the whole nation faces a shortage for months. Mass panic begins, and toilet paper is nowhere to be found. Eggs, milk, various types of meat, produce—all have faced periods of shortage and consequent price hikes.

But perhaps no shortage has been more terrifying for parents than that in infant formula, which began during the pandemic but was deeply exacerbated when Abbott Labs shut down formula production at its Sturgis, Michigan plant in February 2022.¹ It all began when the FDA investigated the deaths of two infants from a bacteria found in infant formula. Traces of a pathogen (*Cronobacter sakazakii*) were found at the Michigan Abbott plant, and although it is not clear that this particular pathogen at this plant was responsible for the deaths, the plant was nonetheless shut down for further investigation and clean-up (some other unsanitary conditions, including standing water, were also discovered).

But this one event was just the tipping point; the scene had long been set for a dramatic formula shortage. To begin with, the formula market in America is dominated by only three companies: Abbott, Mead Johnson, and Gerber, with the first two making up 80 percent of all sales. Infant formula is relatively difficult to produce and is subject to stringent safety requirements, so the manufacturers tend to outfit whole factories devoted to just that product. When one factory has to close, the market reels.

Regulatory and trade issues affect supply as well. The U.S. has different requirements for formula than European countries have (not necessarily better, but

WHEN HELPING HURTS

Then there is the role of government subsidy. As one Vox story points out, “Abbott and Mead Johnson haven’t dominated the formula market on their own. The federal government has helped.”² Through the Women, Infants, and Children program (WIC), the federal government subsidizes more than half of formula purchases by giving rebates to certain manufacturers. In practice, this has meant that when an individual state chooses to work with a specific formula manufacturer, that manufacturer has a virtual monopoly in that state. When, for example, Abbott lost California’s WIC contract, it

went from holding 90 percent of that state’s formula market to a mere 5 percent.

The demand for formula has also oscillated dramatically in the past two years. When the pandemic hit in 2020, parents feared future shortages and stocked up, causing price increases and, ironically, the very shortages they feared. Then, as they worked through their stockpiles, demand lessened—causing manufacturers to produce less. To further complicate matters, research by Lyman Stone found a slight uptick in births in early 2022, along with a “dramatic” decrease in breastfeeding. The fluctuating demand itself has made it difficult for manufacturers to know how much formula to make.

The U.S. government has been scrambling to get more formula produced and imported, but the current shortage lays bare the problems of industrialized life. There have always been women who have been unable, for one reason or another, to nurse their babies, but there have also been other women who have been able to step in and fill those gaps.

Infant formula does fill a need, but the formula industry did much to create more “need” by handing out free formula to hospitals in the 1950s. Nurses were encouraged to feed infants formula first, during what is a very delicate and crucial time for the establishment of breastfeeding. When mothers saw how easy formula seemed to be (and probably also



struggled with their own supplies of breastmilk once they brought their babies home), they were won over. Formula feeding surged in the 1950s and 1960s, an era corresponding with the push to get ever more able-bodied women into an office chair.

But for reasons nutritionists have never been able to nail down, infant formula has never been quite as good as breastmilk. The benefits of breastfeeding—and I do mean breastfeeding here, not feeding pumped breastmilk (which has been much less researched)—are extensive and long-lasting, so much so that the CDC and other regulatory bodies have strongly encouraged it since the 1970s. In spite of this, American mothers in particular struggle to breastfeed their children. Although exclusive breastfeeding is recommended for at least the first six months of a child's life, only 25 percent of babies nationwide meet that goal.³ Roughly 20 percent of breastfed infants receive formula supplementation in the first two days of life—interfering with the crucial supply-demand link with the mother's body.

One response to the current crisis has been simply to cry out “Breastmilk is free!” This is a deeply uncompassionate and ignorant answer, for a number of reasons. First, if you haven't gone through the work of breastfeeding exclusively in those first few precious days, chances are that your supply of breastmilk is never going to recover. Mothers can't suddenly start producing enough milk to feed their infants, much as some of them would like to right now.

But second, and perhaps even more importantly, the population least able to breastfeed “for free” are the low-income women. Women who have to return to work shortly after giving birth, or who receive WIC assistance, or who are single mothers without the support of the baby's father are overwhelmingly more likely to feed their babies formula. Breastfeeding is vastly time-consuming and thus extremely difficult for many women.

TOWARD FAMILY SUSTAINABILITY

What all this reveals is that problems arise when the family outsources its most basic functions—in this case, feeding its most vulnerable members—to industry and government. But there are things individual families can do to create a more sustainable system. The first step is simply to shrink the system by taking back as many functions into one's own home as possible.

In the case of remedying a formula shortage, this would first involve efforts to break up the monopolies. If you do rely on formula, try to find smaller manufacturers. If you haven't begun the journey of having babies yet, consider what changes you might make now to make breastfeeding possible. Local communities and hospitals could organize groups of breastfeeding women to support each other, not only with encouragement and education, but also with informal networks of breastmilk. The true, pie-in-the-sky target is for policymakers to recognize this first crucial link between parent and child and do all in their power to ensure that every woman can be at home with her children at least for the first few months to establish good breastfeeding habits.

It may seem ridiculous that in the most prosperous nation on earth, parents are scrambling to find food for their children. But this is a man-made crisis in every way, and government attempts to help have often made it worse. With a bit of creativity and thoughtfulness, we can remedy this crisis and restore local, family-based food economies. ☺

Notes

1. Derek Thompson, “What's Behind America's Shocking Baby-Formula Shortage?” *The Atlantic* (May 12, 2022): theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2022/05/baby-formula-shortage-abbott-recall/629828.
2. Dylan Scott, “Why There's Still a Formula Shortage,” *Vox* (June 2, 2022): [vox.com/policy-and-politics/2022/6/2/23151583/abbott-baby-formula-shortage-wic-biden-trump](https://www.vox.com/policy-and-politics/2022/6/2/23151583/abbott-baby-formula-shortage-wic-biden-trump).
3. Centers for Disease Control, “Breastfeeding Report Card,” 2020: [cdc.gov/breastfeeding/data/reportcard.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding/data/reportcard.htm).



The End Game

Perfect Order & the Second Law of Thermodynamics

by Bob Perry

The moral law, C. S. Lewis notes in *Mere Christianity*, is the only Law of Nature we can choose to disobey. The rest of them—like the laws of gravity or electromagnetism—demand compliance. They are so deeply woven into the fabric of the universe we rarely give them a second thought. But we should. They reflect the orderliness and constancy of our Maker. And they must be intricately fine-tuned, both individually and synergistically, for life to exist at all.

We are designed to operate under them, but unless we examine the physics that goes along with these laws of nature, it's easy to miss their beauty and significance. Few of us could sufficiently understand the science that would lead to that kind of appreciation. But there is an exception. One of these laws is easy to comprehend.

The *Second Law of Thermodynamics* is the driving force behind the operation of everything from a computer's microchip to the internal combustion engine to the biological machinery that runs every cell in your body. But the Second Law is more than just a useful but invisible feature of our world. Its simplicity camouflages the profound implications it has concerning the origin and nature of our cosmic home.

TWO LAWS

You understand the Second Law intuitively. You prove it every night when you plug in your cell phone to recharge it. As you are well aware, the battery only holds a fixed amount of useable energy. If you don't restore it by connecting it to an external power source, it will eventually go dead. It's not a mystery.

When it comes to using energy, our universe is like a giant battery. But unlike your cell phone, it doesn't come with a power cord. The universe is what we call a "closed system." There is no external source it can draw from to get recharged. As time

goes on, a closed system uses the energy available to it until that energy is gone. And the laws of thermodynamics tell us how the process works.

The *First Law of Thermodynamics*—commonly referred to as the *Law of Conservation of Energy*—says that energy can neither be created nor destroyed; it can only be transformed from one form into another. The *Second Law* tells us that the process of using energy only goes in one direction.

You understand this, too.

ENERGY FLOW

Imagine that you have a match in your hand. The head of the match is made of combustible material that has the potential to create a flame. There is a

fixed amount of potential energy concentrated in its head. When you strike it, the potential chemical energy in the tip transforms into the heat and light you see as the matchhead burns. Both heat and light energy disperse into the room. You see the light. And, if you had a way to measure it, you could also detect an increase in the room's temperature.

Notice that you haven't created any energy in this scenario. You've just observed the transformation of energy from one kind into two others.

Now consider this. Would you ever walk into a room holding a little wooden stick and have any expectation that the heat and light dispersed in that room could suddenly combine themselves into a glowing flame, then coagulate into a ball of chemicals on the end of your stick? If you consider that to be a silly question, you understand thermodynamics.

The Second Law simply formalizes what you already know to be true. It says this process of transforming energy is irreversible. You know that. But you might not know the technical, scientific term for the concept. It's called *entropy*. The Second Law says that in a closed system, entropy always increases.

Don't be intimidated by the word "entropy." It's simply a word for "level of chaos." Increasing entropy means things get more chaotic. If you have a garage, you understand this. In the spring, you sweep it out, hang up all your tools, and straighten out the stuff on your shelves. It looks great. But by

November, without any effort on your part, the garage has become a complete disaster. That's the Second Law at work. Left to itself, the entropy of your garage always increases. Same with your kids' bedroom closets.

In our matchstick example, the concentrated energy in the tip was transformed into the more dispersed and chaotic forms of heat and light. Things would never go the other way. The natural world tends toward disorder, not order.

DIVINE IMPLICATIONS

You understand these properties of energy transformation implicitly just from your experience of living in the real world. But the divine implications that follow from them become clear when you imagine running these processes backward.

Because the universe is a closed system with no way of getting recharged, we can deduce a couple of things about it. For starters, we know that the whole system cannot have been doing this energy transformation thing forever. If it had been going on for an infinite amount of time, all the energy would have already been used up. Our cosmos-sized battery would be dead.

But it's not.

That means that the universe began its energy transformation process at some time in the finite past—at a point when the universe's energy source was as full as it ever would be. It turns out that the Second Law leads us to the same inference as does Big Bang Cosmology, with which it is inextricably linked. The universe must have had a beginning. And, because beginnings need Beginners, the Second Law implies that a Creator set the whole energy transformation process in motion.

A PERFECT START

The Second Law points to a Beginner for sure. But it does more than that. Consider another implication that comes with our observations about the flow of energy.

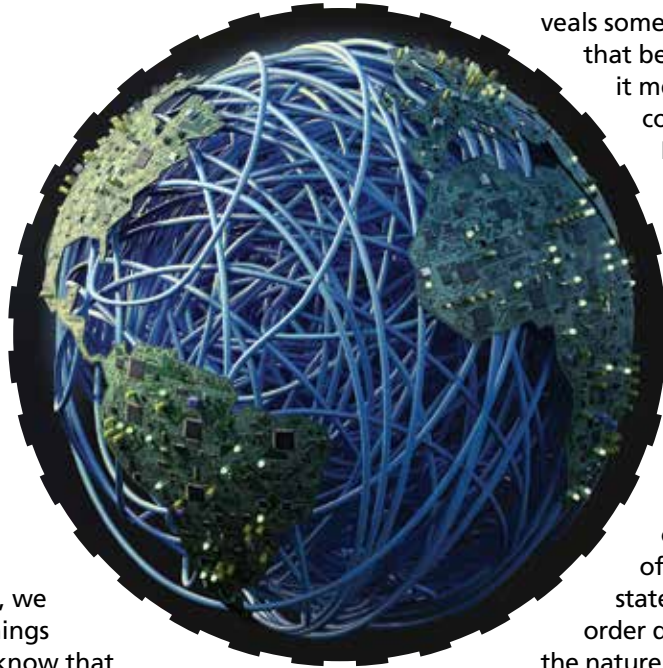
Running the clock backward would also mean reversing the level of entropy in the universe as a whole. The farther back we go in time, the less chaotic things become. Reversing the process back to where it started, we reach the point where the entropy level disappears altogether.

Zero entropy. You can't run the clock farther back than that.

This isn't just another way to see that the universe had to have had a beginning. It reveals something about the *nature* of that beginning. Think about what it means to have identified a condition of "zero entropy."

If entropy is the level of disorder in a system, zero entropy is a place of perfect order. And that sounds like a very God-like place to be.

We have to be careful here. God is not part of the physical universe. To say he *is* would be to suggest a form of pantheism. But pointing out that the initial condition of the physical universe was a state of perfect thermodynamic order does say something about the nature of the One behind it all.



THE FORCE OF LAWS

We choose to reject the Moral Law. And the human propensity to do so has created an ethically chaotic world. We see the consequences of it every day. Even those who deny God's existence cry for justice from within the chaos. Those cries are tacit admissions that there is a perfect standard of goodness that isn't being met. Our ability to complain about evil depends on the existence of a Moral Law that is grounded in God's perfect nature. The Second Law—a law we have *no choice* but to obey—leads us through a different form of chaos to the same conclusion.

The simple power of the Second Law is so commonplace we give it no thought. So fundamental is it to our existence, we quite literally can't do without it. But every time we flip on a light, or gaze into a blazing fire, or feel the warmth of the sun on our face, we should see it. The Second Law is evidence, not just that our Maker exists, but that the universe he created has reflected his perfect nature from the first instant it came to be. ☉

THE LEGEND OF SOCIAL JUSTICE JESUS

The Latest Revision of the Biblical Messiah Examined

by Greg Koukl



I want to tell you a story of an ancient sage who changed the world.

This wise man fought for justice, championing the cause of the poor and the oppressed. He rejected organized religion, showing tolerance—not judgment—for the outcast and the socially marginalized. He promoted universal love and the brotherhood of man. His unflinching commitment to speak truth to power cost him his life, but his legacy lives on. He is a model for us today of love, acceptance, and inclusion. His name is Jesus of Nazareth.

That is the story, in sum. It's a noble tale, to be sure. But it's a falsehood, a fiction, an urban legend. Though the story is parroted like a mantra by multitudes—even echoed reflexively by otherwise sound spiritual leaders who ought to know better—no such Jesus ever existed. Rather, taken as a whole, this version of Jesus is just another example of another Jesus bringing another gospel, like the ones the Apostle Paul anathematized to the Galatians.

This is not the first legend about Jesus, of course. Paul chastised the Corinthians for their own cavalier embrace of teachers fabricating a false Christ generated by a false spirit bringing a false gospel. The trend would continue in the future, Paul warned, with the Church turning its ticklish ears from truth to myths—legends—choosing man-made fictions over doctrinal facts. Jesus himself warned of future interlopers, imposters masquerading as messiahs who would mislead many.

The Jesus on Record

Times have changed, but the trend has not. New “Jesus legends” abound: the legend of Jesus, the (mere) itinerant moral teacher; the legend of Jesus, the prophet of Allah; the legend of the socialist Jesus; the legend of the Gnostic Jesus of the Gospel of Thomas; the legend of Jesus, the universal Christ; the LDS legend of Jesus, the spirit brother of Lucifer; the New Age legend of Jesus, the Hindu guru. Et cetera, et cetera.

The remaking of the Jewish Messiah from Nazareth into a progressive advocate of social justice is just the latest example of the tendency people have to fashion Christ in their own social/spiritual/political image. Here the tail wags the dog, though. The point is not for any of us to get Jesus on our side, but for us to get on Jesus' side—hands to the plow, not looking back, fit for the kingdom.

What precisely is “Jesus' side,” though? Given the mishmash of myths, how do we separate wheat from chaff, fact from fiction, legend from history? There is a reliable, uncomplicated method I employ to get an accurate, balanced, big-picture take on any topic in any section of Scripture, and it's perfectly suited for this task.

I simply read every word of the biblical material I'm interested in, isolate every passage that's germane to my topic, then collate the passages in an orderly way to create a thorough, complete, precise portrayal of the topic. It's a simple—if labor-intensive—technique anyone can use to get the full counsel of any section of Scripture on any topic.

We have one body of detailed information about Jesus: the canonical Gospels. We can accept them as divinely inspired. We can accept them as non-inspired



human documents that are, in the main, historically accurate. We can even accept them as error-ridden musings by primitive people about God and Jesus. What we cannot do, though, is reject the Gospel accounts out of hand and then advance our own personal opinion of the Jesus of the Gospels.

Reject the record, and you forfeit your opinion of the man of the record. It's that simple. Of course, if you cherry-pick verses to fashion a Jesus in your own image, then I have nothing to offer you. If that's your project, you are welcome to your fantasy, but do not mistake the views of your make-me-up Christ for the views of Jesus of Nazareth. That legend will reflect your opinions, not his.

Jesus & "Social Justice"

To separate the real Jesus from legendary Christs of any sort, simply read every line of every Gospel carefully, isolating every passage that speaks of Jesus' purpose.

In the vast majority of cases where Jesus mentions the poor, he does so to make a point about something else. Campaigning for those in poverty was not part of his project. In one case, Jesus actually was dismissive of the poor when compared to something

else that was his greater concern: "For you always have the poor with you; but you do not always have me."

What was it about Jesus *himself* that defined his mission in a way that completely eclipsed a legitimate and appropriate concern for the financially destitute?

When preaching on the Sabbath at the synagogue in Nazareth, Jesus said: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me . . . to set free those who are *oppressed*." But which "oppressed"?

Peter gives us insight into the kind of oppression Jesus had in mind:

You know of Jesus of Nazareth . . . how he went about doing good and healing all who are oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. . . . Of him all the prophets bear witness that through his name everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins.

Jesus also said the Spirit has "anointed me to preach the gospel to the *poor*." But what kind of "poor" would receive this gospel message of forgiveness and thus be freed from the oppression of the devil? Jesus told us: "Blessed are the poor *in spirit*."

For Jesus, salvation was not economic prosperity, equal distribution of goods, or sexual liberty without judgment or shame. . . .

Not the proud self-righteous, but rather those who understood their spiritual poverty.

Taken together, these passages about the oppressed and the poor paint a clear picture of Jesus' intent. The poor in spirit were to receive the gospel, have their sins forgiven, and be released from the devil's oppressive power.

Clearly, contending for the financially destitute as such was not his concern, nor was campaigning on behalf of the marginalized, the disenfranchised, or the socially oppressed. Jesus' concern was bringing forth a kingdom in a way that secured liberty for the captives through forgiveness of sin.

Jesus on Jesus

From the outset, the Gospels paint a clear picture of Christ's purpose, from which a clear profile emerges. Here are the facts that record reveals: A savior named Jesus, who is Christ the Lord, the Son of the Most High God, will be born in Bethlehem to shepherd Israel. As the sacrificial Lamb of God, he will bring salvation and redemption through the forgiveness of sins, baptizing some with the Holy Spirit and others with the fire of judgment. He will be given the throne of his father David and rule over an everlasting kingdom.

There is nothing in the Gospel descriptions of Jesus that suggests the social-justice Jesus described earlier. As it turns out, there is nothing like that in Jesus' own claims about himself, either.

Jesus had much to say about his own mission. He said he came to preach the good news of the kingdom of God. He made clear, though, that his kingdom was not of this world, at least initially. It was not a physical kingdom bringing social justice, wealth redistribution, or political and cultural equity. Rather, it was a spiritual kingdom bringing forgiveness, salvation, and eternal life.

For Jesus, salvation was not economic prosperity, equal distribution of goods, or sexual liberty without judgment or shame. Instead, salvation came through

... Instead, salvation came through belief in him, bringing forgiveness of sins and eternal life.

belief in him, bringing forgiveness of sins and eternal life. Jesus knew that in order to accomplish this mission, he must suffer, die, and be raised again, just as Moses and the prophets had foretold.

Examine the record of Jesus' own statements about his purpose and mission, and once again, you will find that something is missing—any evidence of any kind that Jesus saw himself as an advocate for social justice. It's not there. Not a word.

To be clear, there is no question that God in Scripture has a heart for the genuinely oppressed and destitute, and Jesus as God shared that concern, as did his Church. When Jesus encountered deep human need, he responded with compassionate action—characteristically healing the sick, casting out demons, raising the dead, and in two instances, physically feeding multitudes. Even so, Jesus' principal purpose was redressing *spiritual poverty*, not rectifying *social inequities*.

"Who Do You Say That I Am?"

Near the end of Jesus' life, he asked his disciples the most important question anyone can consider: "Who do you say that I am?" The answer any person gives to that question seals his fate for eternity. We dare not be mistaken on this issue.

Isolate every verse in the Gospels identifying Jesus' purpose. You will not find a single sentence where Jesus championed the cause of the poor, the outsider, or the disenfranchised as such. There is not even a hint of it—in the sense that it's commonly understood—in the entire historical account of the life of Jesus of Nazareth.

Did Jesus care about the poor, the downtrodden, and the marginalized? Yes. He also cared about the rich, the powerful, and the socially advantaged. Jesus cared about everyone, and he helped anyone who came to him—poor beggar or prostitute, wealthy tax collector or Pharisee.

The right answer to Jesus' question is Jesus' own answer. He is the Christ, the Son of God, the Savior, the Lamb of God, the living sacrifice who secures forgiveness of sins and eternal life for anyone who bends his knee and beats his breast in penitence before him.

It is the right answer because no other Jesus saves souls—and that, as it turns out, is what he came to do. Any other Jesus—Jesus the mere moral teacher, Jesus the prophet of Allah, the socialist Jesus, the Gnostic Jesus, the universal Christ Jesus, the spirit brother of Lucifer Jesus, the Hindu guru Jesus, even the social justice Jesus—is a falsehood, a fiction, an urban legend. •

—Adapted from *Stand to Reason* (str.org).
Used with permission.

Brainiacs



The Mythical Pipedreams of Transhumanist Tech Execs

by Clay Jones

Two weeks after 17-year-old Mary's baby died, she wrote in her diary, "Dream that my little baby came to life again; that it had only been cold, and that we rubbed it before the fire and it lived. Awake and find no baby. I think about the little thing all day. Not in good spirits."¹ Mary's own mother had died of an infection a few days after giving birth to Mary, so death haunted her.

At the time, demonstrations of the power of galvanism were popular. Galvanism, named after scientist Luigi Galvani (1737–1798), was the process of giving electric shocks to parts of a dead body that resulted in the muscles contracting. One experiment on an executed murderer brought this result:

On the first application of the process to the face, the jaws of the deceased criminal began to quiver, and the adjoining muscles were horribly contorted, and one eye was actually opened. In the subsequent part of the process the right hand was raised and clenched, and the legs and thighs were set in motion.

Some feared that "the wretched man was on the eve of being restored to life."²

Mary wondered, “Perhaps a corpse would be re-animated; galvanism had given token of such things: perhaps the component parts of a creature might be manufactured, brought together, and endued with vital warmth.”³ Mary wasn’t a scientist, but she turned out to be a good writer. In 1818, at age 21, Mary Shelley published the book that would make her famous: *Frankenstein*.

From Sci-Fi to Biotech

Since *Frankenstein*, science fiction has been abuzz about genetically altered humans, or transhumans.

Some possess terrific powers, and some are even immortal. This has been seen in movies such as *Spider-man*, *Captain America*, *X-Men*, *Limitless*, *Lucy*, and others. But many now argue that immortality isn’t just science fiction because science is now on the threshold of bestowing true immortality through transhumanism. The basic idea is simple: if unguided, random matter, via natural selection, is capable of evolving humans into the marvelous beings that we are, then what happens if we humans use our intelligence to take the chance out of natural selection by modifying our DNA? This is sometimes referred to as “unnatural selection.”

Tech executives are betting on it. The founders of PayPal, Google, Facebook, eBay, Napster, and Netscape are spending hundreds of millions of dollars to defeat death entirely or at least to radically increase human longevity.⁴ Oracle co-founder Larry Ellison has donated more than \$430 million to anti-aging research.⁵ Similarly, Larry Page, CEO of Google’s parent company Alphabet, started Calico (short for California Life Company) with an investment of up to \$750 million from Google, for the purpose of life-extension research.⁶

Once we get this all figured out, we’ll be able to “reverse aging,” writes futurist and National Inventors Hall of Fame inductee Ray Kurzweil. This will be accomplished through biotechnology methods “such as RNA interference for turning off destructive genes, gene therapy for changing your genetic code, therapeutic cloning for regenerating your cells and tissues, smart drugs to reprogram your metabolic pathways, and many other emerging techniques.” If that doesn’t do it, “whatever biotechnology doesn’t get around to accomplishing, we’ll have the means to do with nanotechnology.”⁷

One brain-uploading true believer is David J. Chalmers, University Professor of Philosophy and Neural Science at New York University. Chalmers and a host of others hold that one day you will be able to upload your consciousness into a computer and it will still be you. Some of those who believe this are giddy at the prospect of an electronic immortality.

Of course, we’re not even remotely close to accomplishing these things, but that’s why Kurzweil’s book is entitled *The Singularity Is Near*. He looks to the Singularity to save us.

Brain Uploading

Another way some hope to live forever is through brain uploading, also known as “whole brain emulation.” Brain uploading is a kind of transhumanism in which the mind—a collection of the memories, personality, mental state, and attributes of a specific individual—is transferred from its original biological brain to a computer. If this were possible, then you could potentially possess literal immortality. If you could upload your consciousness into a computer, then you could load yourself into a new body or a digital avatar. You could be She-Ra or the He-Man, except those names are already taken—but don’t worry, there are avatar name generators to help you.

Brain uploading is illustrated in movies such as *Transcendence* with Johnny Depp (2014), *Selfless* with Ryan Reynolds and Ben Kingsley (2015), and the all-time worldwide box office leader, *Avatar* (2009). Brain uploading was even in an episode of *The Simpsons* in which Homer’s antics result in his death. But to the relief of everyone, we learn at Homer’s funeral that Homer had been cloned by Professor Frink. This encourages the brain-uploaded and cloned Homer to be even more careless, since he knows he can come back to life. But after 30 years of Homer dying and coming back as a clone, Frink announces at Homer’s umpteenth funeral that he has run out of Homer clones.

All is not lost, however, because Frink had downloaded Homer onto a flash drive, which is ultimately uploaded into Marge’s home entertainment system.





From then on, the episode is sad. Because she misses being with Homer, Marge ultimately electrocutes herself so she can join Homer forever in a flash drive.⁸

Not-Kidding Proponents of Brain Uploading

But for some, brain uploading isn't science fiction; it's achievable science. Belief that this is possible is based on the philosophy of materialism, which says that humans are no more than material stuff—i.e., humans don't have souls. Brain uploaders argue that since humans are no more than molecules in motion, there's no reason why the synapses of our brains couldn't be replicated with components and circuitry yet to be *invented*. When this electronic whiz-bang is invented, brain uploaders declare, there will be no reason why a computer, which is also just material stuff, couldn't become a vessel into which we can upload our consciousnesses.

Once we are able to upload our consciousnesses, we will be able to download them into a body or

into a robot. As Kurzweil puts it, "we will have plenty of options for twenty-first-century bodies for both nonbiological humans and biological humans who avail themselves of extensions to our intelligence. The human body version 2.0 will include virtual bodies in completely realistic virtual environments, nanotechnology-based physical bodies, and more."⁹ Futurologist Ian Pearson predicts that, "realistically by 2050 we would expect to be able to download your mind into a machine, so when you die it's not a major career problem."¹⁰

One brain-uploading true believer is David J. Chalmers, University Professor of Philosophy and Neural Science at New York University. Chalmers and a host of others hold that one day you will be able to upload your consciousness into a computer and it will still be you. Some of those who believe this are giddy at the prospect of an electronic immortality. One such fellow is philosophy professor Mark Walker, who writes, "If one is uploaded to a computer, then it seems that it would be a relatively routine matter to enhance one's memory or cognition: just add more computer memory or processing power. The sky is literally the limit here." He enthuses, "In short, and without too much hyperbole, those who upload may well be on their way to godhood."¹¹ Throughout the ages we humans have made our own gods, but now some think that we can make *ourselves* gods.

But how could you possibly upload your *consciousness* to a computer? One popular explanation is gradual uploading. Chalmers explains:

Suppose that 1% of Dave's brain is replaced by a functionally isomorphic [similar in form and structure] silicon circuit. Next suppose that another 1% is replaced, and another 1%. We can continue the process for 100 months, after which a wholly uploaded system will result. We can suppose that functional isomorphism preserves consciousness, so that the system has the same sort of conscious states throughout.¹²

Chalmers believes that this gradual uploading is the "safest" way to upload your brain, and he is "reasonably confident that gradual uploading is a form of survival."¹³ Thus he writes, "So if at some point in the future I am faced with the choice between uploading and continuing in an increasingly slow biological embodiment, then as long as I have the option of gradual uploading, I will be happy to do so. Unfortunately, I may not have that option. It may be that gradual uploading technology will *not be available in my lifetime*."¹⁴ Or any lifetime!

Science Isn't Even Close

The reason it won't be available in Chalmers's lifetime is that everyone agrees that the computer into which the brain is uploaded must have circuitry identical to the connections that one finds in your brain. Your brain needs to be mapped neuron by neuron, and then replicated neuron by neuron along with the other relevant components.

Chalmers writes, "The holy grail here is *some sort of* noninvasive method of brain imaging, analogous to functional magnetic resonance imaging but with fine enough grain that neural and synaptic dynamics can be recorded." In other words, the wiring of your brain needs to be exactly replicated in a machine if it is to be you. The problem, writes Chalmers, is that "no such technology is currently *on the horizon*, but imaging technology is an area of rapid progress."¹⁵ In other words, science isn't close to replicating your brain, much less to making circuitry conscious.

In fact, we can't even make artificial intelligence (AI) that acts like a person, much less upload a human brain into a computer. Stanford University neuroscientist and HBO *Westworld* advisor David Eagleman explains:

What AI is not any good at is the sort of broad intelligence that, for example, a 3-year-old has. A 3-year-old can do things like pick up a dish from the sink and put it in the dishwasher and communicate with people and manipulate people and navigate a complex room without falling down or running into the furniture—all kinds of things that AI really stinks at currently. We are not really close to having AI that seems like a human.¹⁶

Much less being a vessel into which we could upload a human brain!

Eagleman speaks of computers not having the "broad intelligence" of even a three-year-old. The problem is that humans possess a type of intelligence foreign to computers. Philosopher Hubert L. Dreyfus points out that "metaphors like 'Sally is a block of ice' could not be analyzed by listing features that Sally and a large, cold cube have in common."¹⁷ If you said that to most humans, they would immediately understand your low opinion of Sally, but a computer will have no idea. Philosopher John R. Searle gives another example: "'Juliet is the sun' does not mean 'Juliet is for the most part gaseous', or 'Juliet is 90 million miles from earth', both of which properties are salient and

The problem of producing a brain is that there are almost a hundred billion neurons. We can't even replicate a 302-neuron worm brain!

well-known features of the sun."¹⁸

AI scientist Erik J. Larson points out that children know that "when Barack Obama is in Washington, his left foot is also in Washington," but a computer wouldn't know that without being instructed. Larson says that "simple knowledge like this seemed endless; even worse, the bits and pieces that became relevant kept changing, depending on context."

The Wiring Disconnect

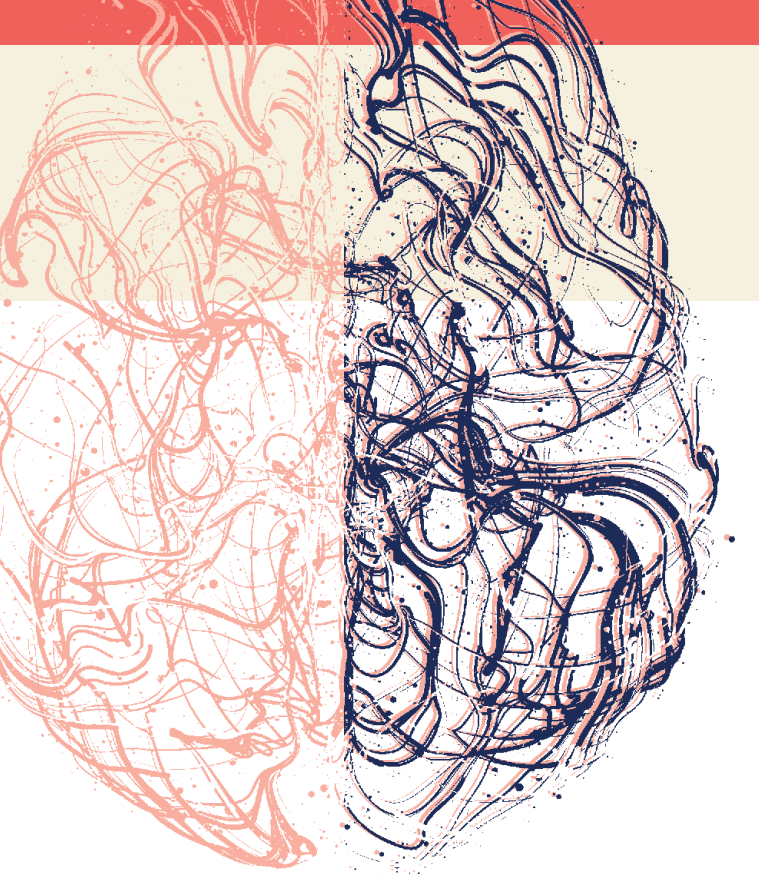
The problem of producing a brain, writes Eagleman, is that there are "almost a hundred billion neurons—those are the specialized cell types in the brain—and each one of those has about 10,000 connections to its neighbor. So there are almost a thousand trillion connections in the brain and we just haven't figured out all the secrets to it yet."¹⁹ So we haven't figured out the "secrets" to "a thousand trillion connections" of our "hundred billion neurons."

Strong AI proponents say that they will one day emulate the brain on a computer, but that's not the same thing as making a brain. Searle explains:

The computational emulation of the brain is like a computational emulation of the stomach: we could do a perfect emulation of the stomach cell by cell, but such emulations produce models or pictures and not the real thing. . . . Even with a perfect computer emulation of the stomach, you cannot then stuff a pizza into the computer and expect the computer to digest it. Cell-by-cell computer emulation of the stomach is to real digestive processes as cell-by-cell emulation of the brain is to real cognitive processes. But do not mistake the simulation (or emulation) for the real thing. It would be helpful to those trying to construct the real thing but far from an actual stomach.²⁰

But we haven't even figured out how a brain with only 302 neurons works. McGill University neuroscientist Michael Hendricks writes in the MIT Technology Review:

I study a small roundworm, *Caenorhabditis elegans*, which is by far the best-described



animal in all of biology. We know all of its genes and all of its cells (a little over 1,000). We know the identity and complete synaptic connectivity of its 302 neurons, and we have known it for 30 years. If we could “upload” or roughly simulate any brain, it should be that of *C. elegans*. Yet even with the full connectome in hand, a static model of this network of connections lacks *most* of the information necessary to simulate the mind of the worm. In short, brain activity cannot be inferred from synaptic neuroanatomy.²¹

We can’t even replicate a 302-neuron worm brain!

The Harvard-educated MIT neuroscience professor Sebastian Seung explains that “the bottleneck” for reproducing a brain has to do with “analysing the images.” Seung says, “Suppose we can image a cubic millimetre of brain in two weeks. To trace the neurons through those images manually we estimate would take 100,000 years. For one cubic millimetre.”²² And a cubic millimetre is only about the size of a grain of sand! In other words, scientists won’t be able to completely map anyone’s brain within, say, the next million years, and even if they could, it would only be a model of a working brain—it wouldn’t actually be a working brain.

Erik J. Larson, in *The Myth of Artificial Intelligence: Why Computers Can’t Think the Way We Do*, sums up the problem: “Here, it’s best to be clear: equating a mind with a computer is not scientific, it’s philosophical.”²³ Indeed, and because of the naturalist’s *philosophical* commitment to materialism—a commitment that has nothing to do with science—naturalists go on whistling in the grim reaper’s shadow, believing that one day science will figure out how to replicate a brain.

But as mentioned above, those who seek literal immortality have a last, best hope: the Singularity! Cue the choir! Many scientists hope the Singularity will save them! But in part two of this series, I will explain why the Singularity will never, ever happen—never ever. ☹

—This article was adapted from Clay Jones’s book, *Immortal: How the Fear of Death Drives Us and What We Can Do About It* (Harvest House, 2020).

Notes

1. Mary Shelley and Leslie S. Klinger, *The New Annotated Frankenstein* (Liveright, 2017), xlv.
2. “George Foster,” *The Newgate Calendar*, available at The Ex-Classics Web Site: exclassics.com/newgate/ng464.htm.
3. Shelley and Klinger, *Frankenstein*, *ibid.*, 298.
4. Ariana Eun Jung Cha, “Tech titans’ latest project: Defy death,” *Washington Post* (April 4, 2015): washingtonpost.com/sf/national/2015/04/04/tech-titans-latest-project-defy-death/.
5. *Ibid.*
6. *Ibid.*
7. Kurzweil, *The Singularity Is Near: When Humans Transcend Biology* (Penguin, 2005), 256.
8. *The Simpsons*, “Days of Future Future,” episode 548 (originally aired April 13, 2014).
9. Kurzweil, *The Singularity*, *ibid.*, 199.
10. David Smith, “2050—and Immortality Is Within Our Grasp: Britain’s Leading Thinker on the Future Offers an Extraordinary Vision of Life in the Next 45 Years,” *The Observer/Guardian*

(May 21, 2005): theguardian.com/science/2005/may/22/theobserver.technology.

11. Mark Walker, “Personal Identity and Uploading,” *Journal of Evolution and Technology*, vol. 22, issue 1 (November 2011): <https://jetpress.org/v22/walker.htm>.
12. David Chalmers, “The Singularity: A Philosophical Analysis,” *Science Fiction and Philosophy: From Time Travel to Superintelligence*, 2nd ed., ed. Susan Schneider (Wiley-Blackwell, 2016), 208.
13. *Ibid.*, 211.
14. *Ibid.*, 211. Emphasis mine.
15. *Ibid.*, 200. Emphasis mine.
16. Denise Chow et al., “‘Westworld’ science adviser shares his vision of robots and the future of AI,” *NBC News Mach* (June 16, 2018): nbcnews.com/mach/science/westworld-science-adviser-shares-his-vision-robots-future-ai-ncna883321.
17. Hubert L. Dreyfus, *What Computers Still Can’t Do: A Critique of Artificial Reason* (MIT, 1992), xxvi.

18. John R. Searle, *Expression and Meaning: Studies in the Theory of Speech Acts* (Cambridge Univ. Press, 1979), 95.

19. Chow et al., “‘Westworld’ science adviser,” *ibid.*

20. John R. Searle, “What Your Computer Can’t Know,” *The New York Review* (Oct. 9, 2014): nybooks.com/articles/2014/10/09/what-your-computer-cant-know.

21. Michael Hendricks, “The False Science of Cryonics,” *MIT Technology Review* (Sept. 15, 2015): technologyreview.com/s/541311/the-false-science-of-cryonics. Emphasis mine.

22. Ian Sample, “Interview: Sebastian Seung: you are your connectome,” *The Guardian* (June 9, 2012): theguardian.com/technology/2012/jun/10/connectome-neuroscience-brain-sebastian-seung.

23. Erik J. Larson, *The Myth of Artificial Intelligence: Why Computers Can’t Think the Way We Do* (Belknap/Harvard, 2021), 69.



USSR Builds Socialism
by El Lissitzky
1933

Meanwhile, polls show that some 70 percent of millennials would likely vote for a socialist—a total rejection of the principles on which the nation was founded. Data produced in 2021 by Barna Research in conjunction with the Cultural Research Center at Arizona Christian University and Foundations of Freedom showed that 30 percent of millennials and almost 40 percent of Gen Z (18–24) identify as LGBTQ.² Hundreds of thousands of youngsters now identify as “furries,” with news reports indicating that some are coming to school dressed up as animals while meowing or barking.³

On the religious front, millennials are the first generation in American history among whom Christians are in the minority. California only backed down from forcing children to chant to pagan Aztec deities of cannibalism and human sacrifice after a lawsuit.⁴ And rituals and practices from non-Christian religions are now a staple in some school classrooms. All this in a country where, only a few decades ago, upwards of 90 percent of Americans described themselves as Christians. Even among those who still identify as Christian, those with a biblical worldview are a steadily declining minority.

And the trends are accelerating, with data showing that the overwhelming majority of Christian children who attend public school will leave the faith. *The Christian Post*, citing the Nehemiah Institute, reported that 80 to 85 percent

of public-school students from Christian homes have a secular humanist worldview at odds with Christianity.⁵

But the mantra heard so often that public education is merely “broken” or was “hijacked” at some undetermined point in the past is false. The truth is, the schools are performing exactly as intended. It was all by design, though not the design of the workaday schoolteacher or principal.

Tyrants have understood for at least a century that indoctrinating children through universal public education would help them cement

Stealth Education

The Successful Humanist Subversion of Public Schooling

by Alex Newman

Virtually everyone today realizes that government schools are less than ideal for children, with polls indicating that the vast majority would prefer an alternative. The fruit is obvious enough. According to 2019 data compiled under the federal government’s own National Assessment of Educational Progress, known as “America’s Report Card,” two-thirds of eighth graders are not proficient in *any* core subject. According to a 2020 Gallup study, fewer than half of U.S. adults read at a sixth-grade level.¹

their power. Karl Marx was an early advocate of government “education” for all children, and from Adolf Hitler’s National Socialism to Lenin’s and Stalin’s Socialist Soviet Union, mandatory, state-controlled education has been a critical component of tyranny. That self-styled progressives today would use the same system to indoctrinate children in America shouldn’t be surprising. Indeed, many of them boast of what they are doing. Just last year, amid unprecedented parental uproar surrounding Critical Race Theory in schools, the National Education Association (NEA) passed resolutions declaring that they would continue pushing the Marxist ideology masquerading as a remedy for racism anyway.

The United Nations has also been transparent about its agenda to use public education to shift values, attitudes, and beliefs. “Both formal and non-formal education are indispensable to changing people’s attitudes,” reads chapter 36 of UN Agenda 21, a controversial global agreement adopted by the consensus of UN member states in 1992. “It is also critical for achieving environmental and ethical awareness, values and attitudes, skills and behaviour consistent with sustainable development.” This can include “spiritual” development.



“Organized social planning . . . is now the sole method of social action by which liberalism can realize its professed aims.”

—John Dewey, *Liberalism and Social Action* (1935)

— HISTORICAL BACKGROUND —

Politicized subversion via education is not new. From the beginning, key individuals behind the establishment of government education in the United States were open about their plans. The goal, in brief, was a total transformation of the United States—away from its Christian heritage of individual liberty, God-given rights, and limited government and toward a collectivist utopia.

This is documented in the writings of John Dewey (1859–1952), who is universally regarded as the father of the “progressive education” that reigns in government schools today. Unlike many of his contemporary associates, Dewey was transparent about his desire to subvert the existing order. His vision came from an 1888 novel by utopian author Edward Bellamy, called *Looking Backward*, in which private property would be seized by the government. So enamored was Dewey with this collectivist vision that he became an honorary member of the Edward Bellamy Association, which was created to promote the agenda.

Another key inspiration for Dewey was the then-nascent Soviet Union, which even in its early years was savaged by mass murder, political and religious persecution, and economic horror. Dewey traveled to the Soviet Union and wrote a series of glowing reports for *The New Republic* about the collectivist system, and especially its instilling of a “collectivist mentality” in children through public education.

Despite couching his ambitions with the label of “democracy” (much like socialists today), Dewey’s socialistic leanings were hardly a secret to anyone who cared to look. In his book *Liberalism and Social Action*, he openly called for government control of the means of production. “The only form of enduring social organization that is now possible is one in which the new forces of productivity are cooperatively controlled,” he wrote. “Organized social planning . . . is now the sole method of social action by which liberalism can realize its professed aims.”

Dewey’s disciples today say he was not a Marxist, but Dewey’s chief difference with other communists of his day was that they generally favored violent revolution to achieve their vision, while Dewey favored a gradual approach using education and “democratic means” to bring about the same ends.

Knowledge Will Break the Chains of Slavery
by Alexei Radakov

1920

— EVERY SCHOOL a SCHOOL of HUMANISM —

Dewey's religious views, if communistic godlessness can be so called, were also on full display for anyone who bothered to look, as he was an author and signer of the *Humanist Manifesto* (1933). The first plank stated, "Religious humanists regard the universe as self-existing and not created," an outlook antithetical to America's founding premise, expressed in the Declaration of Independence, "that all men are *created* equal, that they are endowed by their *Creator* with certain unalienable rights."

To America's Founding Fathers, God and Creation were self-evident truths, and God was the source of human rights. In humanism, there is no God, and therefore no God-given rights. Dewey's vision is therefore a total repudiation of America's Judeo-Christian founding. The two visions cannot coexist.

Dewey's "religion" was also openly communistic. "The humanists are firmly convinced that existing acquisitive and profit-motivated society has shown itself to be inadequate and that a radical change in methods, controls, and motives must be instituted," the 14th plank explains. "A socialized and cooperative economic order must be established."

Dewey was not alone. Another early humanist, Charles Francis Potter, explained in his 1930 book *Humanism, A New Religion* that public schooling would be the primary transmission system for this new religion. "Education is thus a most powerful ally of humanism, and every American public school is a school of humanism," he wrote. "What can the theistic Sunday schools, meeting for an hour once a week, teaching only a fraction of the children, do to stem the tide of a five-day program of humanistic teaching?"

— PRE-DEWEY SUBVERSIVES —

Long before Dewey, state schooling was seen as an instrument of totalitarianism. The first known advocate of government education and rearing of children was not Karl Marx, but Plato, a proto-totalitarian who believed humanity should be ruled by an elite class of "philosopher kings" for their own good. He believed that children should be educated *by the state*, for the benefit of the state. A handful of ancient Greek jurisdictions experimented with the idea, with terrible results (think fascist Sparta).

In 1837, another anti-Christian utopian, Horace Mann, was installed as the first Secretary of Education for Massachusetts, the first state to have such a position. Inspired by the Prussian system, Mann launched the establishment of full-blown government schooling, complete with government-controlled teacher training. He, too, rejected the Bible and wanted it out of education, suggesting that it fueled "sectarianism." Believing that public education would "equalize all men" and cure countless societal ills, he adamantly opposed home education and private schools. After achieving his goals in Massachusetts, he traveled America preaching the good news of public education to any legislature that would listen.

Under Mann's leadership, quackery infected education. Mann regarded phrenology, the debunked idea that skull measurements could predict

personality traits, as the greatest discovery of the era, and he quickly imposed its "insights" on the school system.

More tragically, Mann introduced the "whole word" method of teaching reading in the schools he oversaw. Originally created to help deaf children learn how to read, and sometimes

"What can the theistic Sunday schools, meeting for an hour once a week, teaching only a fraction of the children, do to stem the tide of a five-day program of humanistic teaching?"

—Charles Francis Potter, *Humanism, A New Religion* (1930)

referred to as the "look-say" or "sight words" method, it involves memorizing entire words as if they were symbols. For deaf children, it represented a great advance, allowing them access to the written word, if imperfectly. But when taught to non-deaf children, it was debilitating. "Such a change, as that proposed by Mr. Mann and others, is neither called for, nor sustained by sound reasoning," wrote Samuel Stillman Greene on behalf of the Association of Boston Masters in a devastating critique that practically ended the practice for 50 years.

Mann may have genuinely believed that the whole word method would be helpful, but when Dewey resurrected it half a century later, he had no such excuse. While he stood on the shoulders of earlier collectivists, Dewey was by far the most transparent about the need to dumb down the population before Americans would give up their individualism and Christianity. In an 1898 jeremiad headlined *The Primary Education Fetish* (*sic*), he argued that schools shouldn't be focusing so much effort on teaching young children how to read. Instead, he saw the education system as part of "an organism of social forces [that should be retooled] to meet the needs of the present hour."

He knew his ideas would not go over well with the public. "Change must come gradually," he wrote. "To force it unduly would compromise its final success by favoring a violent reaction." And indeed, it would have.

Education and Literacy

1921

In 1894, Dewey set up an experimental school at the University of Chicago, funded by Rockefeller money. The Laboratory School resurrected the debunked whole-word method to teach reading, resulting in graduates who could not read or write properly. Despite having been exposed as harmful for 150 years, this method remains firmly entrenched in some schools today under the national “Common Core” standards. Dewey eventually moved on to Teachers College at Columbia University, the most influential college of education in America, and from there his ideas spread throughout U.S. public education.

— FROM LITERACY to MEDIOCRITY—

Contrary to this statist inclination, education throughout Christian history has been seen as primarily the domain of parents, for the Bible clearly places responsibility for the education, disciplining, and training of children on their parents, with the church playing a supplemental role. Following the Protestant Reformation, formal education became more widely diffused, but it was primarily a function of the church, not the state.

It is hard for anyone to grasp the magnitude of educational decline that has taken place in the U.S. without first knowing how well-educated and highly literate Americans once were. From the very start, settlers placed enormous value on ensuring universal literacy. Early Massachusetts pioneers were so determined to make sure that every child was literate that they passed a law in 1642 requiring parents to ensure their children could read and write.

Near-universal literacy was not limited to Massachusetts. John Adams wrote to a friend that “a native of America who cannot read or write is as rare an appearance . . . as a Comet or an Earthquake.” P. S. du Pont de Nemours, in his 1812 study, *National Education in the United States of America*, concluded that virtually everyone could read at a young age. “Most young Americans, therefore, can read, write and cipher,” he said. “Not more than four in a thousand are unable to write legibly—even neatly.”



And it was not just reading. French political scientist Alexis de Tocqueville, who traveled in America before Mann’s establishment of state schooling, wrote of his astonishment at the level of education found in America on everything from religion and history to the U.S. Constitution. This was all the result of a “non-system” consisting primarily of home-schooling and church-based education, with some Christian colleges taking care of more advanced levels.

But by the latter half of the twentieth century, the situation had become scandalous. “The educational foundations of our society are presently being eroded by a rising tide of mediocrity that *threatens our very future as a nation and a people*,” concluded the authors of *A Nation at Risk*, the report of President Ronald Reagan’s National Commission on Excellence in Education, in 1983. “If an unfriendly foreign power had attempted to impose on America the mediocre educational performance that exists today, we might well have viewed it as an *act of war*.” The situation is only more acute today.

— A TURNING TIDE? —

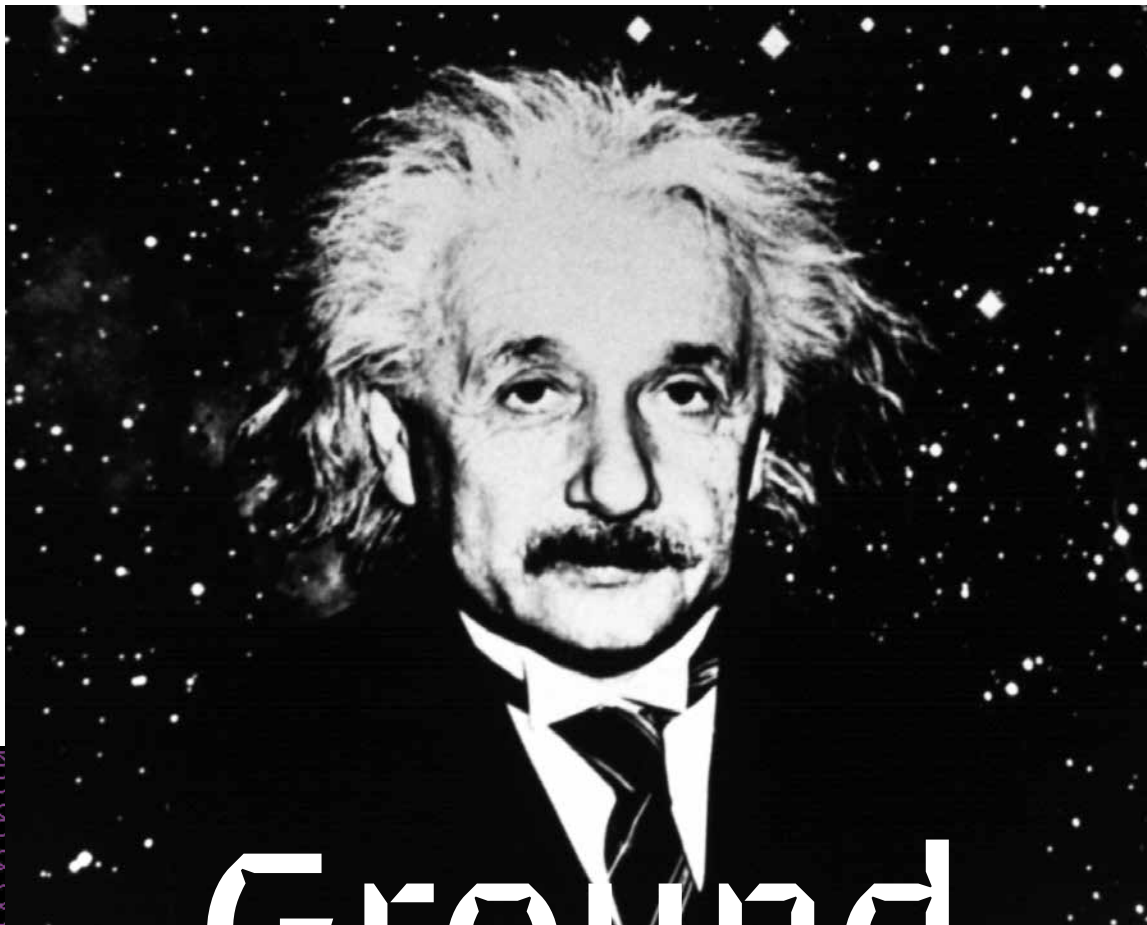
Multiple generations of Americans have been dumbed down and indoctrinated with godless, collectivist ideologies that threaten to destroy the nation and its citizens’ civil liberties. It remains to be seen if this tide can be turned, but any solution to the decline in America must address the crisis in education.

There is good news, though. All across the country, families are fleeing public schools by the millions. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, amid the covid shutdown, the number of homeschooling families doubled in just one year. And early data suggests that most of them will not go back to public schools.

In fact, this mass exodus may be only beginning, as frustrated parents are ignored and mocked and even persecuted by the educational establishment for speaking out against abuses. Better late than never. It is past time for churches and parents to reclaim their rightful role from the state. The future of America literally depends on it. ☺

Notes

1. forbes.com/sites/michaeltietzel/2020/09/09/low-literacy-levels-among-us-adults-could-be-costing-the-economy-22-trillion-a-year.
2. newsweek.com/nearly-40-percent-us-gen-zs-30-percent-christians-identify-lgbtq-poll-shows-1641085.
3. <https://thenewamerican.com/brainwashed-school-kids-now-identifying-as-animal-furries>.
4. <https://cferfoundation.org/pr011422>.
5. christianpost.com/news/christian-parents-public-schools-3-reasons-for-sending-your-kids.html.



Ground Zero

*Why Einstein's Theory
Is Such a Big Deal*

by Hugh Ross

When I shared with my wife the thrilling news that general relativity had just passed seven more tests of its certainty and accuracy, she looked at me blankly and asked, “So, why should I care about this, Hugh?” When she realized I was eager to write on this topic one more time, she urged me not to—*unless* I could make clear to her, and to anyone else who is *not* an astrophysicist, why this finding is such a big deal.

Today, I’m attempting to take up her challenge. Frankly, the answer is not all that complicated. It really comes down to pulsars and patience. I’ll admit that my explanation of what the tests revealed may seem a wee bit technical; so, for Kathy’s sake and yours, I’ll preview the bottom line right up front: The reliability of Einstein’s theory of general relativity (GR) holds monumental significance for our trust in the existence of the *Creator*—not just a force of physics, but the Creator-God revealed in the Bible.

For more than 2,500 years, the Bible alone claimed that the universe had a beginning, a beginning that included the

For more than 2,500 years, the Bible alone claimed that the universe had a beginning that included the creation of space and time. Hence, general relativity implies that the universe is not eternal and self-existing but rather that it was created *ex nihilo* at some point in the finite past.

Radio antenna dishes of the Very Large Array radio telescope near Socorro, New Mexico



creation of space and time. Hence, GR implies that the universe is not eternal and self-existing but rather that it was created *ex nihilo* at some point in the finite past. GR, too, implies the existence of a causal agent—one that exists beyond matter and energy, time and space—to cause it all to come into existence.

If GR is real, then it provides evidence that the Bible’s creation narrative is securely, demonstrably rooted in reality, not in fantasy. So it is exciting news that findings from a recent 16-year scientific study support the reality of general relativity. And now, for the details.

The New Research

New radio-wave measurements from two “heavy” stars (in this case, pulsars) have provided weighty evidence. A team of 29 astronomers just published results

from their 16-year study of the subtle orbital changes in the binary pulsar system PSR J0737-3039A/B—the only known system in which two pulsars (neutron stars emitting regular pulsating radiation toward Earth) are locked into an orbit with each other (see figure on page 43).¹

I refer to these two pulsars as “heavy” because the diameter of each is about 116,000 times smaller than

the Sun's and yet their mass is slightly greater than the Sun's. Their densities exceed 2 billion tons per teaspoonful! They're called pulsars because their radio emissions pulsate regularly from their extraordinarily powerful magnetic fields as they rotate rapidly. These beams of radiation "pulse" into our view, like the beams from a lighthouse.

The rate of these pulsations is astounding. In the PSR J0737-3039 system, Pulsar A rotates every 22.70 milliseconds, and Pulsar B every 2.77 milliseconds. This means radio astronomers can observe 44 pulses of radiation per second from A and 361 pulses per second from B.

Meanwhile, Pulsar B makes a complete orbit around Pulsar A every 2.454 hours. This orbital period is the shortest yet known for any binary system involving neutron stars. It is three times shorter than that of the pulsar-neutron star system PSR B1913+16, which delivered the previous best tests of GR and resulted in a Nobel Prize in Physics for Joseph Taylor and Russell Hulse in 1993.

Gravitational theories (such as GR) can best be tested where at least one of the neutron stars in a binary system happens to be a pulsar, but the theoretical ideal is a system in which both neutron stars are pulsars. The opportunity for accuracy increases still more if the two pulsars have a short orbital period and a somewhat eccentric (as opposed to a nearly circular) orbit and if their orbital planes are closely aligned with our line of sight from Earth. It is utterly remarkable—some would dare to say a miraculous gift—that the only known binary pulsar to manifest all these optimal features for testing theories of gravity is accessible to us.

Seven Tests

Beginning in 2003, astronomer Michael Kramer and his team used six of the world's largest radio telescopes, as well as the Very Long Baseline Array (VLBA), to measure PSR J0737-3039's pulses. The VLBA consists of ten 25-meter radio telescopes stretching from Hawaii to the Virgin Islands, all linked together to work as one interferometer. (An interferometer measures the interference pattern created by two or more sources of waves, in this case, light waves at radio wavelengths.) The VLBA was crucial for determining an accurate direct-distance measurement to PSR J0737-3039, without which precision tests of GR would not have been possible.

Kramer's team remained patient. They continued observing the PSR J0737-3039 pulsars month after month, year after year, without publishing any results. Even when the LIGO and Virgo Collaborations (gravity

wave telescope research teams) published their direct detections of the gravity waves predicted by GR from the mergers of black holes and neutron stars in 2016,² Kramer's team continued their painstaking work. They waited until they had accumulated enough measurements to determine the energy emitted by gravitational waves to 1,000 times greater precision than the measurements achieved by the LIGO and Virgo gravitational wave telescopes.

Prior to this study, GR had already passed every experimental and observational test astronomers and physicists were able to devise. These previous tests are described in my book *The Creator and the Cosmos*.³ Only one possibility existed in which an alternate theory of gravity, if it existed, could be discerned, and that was within the extremely strong gravitational fields that exist near neutron stars and black holes. And such fields are exactly what this binary pulsar within our range of detection provided!

What the Tests Accomplished

The patience of Kramer's team paid off. By observing minuscule reductions in the neutron stars' masses and tiny variations in their orbital features (shape and size) and in the timing of their pulses, Kramer and his colleagues were able to achieve seven distinct tests of GR.

Two of the seven tests had never before been performed. In one, Kramer's team showed how photons from one of the neutron stars slowed down and how their directional path bent as they passed through the intense gravitational field of the other neutron star. The effects they observed fit what GR predicted. Another was their demonstration of the manner in which gravity distorted the shape of the neutron stars' orbit—again, just as GR predicted.

The results of the seven tests, expressed as observations compared to GR theoretical predictions, are as follows:⁴

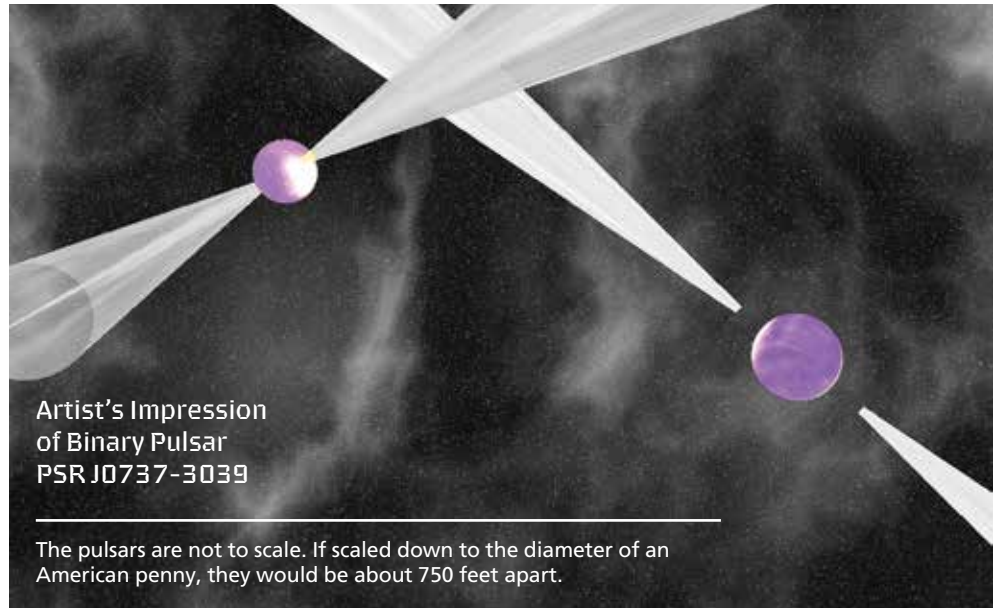
GR Test	Comparison with GR Prediction (GR = 1.0)
Shapiro delay shape⁵	1.00009 ± 0.00018
Shapiro delay range	1.0016 ± 0.0034
time dilation⁶	1.00012 ± 0.00025
periastron advance⁷	1.000015 ± 0.000026
gravitational wave emission⁸	0.999963 ± 0.000063
orbital deformation	1.3 ± 0.13
spin precession⁹	0.94 ± 0.13

The first test in this list, the Shapiro delay, is named for Irwin Shapiro, who made the first high-precision tests of GR back in the 1970s.¹⁰ As a young member of Caltech's astronomical research staff not long thereafter, I enjoyed several conversations with him about GR tests and their implications.

Physical & Philosophical Implications

The patience of Kramer's team was rewarded with new insights not only about GR but also about the properties of the interstellar medium between PSR J0737-3039 and Earth. Ongoing observations of PSR J0737-3039 are expected to produce even more insights. As we gain more comprehensive knowledge of the interstellar and intergalactic media, we will be able to develop more detailed Big Bang origin models. Future observations also may deliver more comprehensive and detailed models for the formation of binary pulsar systems, the likelihood of discovering more of these systems, and new insights into particle creation models.

The most exciting outcome from the astronomers' results is that GR now stands even taller as the most exhaustively tested and firmly established principle in physics—confirmed under all gravitational field regimes. Insofar as GR accurately and comprehensively



describes gravity and, thus, the universe's space-time fabric, it is fully consistent with the biblical model of cosmic creation.

This affirmation is good news for all theists, especially Christians. The space-time theorems proved that the universe had a beginning.¹¹ This beginning includes the origin of space and time. The proof follows if the universe contains mass and GR reliably describes the dynamics of massive bodies in the universe. Each of us, and each star and galaxy, is evidence that the universe indeed contains mass. Thanks to the exhaustive testing of GR described here, we can be confident that GR reliably describes the dynamics of all massive bodies in the universe. Therefore, a Causal Agent beyond space and time must have intentionally brought into existence this universe of matter, energy, space, and time, just as the Bible has declared for thousands of years.¹² ☉

Notes

1. Michael Kramer et al., "Strong-Field Gravity Tests with the Double Pulsar," *Physical Review X*, 11, 041050 (Dec. 13, 2021): <https://journals.aps.org/prx/pdf/10.1103/PhysRevX.11.041050>.
2. B. P. Abbott et al., "Astrophysical Implications of the Binary Black Hole Merger GW150914," *Astrophysical Journal Letters*, 818, no. 2 (Feb. 11, 2016): <https://iopscience.iop.org/article/10.3847/2041-8205/818/2/L22>; Hugh Ross, "How Gravitational Waves Help Explain the Universe's History," *Reasons to Believe* (Mar. 10, 2016): <https://reasons.org/explore/publications/articles/how-gravitational-waves-help-explain-the-universe-s-history>.
3. Hugh Ross, *The Creator and the Cosmos*, 4th ed. (RTB Press, 2018), 114–120.
4. Kramer et al., "Strong-Field Gravity Tests," 37.
5. The Shapiro time delay effect refers to light taking longer to travel to a target when that

light must pass by a massive body.

6. Time dilation is the elapsed time difference between two clocks due to a difference in gravitational potential at the clocks' locations.
7. In a binary star system, periastron advance refers to one star's movement toward that position in its orbit that brings it closest to its companion star.
8. Gravitational wave emission refers to the propagation of waves outward from accelerated masses.
9. Spin precession refers to the distortion of space near a massive body generated by the spin of the massive body.
10. Irwin I. Shapiro, "Fourth Test of General Relativity," *Physical Review Letters* 13, no. 26 (Dec. 28, 1964): https://pubs.aip.org/paper/Shapiro_1964.pdf.
11. Arvind Borde, Alan H. Guth, and Alexander Vilenkin, "Inflationary Spacetimes Are

- Incomplete in Past Directions," *Physical Review Letters* 90, no. 15 (April 18, 2003): id. 151031, doi:10.1103/PhysRevLett.90.151031; Aron C. Wall, "The Generalized Second Law Implies a Quantum Singularity Theorem," *Classical and Quantum Gravity* 30, no. 16 (July 12, 2013): id. 165003, doi:10.1088/0264-9381/30/16/165003; Alexander Vilenkin and Aron C. Wall, "Cosmological Singularity Theorems and Black Holes," *Physical Review D* 89, no. 6 (March 2014): id. 064035, doi:10.1103/PhysRevD.89.064035.
12. Hugh Ross with John Rea, "Big Bang—The Bible Taught It First!," *Reasons to Believe* (July 1, 2000): <https://reasons.org/explore/publications/rtb-101/big-bang-the-bible-taught-it-first>; Hugh Ross, "Does the Bible Teach Big Bang Cosmology?," *Reasons to Believe* (Aug. 26, 2019): <https://reasons.org/explore/blogs/todays-new-reason-to-believe/does-the-bible-teach-big-bang-cosmology>.



The Whitewashing

Darwin Apologists Obscure His Racism & Assist White Supremacists Today

by Denyse O'Leary

In *Hitler's Ethic: The Nazi Pursuit of Evolutionary Progress* (2009), University of California historian Richard Weikart demonstrated how the Nazis had developed an ethic based largely on applying Darwinian evolution principles to government. With racism very much in current news, he has followed up this year with *Darwinian Racism: How Darwinism Influenced Hitler, Nazism, and White Nationalism*, which focuses on how the Nazis understood racism in explicitly Darwinian terms. Briefly, they believed that natural selection acting on random mutations during the Ice Age had made northern Europeans fitter for survival than other human groups.

Suppose a PR agency was hired to defend the view that the Nazis were not really Darwinists after all. They could hardly do better than much current scholarship, which attempts to obscure the plain facts of the case. Here are some of the misrepresentations Weikart's methodical trip through the archives addresses.

EVASION TACTICS

Some offer sentimental stuff about Darwin to the public while continuing to admit the truth as scholars. For example, Adrian Desmond and James Moore wrote *Darwin's Sacred Cause* (2009), playing up Darwin as an abolitionist. Yet, as Weikart notes, they freely admit that he saw genocide as a force for progress in human evolution and thus justified imperialist warfare against aboriginal peoples. Of the people living in Tierra del Fuego, Darwin wrote, "Viewing such men, one can hardly make oneself believe that they are fellow-creatures, and inhabitants of the same world."

Hitler's public orations virtually channelled Darwinism. From his Nuremberg Rally speech in 1933:

"The gulf between the lowest creature which can still be styled man and our highest races is greater than that between the lowest type of man and the highest ape." That's almost verbatim from Ernst Haeckel. Nazi education and teacher training explicitly taught Darwinism. Schoolchildren were "encouraged to see primates as their evolutionary relatives." Meanwhile, the Nazi-run biology teachers' magazine often attacked creationism. Nazi popular media proclaimed evolution as a critical scientific fact, rejecting any skepticism. Weikart comments, "In the course of my research, I have surveyed quite a few Nazi periodicals, and I have never discovered a single article in them attacking or even calling into question evolutionary theory."

Historians who are uneasy with these facts sometimes either misunderstand or misrepresent occasional controversies. For example, Daniel Gasman argues that because German biologist Ernst Haeckel was unpopular among Nazis, the Nazis rejected Darwin. No, they spurned Haeckel's involvement in socialism, pacifism, feminism, and anti-fascism. But by 1939, Haeckel was posthumously showered with honors nonetheless.

Similarly, historians George Mosse and Peter Bowler have argued that since the Nazis insisted that only heredity (not environment) matters, they rejected evolution. It is unclear how these historians arrived at that view. The Nazis rejected Lamarckian evolution (where environmental influences matter) as a Marxist doctrine *because* they were strict Darwinian selectionists.

Other historians have claimed that the Nazis *must have* rejected evolution because they "would not have wanted to affirm a common ancestor for the various human races, because that would imply human equality." But Darwin himself argued for common descent in *The Descent of Man* while explicitly believing that human populations were physically, intellectually, and morally unequal.

Neither he nor his Nazi fans noticed any difficulty.

Some portray disputes about mechanisms as opposition to the basic idea. Historian Robert Richards, for example, insists in *Was Hitler a Darwinian?* (2013) that two Nazi scientists were anti-Darwinism. In reality, Weikart says, they were both “full-fledged evolutionists” arguing about details of mechanisms—like Stephen Jay Gould versus Richard Dawkins. In a rare moment of impatience, Weikart calls Richards’s contention “wildly mistaken.”

Another claim is that Darwinism was a mere propaganda tool, even though Hitler and leading Nazis invoked it in private conversation. Some boldly claim that Hitler was a “creationist.” He was, in fact, a pantheist who scoffed at creationist explanations.

DARWIN & WHITE NATIONALISM

These misrepresentations by historians are especially disturbing if one takes racism and white nationalism seriously. Weikart sums up by pointing out the obvious: “Most objections to the historical connection between Darwinism, racism, and Nazi ideology seem to come from those desperate to protect Darwinism from any such unsavory associations. They ignore masses of data while latching onto small tidbits that seem to corroborate the view they like.” He then offers a challenge: “In sum, if Darwinism really is not inherently racist, then it is incumbent on Darwinists to explain why it is not.”

A similar skew clouds the discussion of white nationalism today. Weikart noted recently that in 2021 alone, academic presses published *White Evangelical Racism* (by Anthea Butler), *Bad Faith: Race and the Rise of the Religious Right* (Randall Balmer), and *The Bible Told Them So: How Southern Evangelicals Fought to Preserve White Supremacy* (J. Russell Hawkins).¹

You’d never guess from these titles that American white nationalists are profoundly anti-Christian or that Darwin’s *Descent of Man* clearly underlies their views, but Weikart sketches their history, starting with an obscure incendiary book, *Might Is Right* (1896), by Ragnar Redbeard (a pseudonym). Anton LaVey, founder of the Satanic Church, plagiarized part of it for his *Satanic Bible* in 1969, and it has remained very popular ever since among white nationalists. Concerning Christianity? “From the very first pages Redbeard viciously and relentlessly attacked Christianity—calling Jesus ‘the true prince of Evil.’”

Leading white power and alt right figures, such as George Lincoln Rockwell, William Pierce, Revilo P. Oliver, Kevin Alfred Strom, J. Philippe Rushton,

Kevin MacDonald, Richard Spencer, Jared Taylor, John Derbyshire, and Steve Sailer, have stressed Darwinian evolution as underpinning their racism.

ELITISM CONTINUES

Weikart’s book is fact-heavy, but it addresses a need.

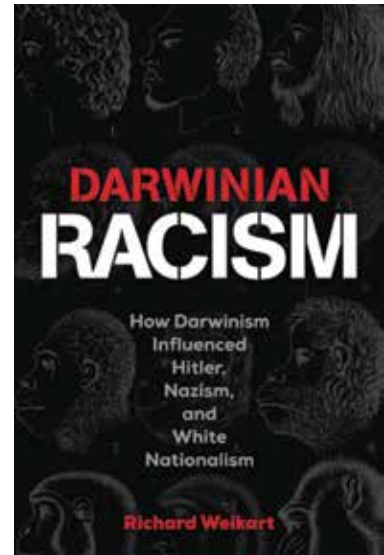
The fact-lite (or fact-free) Woke

demand a Darwinism purged of its own history. Yet that history is still very much alive. Recently, transhumanist historian Yuval Noah Harari, a key advisor to the World Economic Forum (WEF), was musing on what we should do with all the “useless,” “meaningless,” and “worthless” people alive today.²

WEF is hardly an alt right web site; ultra-fashionable political jetsetters meet there to reshape our lives. So I asked Dr. Weikart by email, “What, if anything, has changed?” He replied:

Harari is an Israeli, so he would have been on Hitler’s list of inferior peoples. The difference between the Nazis’ view and the view of many intellectuals today, Harari included, is that they simply have different categories of people that they consider inferior. For the Nazis, it was the Jews and other races. For most progressives today it is those they think have lower levels of rationality, such as preborn children, people with mental disabilities, senile elderly people, etc. In Harari’s case, it apparently includes anyone who will not go along with his transhumanist program to become an “enhanced” human.

Darwin never asked historians to rescue him from racism, but as Darwinian thinking remains fashionable, we may expect recurring attempts to obscure its origins and history. ☺



Notes

1. “Anti-Racists Often Ignore This Non-Religious Source of Racism” (May 10, 2022): evolutionnews.org/2022/05/anti-racists-often-ignore-this-non-religious-source-of-racism.

2. “A Great Reset Historian Muses on What to Do with ‘Useless’ People” (June 9, 2022): mindmatters.ai/2022/06/a-great-reset-historian-muses-on-what-to-do-with-useless-people.



by me, even if I'm a block away, without a salute, you won't know what fell on you."

The Agony of Victory

Twelve O'Clock High

by Anthony Esolen

The year is 1942, and the Nazis are in the ascendant. You are American fighter pilots, based in southern England. You are the only American presence in the theater of northern Europe, and you have been flying at night, bombing Nazi installations in Denmark and the Netherlands, but never getting too close to Germany itself, and thus not accomplishing a whole lot. Still, the missions are dangerous, and many of your fellows never come home.

Why are you fighting? Who knows? You don't think about it. Your commanding officer, Colonel Keith Davenport (Gary Merrill), is a brave man, and he identifies with you, so when you get the feeling you are a "hard luck" outfit, he has not the heart to argue about it. It is a job to tear your guts out.

And there is the problem. If the 918th Airborne is to succeed, if it is to help turn the tide of the war, you cannot have men who think they cannot win, no matter how many of their friends die in action. You must somehow learn to love by setting your love aside.

So a new man is placed at the head of the outfit, a rugged, no-excuse-taking, relentless taskmaster, General Frank Savage (Gregory Peck). As he has said to his friend, Colonel Davenport, if you identify yourself too closely with your men, you will lose the capacity to command them. And sure enough, the first time Savage appears on the post, and the gatekeeper passes him by without checking his credentials and without saluting, he makes the driver come to a sudden halt, he gets out of the car, and he gives the guard a dressing down. "Get a good look at me," he says. "If you or any other man on this post passes



into shape, and sure, that is a part of it, but his command is tenuous, and every single pilot has requested a transfer out of his outfit. He has called one of them, the foot-dragging Lt. Colonel Ben Gately (Hugh Marlowe), "yellow" and ordered him to paint the words "The Leper Colony" on his airplane, "because in it you're going to get every deadbeat in the outfit. Every man with a penchant for head colds. If there's a bombardier who can't hit his plate with his fork, you get him. If there's a navigator who can't find the men's room, you get him. Because you rate him." I am sure that many men in the audience in

MEN & WAR

The film is *Twelve O'Clock High* (1949), perhaps the most unusual and cerebral war movie I have ever seen. If you are looking for *Top Gun* special effects, this is not your film. In fact, we see no airborne action at all until well into the second half, and most of it is real footage saved by the American and German armies—footage that will hold you spellbound, precisely because it is not choreographed. You see the tail gunner open to the air and death. You see the bombs as they are dropped. You see the planes in terrifyingly close formation, and you can almost feel the wind whipping the wings.

But your interest will not be in the mechanics of it all. It will be in the men who are there, and in these men not as Hollywood characters—for *Twelve O'Clock High* avoids all the pleasing clichés, the southern farm boy next to the Italian son of the Bronx, the sensitive boy in spectacles next to the football player—but as men, simply men, about whom you know next to nothing, except in their roles at war, and in their fears, their skill, their hard-learned obedience, their exhaustion, their survival, and their death.

You will think that General Savage is there to whip the crew

1949 had some memory of such a confrontation, some knowledge that in war, one kind of human thing to do is at odds with another thing, perhaps less obviously human, and knew that General Savage was a gift to this outfit, a gift they did not at first know how to appreciate.

SAVAGERY & PROTECTION

Well, we have seen such stories before—think of John Wayne teaching a group of herd-driving boys to be men, in *The Cowboys* (1972), or Jack Webb doing the same for raw marine recruits in *The D.I.* (1957). I am not saying anything against such films. They tell the truth. But there is a part of the truth they do not tell, and perhaps cannot tell. In *Twelve O'Clock High*, we see that General Savage's demeanor toward the men is, in part, an act. It is not that he is insincere. But he must walk a tightrope between failure because the men hate him, and failure because he dares not risk being hated so much. And he is not a hateful man. The film shows us many a conversation between him and his adjutant, Major Stovall (Dean Jagger, who won and deserved an Oscar for Best Supporting Actor), wherein we see that the general wants and needs friendship as much as anyone.

The emotional climax of the film comes as a shock. I will not spoil it by revealing the outcome. It is well prepared for by a series of tense dramatic scenes, characterized not so much by action as by human faces and few words. We know that Colonel Davenport has been tried beyond the bounds of a man's endurance; all we need is to look into Gary Merrill's expressively ugly and masculine face to read the signs of depression, grief, and futility. Major Stovall, a "retread" from the First World War, a paper-pusher who wants at least one more go at it in the air, is our touchstone of sanity. He knows what General Savage is up to. He approves of it—with reservation. After one of the runs—a success, not a failure—he has this to say:

I got drunk because I am confused. I was thinking, which is a thing a man should not do, and all at once I couldn't remember what any of them looked like. I, I couldn't see their faces, Bishop, Cobb, Wilson, Jimmy, all of them. All of you. They all looked alike, just one face. And it was very young. It confused me. I think I shall stay drunk until I'm not confused anymore.



But this same Major Stovall will stow himself away on one of the planes to do a little bombing himself.

"Did you get anything?" asks the general.

Stovall wipes off his spectacles. "My glasses were frosted over some," he says with a mischievous smile, "but I think I got a piece of one."

"Ours or theirs?"

And then comes the real test. The boys will be flying over Germany, in broad daylight, to do precision bombing, from a low altitude. And as Savage tries to do the pull-up to haul himself into one of the planes—an exercise we have seen many times already—he cannot manage it, his arms give way, and he must be led off the tarmac. The mission is run, and all the while the planes are away, the general sits in a chair in the middle of a room, in shock, unable to speak, unable to move. The man who began his command of the 918th by demoting a pilot who broke formation to try to assist his roommate who had gotten hit—chewing him out in front of a hundred men, and then commanding that everyone be given new roommates immediately, so that "group integrity" would come first, not friendship—that man now feels so intensely for the men he has trained, whose allegiance he has won, that he is stock-still, at the edge of a complete mental breakdown.

Twelve O'Clock High, then, is less about war, though it is certainly about that, than it is about men, men in the male protective group, men in their friendships and their duties, which are not always in accord with those friendships, men who lead because they must, and men who share in the leadership by sometimes hearty, sometimes agonizing, obedience. It is a fallen world we live in, and sometimes nothing but such agony will serve, and triumph. ☉



The Giraffe's Neck

Its Evolutionary Explanation Is One Long Stretch

by Jonathan Witt

The giraffe's neck has long been a beloved icon of evolutionary theory. According to the story, one of the giraffe's short-necked ancestors had a slightly longer neck, which helped him reach leaves the other animals on the savannah couldn't. This gave him a survival advantage that he passed on to his offspring. Or maybe the female giraffes really dug his slightly longer neck, giving him a reproductive advantage. Same result. He passed his slightly longer neck on to his offspring. Rinse and repeat a few thousand times, and *voilà*, the lineage ends up with 600-pound, six-foot-long giraffe necks.

But the devil is in the details. A recent article in the journal *Nature* frankly characterizes the evolution of the giraffe's cartoonishly long neck as "a puzzle":

There should be a good reason for the extraordinary length, because it causes hardship. A giraffe's heart needs to pump blood 2 metres up to the head, which requires a high blood pressure and management to avoid fainting or stroke. "It's beautifully adapted to this, but it's a big cost," says Rob Simmons, a behavioural ecologist at the University of Cape Town in South Africa, who was not involved in the study.

One prevailing theory is that giraffes evolved longer necks to reach higher trees for food. "This is widely believed; it's really entrenched," says Simmons. . . . [But] research has shown that giraffes tend to eat from lower levels, and tall giraffes aren't more likely to survive drought, when food competition is highest. Another idea is that



giraffes evolved longer necks for sexual competition, with male giraffes engaging in violent neck-swinging fights and longer necks attracting mates. . . . [But] males don't have longer necks than females.¹

FOSSIL PHANTASMS

Fossils aren't much help either. German geneticist Wolf-Ekkehard Lönnig surveyed the literature on

fossils and giraffe evolution and reports that there is an abundance of fossils from giraffes and creatures said to be either giraffe ancestors or closely related to those ancestors, but what remains stubbornly absent is a smooth series of transitional fossils from short-necked to long-necked. He writes:

No continuous series of fossil links leads to the Giraffa or Okapia. "The giraffe and the okapi of the Congo rain forest are considered as sister groups, the origins of which are still not known" (Devillers and Chaline 1993, p. 247). Similarly Starck (1995, p. 999) remarks: "The ancestry of Giraffidae is disputed."

Wesson (1991, pp. 238–239) agrees with these statements about giraffe fossils, as follows: "The evolving giraffe line left no middling branches on the way, and there is nothing, living or fossil, between the moderate neck of the okapi and the greatly elongated giraffe. The several varieties of giraffe are all about the same height."²



An okapi, keep in mind, is an extant even-toed ungulate that looks not dramatically different from a large deer. (An ungulate is any hoofed animal.) Between it and the giraffe there stretches a great morphological gulf.

There was a much-ballyhooed fossil find reported in 2015 purporting to bridge that great gulf. The *LiveScience* article, titled, "7-Million-Year-Old Fossils Show How the Giraffe Got Its Long Neck," promised the moon, and the lead researcher, Nikos Solounias, was only slightly more restrained. "We actually have an animal whose neck is intermediate [in length]—it's a real missing link," he said. But as the evolutionists behind the study later conceded, they don't even think the creature, *Samotherium major*, is a direct ancestor of the giraffe.

STRETCHING THE TRUTH

More fundamentally, as researchers learn more and more about giraffe physiology, it's become increasingly clear that hundreds, maybe even thousands, of genetic changes would be needed to arrive at a functioning giraffe; many of the changes would need to arrive simultaneously for the creature to survive; and such big-jump changes would need to occur numerous times over millions of years.

Yes, natural selection could jump in to preserve these coordinated mutation freak events if they ever occurred, but first the freak-event mutations would have to occur.

Oxford biologist Richard Dawkins, famous for his many books defending atheism and evolutionary theory, characterizes the difference between a giraffe's neck and that of its short-necked ancestor as relatively "slight." Dawkins writes:

The giraffe's neck has the same complicated arrangement of parts as the okapi (and presumably as the giraffe's own short-necked ancestor). There is the same sequence of seven vertebrae [Lönnig contests this], each with its associated blood vessels, nerves, ligaments, and blocks of muscle. The difference is that each vertebra is a lot longer, and all its associated parts are stretched or spaced out in proportion.³

So how hard could it be to evolve?

Dawkins's characterization is one a Darwin disciple could love, but never an attentive engineer, or any biologist with a working familiarity with giraffe physiology. As Lönnig puts it, Dawkins "simplifies the biological problems to a degree that is tolerable for evolutionary theory, but not realistic with regard to the biological facts."

GIRAFFE SPECTACULAR

Lönnig describes several things that must be either engineered or reengineered to arrive at a functional giraffe from a short-necked ancestor. First, giraffes, like cows and many other grazing animals, are ruminants, meaning they regurgitate a half-digested cud and chew on it before swallowing the food a second time, helping them digest tough fibrous grass and leaves. But to pull off this trick, a giraffe, with its neck as tall as a man, needs "a special muscular esophagus," Lönnig explains. So that's one reengineering challenge.

Lönnig gives so many more that there isn't room to list them all here. His book debunking giraffe evolution, *The Evolution of the Long-Necked Giraffe*, is dense and thorough. But he helpfully quotes Gordon Rattray Taylor, who concisely summarizes several of the reengineering challenges in his book *The Great Evolution Mystery*:

If we hold to the evolutionary story for the giraffe neck, we must believe that the various ancestors in the lineage each won numerous longshot lotteries simultaneously and managed to do this over and over.

Nineteenth-century observers assumed that the giraffe had only to develop a longer neck and legs to be able to reach the leaves which other animals could not. But in fact such growth created severe problems. The giraffe had to pump blood up about eight feet to its head. The solution it reached was to have a heart which beats faster than average and a high blood pressure. When the giraffe puts his head down to drink, he suffers a rush of blood to the head, so a special pressure-reducing mechanism, the *rete mirabile*, had to be provided to deal with this. However, much more intractable are the problems of breathing through an eight-foot tube. If a man tried to do so, he would die—not from lack of oxygen so much as poisoning by his own carbon dioxide. For the tube would fill with his expired, deoxygenated breath, and he would keep reinhaling it. Furthermore, one study group found that the blood in a giraffe's legs would be under such pressure that it would force its way out of the capillaries. How was this being prevented? It turned out that the intercellular spaces are filled with fluid, also under pressure—which in turn necessitates the giraffe having a strong, impermeable skin. To all these changes one could add the need for new postural reflexes and for new strategies of escape from predators. It is evident that the giraffe's long neck necessitated not just one mutation but many—and these perfectly coordinated.⁴

Percival Davis and Dean Kenyon cogently tease out the significance of all this:

In short, the giraffe represents not a mere collection of individual traits but a package of interrelated adaptations. It is put together according to an overall design that integrates all parts into a single pattern. Where did such an adaptational package come from? According to Darwinian theory, the giraffe evolved to its present form by the accumulation of individual, random changes preserved by natural selection. But it is difficult to explain how a random process could offer to natural selection an integrated package of adaptations, even over time. Random mutations might adequately explain change in a relatively isolated trait, such as color. But major changes, like the macroevolution of

the giraffe from some other animal, would require an extensive suite of coordinated adaptations.⁵

A LOTTERY-WINNING FIEND

This means that if we hold to the evolutionary story for the giraffe neck, we must go from believing that the giraffe lineage won a series of longshot lotteries over millions of years to believing that the various ancestors in the lineage each won numerous long-shot lotteries simultaneously and managed to do this over and over.

To grasp the enormous difference, imagine that the U.S. president takes a winding summer trip through the American heartland and buys a state lottery ticket in each of the 45 states with a state lottery. Later that summer it emerges that every one of the lottery tickets the president bought was a jackpot winner. The president's handlers attribute this to "dumb luck," but you can bet that 45 state lottery commissioners will smell a rat and, if brave enough, launch an investigation. They will reasonably infer that all those wins were somehow gamed in the president's favor—that is, they were intelligently designed. There are long odds, and then there are odds so long, and so beneficial to someone, that reasonable people begin to look for other explanations.

In the giraffe's case, a bit of reasoning goes a long way. Blind evolution doesn't look ahead and coordinate a group of changes for some future advantage. It's blind and must proceed by one small useful step at a time. No evolutionist, for instance, believes that a small number of mega-mutations turned a land mammal into a whale.

But what if loads of changes are needed simultaneously to successfully make a biological transition, or even just a significant step in a larger transition? We know of only one type of cause with the demonstrated ability to meet such a challenge, and it isn't dumb luck and natural selection. The engineering marvel that is the giraffe, long neck and all, was intelligently designed. ☉

Notes

1. Nicola Jones, "How the Giraffe Got Its Neck," *Nature* (June 2, 2022), internal references removed. For additional evidence against the "necks for sex" hypothesis, see Riley Black, "Giraffe Necks Not for Sex," *National Geographic* (Jan. 15, 2013).
2. Wolf-Ekkehard Lönnig, "The Evolution of the Long-Necked Giraffe (*Giraffa camelopardalis* L.)—What Do We Really Know? (Part 1)" (Oct. 19, 2010): weloennig.de/Giraffe.pdf.
3. Richard Dawkins, *Climbing Mount Improbable* (W. W. Norton, 1996), 103.
4. Gordon Rattray Taylor, *The Great Evolution Mystery* (Harper & Row, 1983), 157.
5. Percival Davis and Dean Kenyon, *Of Pandas and People, The Central Question of Biological Origins*, 2nd ed. (Houghton Pub. Co., 1993), 13.



A Long Surrender

A Scientist's Arduous Path from Hard Atheism to Faith

by Günter Bechly

When atheists hear conversion stories that begin with, "I was a staunch atheist and then . . .", they tend to roll their eyes and doubt the claim. However, this is exactly what happened to me. I had been a 150-percent atheist and materialist for almost forty years before I embarked on a spiritual journey that ultimately, after many twists and turns, led me to belief in God and Christianity. I had no life crisis, no epiphany, and no spiritual experiences at all. It was the result of purely rational, scientific, philosophical, and historical arguments that gradually changed my mind as a scientist. Here is my story.

I grew up in a medium-sized town in southwestern Germany, where the Mercedes-Benz factory is located. My parents were both irreligious. My mother was simply not interested in religion, and my father was agnostic. We never talked about religion or God, and we never prayed or visited any church service. My parents pushed to opt me out of religion

class in school, which was then still compulsory, resulting in my being ridiculed as the village atheist.

I first saw churches from the inside as a young adult, but it was only as a tourist taking photos.

From early childhood, I was interested in nature and animals. I devoured popular science books on earth history and space, and I watched every natural history

documentary that aired on TV. Soon I developed the strong wish to become a natural scientist. I imagined myself on expeditions in tropical jungles in search of rare animals.

All Science, No Religion

However, my parents insisted that I learn something more practical and secure. I gave in and began professional training in public administration, which bored me to death. Halfway through, I decided to escape a dull future as a clerk and instead pursue my childhood dream. I booked a flight to Paramaribo and moved to Suriname in South America. Together with a local business partner, I founded a safari tour company. For two years, we organized canoe trips into the rainforest for nature-loving tourists until a raging civil war made further tourist operations impossible.

I returned to Germany to study biology and paleontology at the universities of Hohenheim and Tübingen, where I graduated with the equivalent of a master's degree in biology and a Ph.D., *summa cum laude*, in paleontology in 1999. That same year, I was fortunate enough to get a dream job as scientific curator for amber and fossil insects in the paleontology department of the State Museum of Natural History in Stuttgart, which ranks among the five top natural history museums in Germany.

Shortly afterward, I met my wife, a Catholic from Austria. She occasionally visited church, and, as a good husband, I accompanied her to Mass and "immediately got converted?"—not. Actually, church not only failed to convert me, but it reinforced my disdain for Christianity. Christians in my view were deluded cowards who were afraid of dying and took some masochistic pleasure in considering themselves worthless sinners who begged on their knees for

forgiveness from an imaginary sky-daddy. How disgusting!

My irreligion solidified into a very explicit anti-religious atheism and materialism. I did not believe in anything supernatural. Outspoken public atheists and skeptics like Richard Dawkins and James Randi were my heroes. I had no particular interest in philosophy at this time either, and no interest in bothering with the claims of religion or philosophical musings in favor of theism. I saw such endeavors as a kind of mental masturbation that was good for nothing. My attitudes were pretty much Nietzschean in nature, and my interest was in science alone. Curiously, this turned into a spiritual rollercoaster ride I never would have imagined.

From Physics to Metaphysics

It all started in my late thirties when I became interested in modern physics. I read popular books by Stephen Hawking, Richard Feynman, Michio Kaku, John Barrow, David Deutsch, Brian Greene, and others. I was fascinated by the weirdness of quantum mechanics and relativity theory, as well as the mind-blowing implications of modern cosmology.

While I had started from a materialist, clockwork-universe perspective, I soon discovered certain implications of modern physics that did not fit well with such an obsolete, 19th-century worldview. I stumbled upon further problems, such as the questions of causality, the ontology of time and space, the status of mathematics, and the laws of nature. This brought me even deeper into metaphysics with issues like the problem of universals, the one and the many, the persistence of diachronic (personal) identity, free will, and the hard problem of consciousness.

I soon realized that materialism is untenable, and I searched for a new worldview that could explain these problems and make sense of the world we experience. I first looked into integral philosophy and non-dualism, as well as Eastern thought. Due to my love of nature, I also felt strangely attracted to the earth-based spirituality of Neopaganism, and I explored belief systems from Druidry and Wicca to Norse Heathenry, which also resonated much better with my Nietzschean inclinations. But ultimately, none of these views satisfied my quest for a coherent worldview, and they were far too involved with New Age mumbo-jumbo for my taste.

I also studied "process thought"—the idea that reality consists of dynamic processes, rather than enduring entities. I became a genuine process philosophy nerd and even named a new fossil dragonfly species after process philosopher Alfred North Whitehead in 2010.

Unplanned Discoveries

Around this time, I also came into contact with intelligent design theory, though for totally different reasons. I was the project leader for a large special exhibition on evolution at our museum for Darwin Year 2009, which celebrated the double event of Darwin's 200th birthday and the 150th anniversary of the first publication of his magnum opus *On the Origin of Species*. In preparing for this exhibit, I read some books by Darwin critics, because we wanted to refute and mock them.

This did not go as intended. I was surprised that the arguments of the ID theorists were nothing like the distorted picture painted by their opponents. The more I studied ID arguments, the more I became a critic of Neo-Darwinism and an ID proponent myself. As a direct consequence of this change of mind, I was forced to resign



SALVO

• ORDER ONLINE shop.fsj.org
While Supplies Last

• BROWSE CONTENTS salvomag.com
Read Select Articles





from my job in 2016. But that's a different story.

I was still into process philosophy when I embraced intelligent design theory, so my support for ID had nothing to do with religion, but only with scientific arguments. I had come to see that Neo-Darwinism simply fails to explain the diversity and complexity of life and that these are better explained by an infusion of information from outside the system. The information does not have to come from a divine, miraculous intervention, but of course that would be compatible with such a view.

As I further thought about process philosophy, I stumbled upon two fatal problems: (1) it does not allow for a real, enduring person as a free agent, because it views the individual mind as a kind of succession of occasions, like a string of pearls; and (2) it implies an infinite past, which is inconsistent with big bang cosmology as well as arguments against an infinite causal series.

Reasons for Theism

I became quite frustrated. I briefly gave up on philosophy and the quest to find a coherent worldview and turned to organic gardening. But my curious mind could not let go for long. So I finally decided to check out the belief system that was the last thing I wanted to be true: Classical theism. I had previously read all the New Atheists' books, but even then, as a non-theist and fan of the authors, I had found them quite shallow and unsatisfying.

I definitely did not find what I had expected when I started looking into sophisticated apologetics. I read a lot and watched the debates of William Lane Craig and others. These introduced me to philosophical arguments for theism. What most impressed me were the argument from the fine-tuning of the universe, the

argument from reason, the argument from contingency (to answer the question, "why is there anything rather than nothing?"), the argument from the uncanny effectiveness of mathematics in the natural sciences, and the argument for God as the very source of the laws of nature.

I started with popular apologetics and then dove deep into the academic literature. I did not want to become a theist, but the overwhelming, cumulative power of the arguments, of which I have only mentioned a few, ultimately convinced me that theism must be true beyond reasonable doubt. There is a God!

Reasons for Christianity

I was not yet done, however. I could not shut my eyes or close my ears to the arguments of Christian apologists. They claimed that there are good reasons and strong evidence for Christianity. I found this surprising because it had never occurred to me that Christians had anything but irrational, blind faith in ancient fairy tales from illiterate goat herders.

Yet here were intelligent and rational Christians making a strong case for the reliability of the Gospels, for fulfilled prophecy, and for the historicity of the resurrection of Christ. The arguments were not based on faith but on empirical evidence and the ordinary methods of secular historians.

However, there was a tiny problem: I still hated Christianity and found it dull and off-putting—anti-nature, anti-body, anti-sex, and anti-woman. I went through

epicycles of well-disposed investigation and critical dismissal, with phases of belief and unbelief sometimes alternating on the same day. Nevertheless, with every epicycle, my resistance became weaker and weaker.

There were unusual situations along the way; for example, I might openly defend the rationality of Christianity to friends, but in the closet still ask myself, *do you really believe this weird stuff?*

In hindsight, I think it was definitely due to the grace of the Holy Spirit that I did

not give up but always returned to do more reading on remaining issues, which included all of the usual suspects, like the problem of evil, atrocities in the Old Testament, biblical anachronisms, contradictions in the Gospels, and unbelievable miracles—you name it. Ultimately, I reached a point where the evidence and arguments were so overwhelming, while most of my problems with Christianity could be resolved, that I had no choice but to surrender to the call of Christ.

So how has my Christian faith developed since my conversion? Actually, it turned out to be very difficult to pray when you had never prayed before your fiftieth birthday. Even though I delved into Scripture and prayed for a more direct experience of God's presence and personal relationship with Christ, this has not manifested yet. I hope this will change with time. Maybe it is simply my destiny to be an evidentialist Christian, or maybe I still have some way to go on this remarkable journey. ☺

**My attitudes
were pretty
much
Nietzschean
in nature, and
my interest
was in science
alone. Curiously,
this turned
into a spiritual
rollercoaster ride
I never would
have imagined.**



A Manly Knight to Remember

Sir Gawain & the Green Knight

by Rick Reed

Written by an anonymous Christian poet

in fourteenth-century England, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* relates a quest made by the titular hero, who is a nephew of King Arthur.

A young knight in a well-established court, Gawain responds to a strange intruder who appears during a New Year's feast, a knight who is completely green in his armor and his body.

The intruder challenges any of the assembled knights of Camelot to an exchange of blows with the great green axe he carries. Arthur himself starts to step forward, but Gawain intervenes and accepts the challenge. He takes the axe and beheads the challenger. At that point, the Green Knight picks up his own severed head and reminds Gawain of the terms of his challenge: Gawain must seek him out and submit to an agreed-upon return blow in a year's time.

Ten months later, Gawain sets out on his quest to find the Green Knight, eventually taking refuge in a castle he encounters on Christmas. While there, his merry host proposes that he will hunt while Gawain rests in the castle, and at the end of each day, he and Gawain will exchange whatever they have gained. Over three successive days, while the host hunts, his wife attempts to seduce Gawain, but Gawain submits only so far as to kiss her. So when the host surrenders the game he has taken in his hunts to Gawain, Gawain gives him kisses. On the third day, the hostess gives Gawain a magical green sash, but he does not surrender this to his host.

As New Year's Day approaches, Gawain must leave the comfort of the castle to seek out the Green Knight and receive a blow from

the mysterious axe. The confrontation tests Gawain's virtue, but he survives, and the sacrifice he has made yields an unexpected result and a surprising turn of events when he returns to Camelot.

Chivalry & Manly Christian Values

Though the plot may seem straightforward enough, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* illustrates the nature of manly Christian virtues projected through the lens of chivalry. From the outset, Gawain demonstrates both courtesy and humility. After the Green Knight announces his challenge to the court, Gawain shows restraint. He does not immediately step forward, lest his volunteering seem either rash or prideful. When he does step forward, he does so



in defense of his king, thus demonstrating selfless loyalty to his sovereign by taking on the danger himself.

When Gawain begins his quest, the poet emphasizes the full array of chivalric virtue and its Christian context. Gawain's donning of his armor recalls St. Paul's imagery of the armor of God in Ephesians 6, especially verse 16: "In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one." Indeed, the great symbol that dominates the scene of Gawain's departure is his scarlet shield emblazoned with a golden pentangle on its front and etched with an image of the Virgin Mary on its inside, facing him. Gawain is a young man whose life is founded on his Christian faith.

Each of the pentangle's five points has a five-fold meaning. One point indicates that Gawain is "flawless in his five senses," meaning that he perceives the world clearly and so understands its full reality in the light of faith. Another indicates that "his five fingers were never at fault," a reference to his physical prowess, honed by training and devotion. The third point indicates that his "faith was founded in the five wounds Christ received on the



cross," underscoring his Christian fidelity and his willingness to die for his king as Christ willingly died for all. The fourth recalls "the five joys which Mary had conceived in her son," pointing to Christ and Mary as the sources of Gawain's courage. And the fifth point of the pentangle represents five virtues that further reveal what makes Gawain the perfect knight. They are generosity, fellowship, cleanliness (in both body and soul), courtesy, and pity (encompassing empathy, compassion, and mercy). With the pentangle's full array of virtues, the poet sets a high bar for young men, a goal for lifelong striving.

Indeed, the entire adventure is designed to test Gawain's virtue. In the castle he comes upon, seemingly in answer to prayer, the young knight finds a place to attend Mass and to receive comfort. Reliance on prayer and devotion to God pervade all of Gawain's strengths.

But those strengths are tested. Before he must leave to meet the Green Knight, he faces the greatest challenge of his adventure. During those three days in the castle, the focus on Gawain's virtue shifts from the symbols on his shield to the animals his host hunts. Each animal connects to a part of the Platonic soul: *eros*, desire, is represented by the deer; *thymos*, spiritedness, is represented by the boar; and *logos*, reason, is represented by the fox.

Gawain successfully resists the temptations of desire and spiritedness on the first two days but gives in to faulty reason on the third, when he accepts the gift of the protective green sash but does not turn it over to his host. His seductive hostess has told him that whoever wears the sash will be "safe against those who seek to strike him." Gawain's virtue fails him here because he places his temporal life above his eternal values.

Gawain meets the Green Knight at the Green Chapel, where



Sir Gawain and the Green Knight from the original manuscript

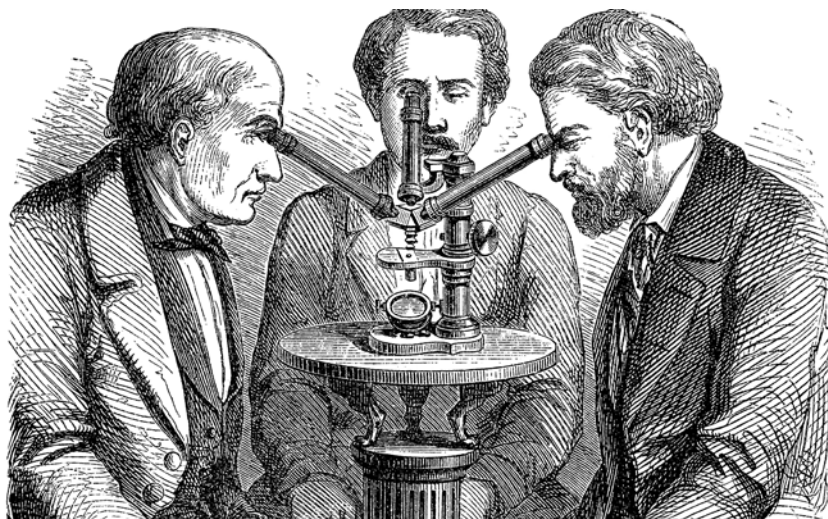
he submits to the agreed-upon blow in the belief that the sash will keep him safe from mortal danger. Gawain's virtue falters here, too, because he has placed his trust in a magic charm and yielded to earthly fear instead of holding fast to spiritual courage. The Green Knight (who is probably the merry host in disguise) knows what Gawain had received on the third day. However, in an almost priest-like manner, this knight, who is also the keeper of the Green Chapel, spares Gawain's life and forgives the young knight's cowardice.

Saint & Sinner, Role Model & Cautionary Tale

Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, then, is a story of a young man filled with the ideals of his Christian faith that plays out in a tale of chivalry. He is brave, loyal, pious, strong, and courteous. Still, like every Christian, he faces temptation. While it would be easy to blame the seductive hostess who tempts Gawain each day while her husband is hunting, it is wrong to shift the blame away from Gawain

himself. This tale demonstrates how a young man may train his body physically, live a life of devotion to God, and practice all the manly virtues but still remain subject to temptation and fall into sin. When Gawain finally faces the blow of the Green Knight's axe, he does so as an act of repentance, in recognition of his sin. So must every young man recognize his own sin and repent.

When he returns to Camelot, Gawain learns that his peers recognize his failure but also his repentance. They adopt the green sash, the badge of his shame, and transform it into an emblem of their mutual humility. Like all the other virtues, humility is a key aspect of chivalry, a set of virtuous practices either ignored or held in contempt by those who believe equality negates this medieval code. All men will fall short of the ideals of Christian virtue, but no man should fail to aspire to them. As C. S. Lewis wrote in *On Stories: And Other Essays on Literature*, "Since it is so likely that children will meet cruel enemies, let them at least have heard of brave knights and heroic courage." ☺



Resisted Science

Key Lessons from Old Controversies

by James S. Spiegel

All too often in the history of science, theories that enjoyed overwhelming scholarly consensus have turned out to be false, while those who challenged these theories were scorned. The case of the Copernican Revolution is well known. Copernicus himself delayed the publication of his defense of heliocentrism until just prior to his death for fear of ridicule. Enduring persecution in defending the theory was mainly left to Galileo, who, with the emergence of better telescopes, was able to make many astronomical discoveries that refuted the reigning Aristotelian cosmology.

This rankled his scientific contemporaries and Catholic Church authorities, who were thoroughly invested in Aristotelian geocentrism. When challenged by the Grand Duchess of Florence, who said his heliocentrism contradicted Scripture, Galileo denied any inconsistency between science and the Bible. This prompted the charge that he was proposing a heretical interpretation of Scripture, and he was ordered by Pope Paul V to abandon heliocentrism and refrain from teaching or defending it.

Galileo laid low for many years, but with the 1632 publication of his *Dialogue Concerning the Two Chief World Systems*, which displayed the errors of geocentrism, he was brought before the church Inquisition and declared a "suspect" of heresy. He was placed under house arrest, and his book was banned. Galileo finally recanted under pressure, but he is also reported to have said regarding the Earth, "and yet it moves"—an indication that despite being compelled to disavow his theory verbally, his mind had not changed.

A more tragic story involves the nineteenth-century Hungarian physician Ignaz Semmelweis. While working at a hospital in Vienna, Semmelweis inquired into mortality rates of infants and their mothers. There were two obstetric clinics, one served by medical students and the other by midwives. Curiously, the mortality rate in the former was inordinately high, as much as six times higher than in the latter.

Semmelweis learned that the medical students also dissected cadavers, and he theorized that they unknowingly transported contaminants from the cadavers to the women. He proposed that physicians wash their hands and instruments, and when his counsel was followed, the mortality rate in the physicians' clinic immediately dropped to the same level as that of the midwives.

Despite these clearly beneficial results, his methods were resisted by most of his peers. It seems they could not accept the possibility that they had been inadvertently causing the deaths of women and babies. Even after similar successes with handwashing at other hospitals, Semmelweis remained an object of scorn and eventually succumbed to chronic depression. He was committed to an asylum, where he died at age 47.

Not Anomalies

These are just two of many cases in the history of science where significant insights were resisted and defenders were persecuted for challenging the status quo. Although Western science is heralded as a paragon of rational enterprise, such stories remind us that while a given *methodology* of empirical inquiry might be ideally rigorous, those who apply that methodology are fallible.

Twentieth-century philosophers of science have shown that objectivity in science is a mythical distortion and that scientific



communities are as fraught with non-rational influences as any other human network. For all the emphasis on empirical evidence in science, theoretical paradigms have often been selected and preserved for non-rational motivations, whether psychological, social, economic, political, or even religious.

The cases of Galileo and Semmelweis vividly illustrate this, as they both had to contend with forces contaminating the scientific inquiries at issue. We dismiss their stories as anomalies to our peril. Indeed, Santayana's warning regarding the failure to learn from history applies here as much as anywhere. If we do not humbly recognize the susceptibility of our own scientific communities to corrupting influences, we are bound to repeat the errors of the past.

Potentially Corrupting Influences

It would seem, then, that the history of science should inspire restraint toward what we regard as uncontroversial scientific fact, especially when it comes to "follow the science" pronouncements. How might this apply to some of our contemporary controversies?

Consider the climate change debate. Like all scientific inquiries addressing issues impacted by human behavior, climate science is fraught with tenuous elements. Among these are causal claims that aim to explain why global temperatures are on the rise. But the correlation between rising global temperatures and carbon-emitting industrial technologies does not by itself prove that global warming is solely human caused. As the adage goes, correlation does not imply causation.

Furthermore, climate scientists' predictive claims about what the future will bring if we pursue a given course are also tenuous, due in part to the contingency of the causal issue: if the rise in

temperatures is not mainly due to human activity, then we cannot reliably predict continued increases based solely on levels of human-caused carbon emissions.

But setting these issues aside, consider some of the ways that climate science might be contaminated by non-scientific influences.

One of these is financial, as the pursuit of research advancing the climate change agenda provides significant opportunities for receiving federal grants. Another potentially corrupting influence, which many have argued is the most fundamental driver of environmental alarmism, is politics. Globalists could use the warming scare to serve their agenda of restraining capitalism and advancing socialism.

While these are certainly possible corrupting influences on climate science, are they real? Many have argued they are, and every year books and articles are published presenting *scientific* arguments reinforcing this skepticism. Michael Shellenberger's recent *Apocalypse Never: Why Environmental Alarmism Hurts Us All* is a significant example.

Another issue to consider in this context is the Covid-19 pandemic. The claim that responses were purely scientific ignores the fact that they were actually a consequence of multi-factor risk assessments. Because public policies regarding masks, social distancing, quarantining, and vaccine mandates imposed limitations on human freedom, they

necessarily involved more than scientific reasoning. They were the consequence of *prudential* judgments about what degree of risk to public safety warranted restrictions on personal autonomy.

These judgments also entailed prior judgments about what sacrifices we should be willing to

make as a society regarding commerce, education, and even mental health, all of which were significantly impacted by quarantines, lockdowns, and mask mandates. While informed by scientific data, such judgments were inevitably *underdetermined* by that data. This is because empirical data only tells us what *is* the case and cannot by itself tell us how we *ought* to respond to a given phenomenon.

Non-scientific judgments necessarily figure into public policies regarding such phenomena. These factors include the psychology of fear, public perception, and financial and political interests.

In both cases—climate change and pandemic responses—public policy could be driven by non-scientific factors hiding behind a "follow the science" mask. But as history has shown, we should not be surprised if this is so. Galileo and Semmelweis could just as easily have been shouted down with the "follow the science" meme of their day, despite the now-obvious fact that *they* were the ones who were most rigorous in their scientific thinking. Their persecution in the name of science could not have been more tragically ironic. Might we be witnessing something similar today? ☹

Galileo and Semmelweis could just as easily have been shouted down with the "follow the science" meme of their day, despite the now-obvious fact that *they* were the ones who were most rigorous in their scientific thinking.



LTI
LIFE TRAINING
INSTITUTE

Syllogist for Life

A Conversation with Scott Klusendorf

by Katie Breckenridge

Ever since its founding in 2004, Life Training Institute has been training people to make a case for the pro-life view in the public square. LTI's founder and president, Scott Klusendorf, talked with us about how he trains pro-life apologists by equipping them with arguments from science and philosophy to defend the lives of innocent, preborn human beings.

You focus specifically on apologetics. Can you explain the difference between pro-life activism and pro-life apologetics?

As a pro-life apologist, I'm more focused on making the case for the pro-life view using arguments that will resonate with unchurched people. An activist is more interested in drawing public attention to the evil of abortion in a more dramatic way. Both are vitally important. I don't pick one over the other; I take a both/and approach. We need to be doing apologetics *and* we need to be doing activism. They just serve slightly different purposes.

A lot of pro-life people will either give a religious argument like,

"We're made in the image of God," or say, "It kills a human being." But those aren't always effective. What do you see as the areas where Christians are specifically lacking in articulating the pro-life view?

Number one, they don't know how to bring it down to the one question that really trumps everything else: "What is the unborn?" You can't answer the question, "Can I kill the unborn?" until you answer the predicate question, "What is the unborn?" And that's the question most people don't want to answer.

Joe Biden, two days after assuming the presidency of the United States, on the anniversary of *Roe v. Wade*, told the nation that reproductive healthcare, by which, by the way, he means abortion, is something all Americans



should celebrate, that it's good for everyone. But, uh, Mr. President, does "everyone" include the unborn? Is abortion good for *them*? You see how he simply assumes the unborn aren't human? That's what a lot of abortion advocates do, and I think a lot of pro-life Christians, instead of challenging that faulty assumption that the unborn aren't human, simply ride along with it.

So the critic says something like, "Why don't you trust women to make their own personal decisions?" And right away pro-lifers get defensive. "Oh, we love women; look at our pregnancy centers! Look at the fact that we adopt kids! Look at the fact that we care about women!" Stop right there. You just bought the premise of the objection, that somehow abortion is related to how much we care. Would you ever argue that we ought to trust women to make their own decisions about roughing up a two-year-old? No!

They only argue that way with the unborn because they assume the unborn aren't human. So that's the first mistake.

The second mistake people make—they don't understand the underlying worldviews that are in play in the abortion debate. If you're talking to someone with a naturalistic worldview, talking about humans being made in the image of God strikes them as utterly foreign. Their worldview says that we came from nothing and we're caused by nothing; humans are cosmic accidents. To talk about the *Imago Dei* in that kind of worldview doesn't resonate with them.

You focus on three steps. You already talked about "What is the unborn?" Can you also walk me through how you specifically train with the questions, "What is the unborn?" "What makes us valuable?" and "What is our duty?"

There are two competing worldviews at play here. The first is what we call the endowment view of human value. The endowment view says that you and I are valuable because we've been endowed by nature with our dignity; that is fundamental and is not granted by the state. The competitor view is what we call the performance view of human value. And that says that being human is nothing special; what you have to have is an acquired trait that you can immediately exercise, something like

Keep going back to what you argue. Let's say your critics say, "Oh, what about all these unwanted kids in foster care? Are you willing to adopt all of them? If you aren't, there goes your whole case." Oh, really? Let's go back to my syllogism.



self-awareness or maybe the ability to feel pain, or the ability to think through complex problems. And until you can immediately exercise those functions, you are not a subject of rights. You may be a human being, but you're not a person with rights.

Questions about fundamental things like, "What makes humans special?" "What is the nature of human beings?" "What is the nature of the universe we live in?"—these are all what we

call metaphysical or ontological questions, and you cannot avoid those questions in the abortion debate. It is very typical for abortion advocates to call the pro-life view inherently religious because we argue that humans have intrinsic value by virtue of the kind of thing they are. The problem is, the pro-choice worldview is equally religious because both sides are asking the same question: "What makes humans valuable in the first place?" That is inherently a religious question. There's no avoiding it. Pro-choicers argue you're only valuable if you can function a certain way. Pro-lifers argue that you are valuable because of the nature you have. If the pro-life view is disqualified for being religious, so is the pro-choice view. So that's really where the debate is.

What I do with pro-lifers is to train them first to focus on the three most important words in

pro-life apologetics. Word number one: *sylllogism*. A syllogism is simply a couple of premises followed by a conclusion, and pro-lifers have a syllogism. The second most important word is *sylllogism*. I think you can guess what the third one is going to be. Syllogism, syllogism, syllogism.

If pro-lifers don't focus like a laser beam on their syllogism, people will change the subject on you. It happens all the time. Pro-lifers start to win the argument, and people change the subject. The way we bring them back to the argument is to focus on our syllogism. So here is the pro-life syllogism. Premise one: "It's wrong to intentionally kill innocent human beings." Premise two: "Abortion intentionally kills innocent human beings." Conclusion: "Therefore, abortion is wrong." It's wrong to intentionally kill innocent human beings; abortion does that; therefore, it's wrong.

I think about all of the common arguments we hear, like, "Oh, but what about those unwanted foster kids?" So should we then go right back to, "Okay, but is it wrong to intentionally kill innocent human beings?"

You keep going back to what you argue. Let's say your critics say, "Oh, what about all these unwanted kids in foster care? Are you willing to adopt all of them? If you aren't, there goes your whole case."

Oh, really? Let's go back to my syllogism. How does my alleged unwillingness to adopt a child justify an abortionist intentionally killing one? That's the issue. Could my syllogism still be a valid and sound argument even if I don't adopt kids? And the answer is, of course. Now, that doesn't mean pro-lifers shouldn't adopt. It just means our argument stands independent of our behavior.

Or they might say, "Oh, you're

against all killing? What about war? What about capital punishment?" Uh, wait a minute; did we argue that all killing was wrong? No, we did not. We argued that it was wrong to *intentionally* kill an innocent human being. Abortion does that. Therefore, it's wrong. You're attacking a straw man. You're not attacking the argument we made; you're attacking an argument you'd *rather* deal with, rather than the one we actually put out.

So by having your syllogism, you keep going back to what you argued and don't let them get away with nonsense.

Tell me your thoughts on Roe being overturned. Are we going to need to step up our game?

This is a *necessary* step forward, but it's not sufficient to declare victory. And the reason is, returning the issue to the states does not mean abortion becomes illegal; you'll have roughly 22 states that will have *significant* restrictions on abortion. But here's the thing—you've got another 26 states that are going to go the other way.

So this country is about to get divided down the middle. We need to fight for truth. The days of believing we can leave defense of the pro-life view to some hired professionals that do all the heavy lifting are over. We're going to have to convince our friends, our churches, our working associates, that the pro-life position is true and reasonable to believe.

And what the pro-life movement is going to learn very quickly once *Roe v. Wade* is overturned is that our biggest problem is not activist judges. It's not a biased press. Our biggest problem is that the worldview assumptions that make abortion plausible to millions of our fellow citizens are deeply entrenched in culture, and they're not going away anytime soon. We're going to have to step

up our game on the apologetics side of things, and that's what we help people do at LTI.

What's next for you?

Well, we are working on helping people really summarize their pro-life views in a concise fashion. For example, I wish every politician would memorize a seven-second soundbite when they're asked about abortion. If I'm a politician, I say this: "I oppose abortion because it's wrong to intentionally kill innocent human beings." And if they keep pressing you, you repeat it, rinse, repeat, *ad infinitum*. You don't give them a chance to change the subject on you. This is what it means to stick to your syllogism.

We need to convey something that is more than just a soundbite; we also need to convey the moral logic of our view. If I have a minute to defend my pro-life view—a friend asks me, or, you know, my aunt Betty who is from Boston and hates Christians asks me, "Why are you pro-life?"—here's what I'll say: "Aunt Betty, I'm pro-life because it's wrong to intentionally kill innocent human beings. And the science of embryology is clear that from the earliest stages of development, you were a distinct, living, and whole human being. You weren't part of another human being, like skin cells on the back of my hand. You were already a whole, living member of the human family, even though you had yet to grow and develop. And you know what else, Aunt Betty? There's no essential difference between you-the-embryo and you-the-adult that justifies killing you. Differences of size, level of development, environment, and degree of dependency are not good reasons for saying we could kill you *then*, but not *now*."

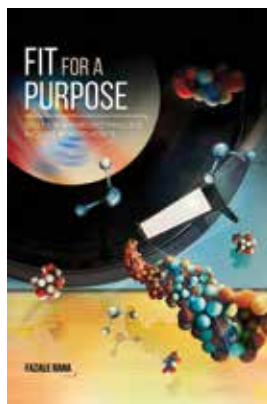
Notice I cited no Bible verses, but did I communicate biblical truth? The answer is yes. ☺

Finely Tuned Life

A Review of *Fit for a Purpose: Does the Anthropic Principle Include Biochemistry?* by Fazale Rana

by Emily Morales

In 1986 physicists John D. Barrow and Frank J. Tipler published *The Anthropic Cosmological Principle*, which addressed the theological and philosophical implications of a material universe possessing physical constants with the precise numerical values necessary to support carbon-based life. This work forced the field of cosmology to straddle both science and metaphysics, accomplishing what Harvard physiologist Lawrence J. Henderson was unable to do for the life sciences some 60 years prior. In *Fit for a Purpose: Does the Anthropic Principle Include Biochemistry?* Dr. Fazale Rana revisits Henderson's thesis and examines key biochemical systems to ascertain whether the anthropic principle manifest at the cosmological scale is similarly evident in the world of the microscopic.



The Biochemical Anthropic Principle

Rana's working hypothesis is, "[I]f the Creator intentionally designed the universe to be biofriendly, then he wouldn't have limited the influence of the universe's physical constants to the processes of star and planetary formation," but rather would have "designed the physical constants to influence chemical and biological systems as well."¹ Rana points out that Henderson demonstrated over 100 years ago that anthropic principles abounded in chemistry. This was manifested in Henderson's insightful characterization of the acid-base buffering systems in blood, the cytoplasm of the cell, and other bodily fluids. Henderson had argued that such a perfect system could never have

arisen from the unguided processes of natural selection.²

In examining several key biochemical systems (nucleic acid and protein synthesis, cell membrane formation, and energy harvesting pathways), Rana sought to answer three questions: (1) Does a molecular rationale and logic undergird the structure and function of these systems? (2) Are such physicochemical constraints as molecular geometry and hydrophobicity (the property of being repelled by water), dictated by the laws of nature, responsible for the configuration and activity of these systems? (3) When the structural properties and functional features of natural biochemical systems are compared with other conceivable biochemical analogs, do the natural systems display the just-right properties that make them unusually fit for

life? If the answer to all three questions is yes, Rana argues, then these biochemical systems manifest anthropic coincidences.

Rana's investigation reveals that not only are all three of these criteria met but that they demonstrate *optimization*—which is not what we would expect from complex systems arising from purely materialistic processes.³

Embracing a Biochemical Anthropic Principle

Rana then asks: What are the implications of embracing an anthropic principle for biochemical systems? Does this insight advance knowledge or present new avenues for research?

Under the naturalistic paradigm, biochemical systems are said to be the consequence of blind processes occurring over geological time. Consequently, research has primarily focused on *characterizing* or *describing* their properties. Rana suggests that an anthropic framework opens up new avenues for research because, as questions formerly raised to answer "what" and "how" are advanced to answer "why," scientists will seek *principles* informed by such a framework. These principles would be powerful tools for developing new technologies.

Scientists will likely resist a biochemical anthropic principle (as many did the cosmological one) because methodological naturalism has held sway for so long. Nevertheless, Rana asserts that there are excellent reasons to affirm the biochemical anthropic principle that biological systems demonstrate exquisite fine-tuning with the just-right properties to sustain life—characteristics that by necessity evince a Mind. ☉

Notes

1. Fazale Rana, *Fit for a Purpose* (RTB Press, 2021), 301, 302.

2. *Ibid.*, 47, 48.

3. David W. Snoke et al., "Suboptimality and Complexity in Evolution," *Complexity* 21.1 (2015), 322–327.

The Shadow of His Wings: The True Story of Fr. Gereon Goldmann, OFM
by Gereon Karl Goldmann, O.F.M.

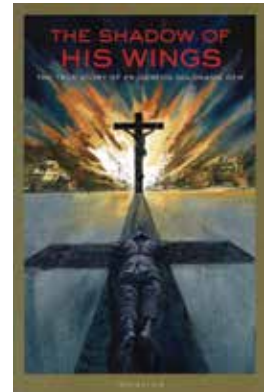
Fr. Gereon Goldmann was a German Catholic seminarian who was drafted into Hitler's SS and then expelled and sent to the *Wehrmacht* (German army) for refusing to renounce his faith. This is his remarkable story of relying on God while serving his fellow man as a soldier, medic, radio tech, and, above all, priest caring for souls caught up in the throes of evil. Originally published in 1964 and reprinted in 2022, this is soul-strengthening reading for modern-day Christians.



The Third Education Revolution: Home School to Church College

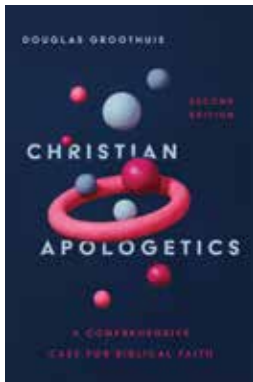
edited by Vishal Mangalwadi & David Marshall

A compendium of essays by more than twenty authors representing five continents, this manifesto calls for the church to reclaim the sphere of education from the spirit of the age (or the spirit of antichrist). The goal is church-based education covering every aspect of life in order that individuals, families, communities, and nations may be transformed by knowing the truth that sets people free. From the beginning, Christianity has been a knowledge tradition. This is about restoring that tradition through local churches, worldwide.



Faithfully Different: Regaining Biblical Clarity in a Secular Culture
by Natasha Crain

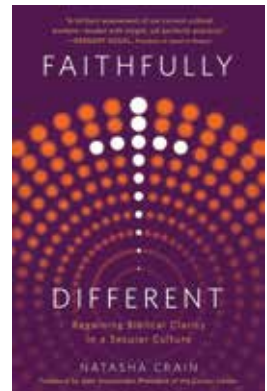
Secularism is putting pressure on every aspect of biblical Christian faith. This book will help you understand our cultural moment according to its four unwritten but relentlessly forceful laws—feelings are the ultimate guide; happiness is the ultimate goal; judging is the ultimate sin; and God is the ultimate guess—so that you may navigate it wisely and shrewdly and maximize your opportunity to live a faithfully different life to the glory of God. Put this on your must-read list.



Christian Apologetics: A Comprehensive Case for Biblical Faith (second edition)

by Douglas Groothuis

Groothuis's 2011 original was a comprehensive reference work defending the rationality and intelligibility of biblical Christian faith. This updated and expanded edition includes new chapters on issues people are raising today, such as doubt, suffering, and the hiddenness of God. It's a hefty volume, both in size and scope, but is very accessible to lay readers, including students, who want to know and confidently communicate the truths of the faith.

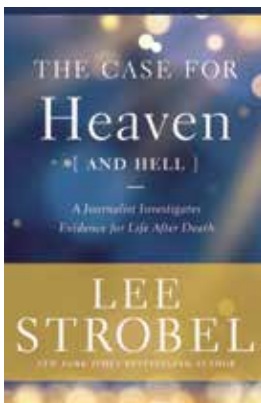


Rediscovering America: How the National Holidays Tell an Amazing Story About Who We Are

by Scott S. Powell

American history of late has been selectively curated by radical ideologues. Shortcomings have been forefronted, while significant achievements and references to divine providence have been surgically excised. In response, Powell has recovered salient aspects of America's extraordinarily rich heritage by using the national holidays as touchpoints for reflecting on the ideas, events, and pivotal figures behind each one. It reads like a kind of spiritual memoir of a people, and recounts history we forget to our peril.





The Case for Heaven [and Hell]: Experience the Evidence for Life After Death

What happens after we die? Is there a heaven? A hell? What is the evidence for a nonmaterial soul that transcends death? After a brush with death in 2001, hard-nosed atheist journalist turned Christian Lee Strobel set out in search of answers to profound questions such as these about the afterlife. He interviewed scientists, theologians, and several people who claimed to have had near-death experiences. The result of it all is another classic Strobel "case," this time, his case for heaven.

2000 Mules

Using geotracking data and video surveillance footage, Catherine Engelbrecht of True the Vote and Gregg Phillips, a 40-year veteran election intelligence investigator, uncovered evidence strongly suggesting that organized ballot trafficking involving a coordinated network of nonprofit "stash houses," and "mules" (traffickers paid to deliver ballots to dropboxes) took place in five states during the 2020 U.S. election. This well-made film raises crucial questions about election security that should concern every American, regardless of political persuasion.

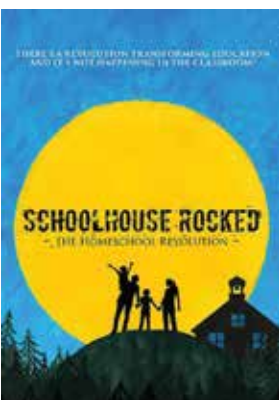
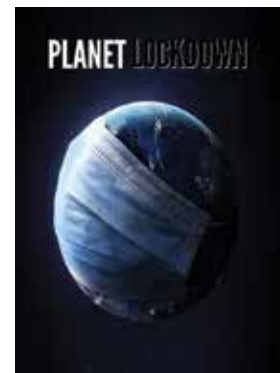


Show Me the Father

This is the Kendrick brothers' (*War Room*, *Courageous*, *Fireproof*) first documentary. It explores the importance of fatherhood through the life stories of five families whose experiences include father joys, father sorrows, father loss, and father finding. All are set against the backdrop of the biblical meta-story of reality, which tells us that God is a Father who loves and who made a way for our broken relationships, both with him and with one another, to be restored.

Planet Lockdown

A multinational mix of scientists, physicians, economists, epidemiologists, and more comment on the changing narratives, shifting goalposts, and draconian measures taken over the course of covid on the pretext of public health and safety. Survivors of Communism and the Holocaust weigh in, too, and warn us to resist illegitimate restrictions on our civil liberties. The goal of this well-made and informative film is to inspire people of good will to take courage and resist the new forms of dictatorship in the Western world. Available for free at PlanetLockdownfilm.com.



Schoolhouse Rocked: The Homeschool Revolution

Garritt and Yvette Hampton thought homeschooling parents were crazy until they became homeschoolers themselves and discovered that homeschooling families were a lot like them. In 2016 they sold their home and for three years traveled the country with their children in a motor home. They met with all kinds of people in the movement, some of whom had been homeschool trailblazers in the 1970s, and documented it all in this encouraging and hope-filled film about this growing, flourishing community.



Dad Reckoning

Shouldn't Children Be the Center of Our Concerns?

by Bobby Neal Winters

The way we center our lives now is different from what it was when I was growing up in Oklahoma.

I like *The Big Bang Theory*. In particular, I like Sheldon's mom. Whatever the other faults of the show, it got East Texas right. I know this because East Texas is just a warmer and more humid version of eastern Oklahoma.

On *Young Sheldon*, which is a spin-off of the series, the characters have to deal with one of my dad's favorite parenting issues: Sheldon's elder brother got a young woman pregnant. The series spent several episodes exploring the familial and social ramifications of this. It was true to the culture. By culture I mean the standard ways that have been developed to deal with the issues of living.

In his "Tiffany Aching" series, Terry Pratchett describes how the country folk in England (well, Discworld, but really England) handled such things. A young man and woman would get together at a fair. A few months later a bump would appear on the young woman's abdomen. The girl's mother would talk to the girl's dad. The girl's dad would talk to the boy's dad over a pint at the pub, and it would all just be worked out.

This is similar to the way Dad taught.

Dad was a simple man and he gave simple advice. If you get a girl pregnant, you are going to marry her. He did recognize that complications could arise, such as, maybe the two people involved didn't like each other. His response was thought out ahead of time: if you don't think that you can live with the girl, then maybe you shouldn't be having sex with her. He also said it was a lot more fun to get along with your spouse than to fight all the time. He was of the school of thought that individuals had some responsibility for their actions.

Paramount Needs

As I look back on it, I see that his philosophy—this cultural way of doing things—was based on the idea that once that little human being comes into existence, its needs are paramount.

This was a lecture I heard from Dad more than once. I think he had it playing on a loop somewhere in his head. It came out whenever we were working in the garden or hunting or fishing or painting the house. "When you get married, your loafing days are over. Don't

spend time out with your buddies. You need to be home with your family. You need to concentrate on putting beans on the table and raising your kids."

He wasn't speaking out of abstract concerns, either. He had plenty of empirical data. He could name numerous young men who had faced just this challenge. They'd made the trip to city hall or the preacher or whatever. They'd been given a clothes basket full of household items and taken to the trailer they would share with their new bride.

While this is often referred to as a "Shotgun Wedding," no shotguns were involved because they didn't have to be. The young people in question had been raised in this same tradition. I could name quite a few grown people with children and grandchildren who are in existence today because of this. It ain't always pretty, but it's life.

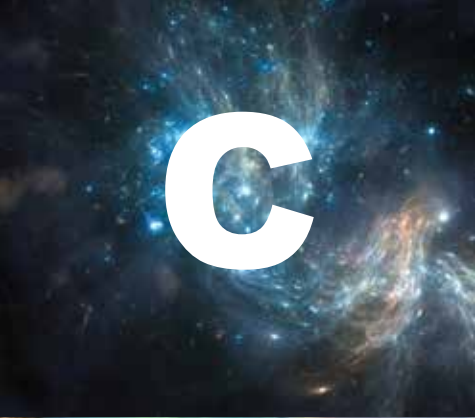
It is a cultural practice that is centered on the child. The idea is that a child needs the support of its whole family: mother, father, and grandparents. It works better if the parents are living together and happy about it. That means marriage, *de facto* if not *de jure*.

There is a line from Gordon Lightfoot's song, "The House You Live In": "Stay calm in the face / of all common disgraces."

I think that "disgrace" is a strong word to use there, but from the moment I heard this, to me it has meant reacting in a calm, measured way to something that is, as my dad would always say, "just human nature."

Times have changed since my dad was bringing up his sons. Human nature has not. We are creating new problems and new solutions. Maybe, just maybe, one principle we can stick with is making our children the center of our concerns. ☺

—This article originally appeared in The Pittsburg Morning Sun.
Used with permission.



C



H



A



O



S

We find that we live in an insignificant universe, in a humdrum galaxy, lost in a cosmic foam, tucked away in some forgotten corner of a multiverse, in which there are far more universes than people.

—Science popularizer Tyson Karls

CHAOS

THE UNIVERSE IS SO RANDOM

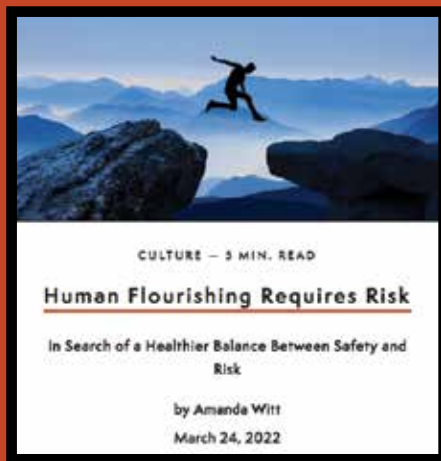
Join us for the third iteration of the award-winning, most-watched science television series of all time—updated with a new name that more accurately represents the *true* nature of space and being.

Premiers January 1, 2023 on the SETTLED SCIENCE CHANNEL

Why the name change? What was wrong with *Cosmos: A Spacetime Odyssey*?

The word *cosmos* implies that the galaxies or universes can be regarded as an orderly, harmonious system.

Since random accidents can only *appear* orderly and harmonious, we conclude that the application of this term will mislead the public imagination toward design, or worse yet, creation—thus leading individuals to adopt regressive voting habits.



SALVO

has a blog!

Get more Salvo between issues.
New posts appear regularly so check back often.

